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THE JEWS ON TIN PAN ALLEY:
THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC, 1830-1940

Kenneth Aaron Kanter

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination.

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

March, 1980

Referee: Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus

To Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus who has walked with me every step of the journey which led towards the completion of this thesis and who has allowed me the privilege of accompanying him on many walks of his own;

To my family and friends who have always brought music to my life, this thesis is proudly dedicated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIGEST

American popular music would not exist as we know it without the contribution made by Jews. This thesis presents the story of American popular song from the first Jewish influence in the 1830's to the year 1940. The men and women who wrote, published, publicized and presented these songs illustrated the history and mores of their day. Major social issues were addressed such as slavery, prohibition, suffrage and patriotism.

In every genre of the American musical industry, the Jews dominated. In vaudeville and burlesque, the Jewish contribution was dominant. The great theatre composers we recognize today learned their trade there. Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Irving Caesar and Charles K. Harris all wrote for and were influenced by vaudeville. If no one could hear the songs, then they could not be appreciated. The music publishing business was largely started and totally controlled by immigrant Jews. M. Witmark, Charles K. Harris, Joseph Stern, Shapiro and Bernstein, von Tilzer, Leo Feist, T. B. Harms, and Irving Berlin were the vanguard of the publishing business which came to be known as "Tin Pan Alley," a name given them by the Jewish lyricist-journalist, Monroe Rosenfeld.

Before Charles K. Harris, there had never been a "million seller," a song that sold a million copies of sheet music. His "After the Ball" sold ten million. The most prolific composer on Tin Pan Alley was the Detroit Jew, Harry Gumm, who changed his name to von Tilzer. He claimed to have written eight thou-

sand songs. Jerome Kern changed the face of the American musical theatre with his desire for the unity of script and song. He paved the way for those who followed, including Irving Berlin and the Gershwins. Berlin represents the essence of the American Jewish contribution to the song industry. An immigrant, he revolutionized the popular music field and in the process became as American as the songs he wrote. He wrote the songs which called men to serve their country in the World Wars; he wrote the songs which have signified two "national" holidays, Christmas and Easter. More than those, though, he wrote what many consider our second national anthem, "God Bless America." Lastly we have George and Ira Gershwin who changed the face of the popular music industry by showing that theatre and popular songs could stand side by side with the more serious music of the orchestra hall.

This thesis is presented in two parts; the first is a lengthy history of American popular music as developed by the hundreds of Jews who contributed to it. The events of each era are clearly illustrated by the songs written during that day. There are more than fifty individual biographies of men and women who shaped American popular music included in the text of the first part. The latter chapters are individual biographies of the seven major people who created the popular music business as we know it. They each represented a certain facet of the industry. Without them, there would not have been a Tin Pan Alley.

CHAPTER ONE

The songs people sing perhaps more than anything else tell the story, the history of that people. The American popular song is no exception to that statement. Beginning at the very first settlement of the colonies until today, the events which shaped the life of every American were immortalized in song. The mores and lifestyles were affected by, and had an enormous effect upon, the kinds of music which the people enjoyed.

The Jewish contribution to American popular music essentially began in the 1840's, although the Jewish presence in America was small indeed, numbering no more than 15,000 in a population of some 17,000,000.[1] It is therefore not surprising that the Jewish contribution was meager indeed. Yet it was a beginning.

To understand these musical contributions, as well as those which came later, it is essential to understand what was occurring musically in the community in general. In the earliest days, the Jews were imitators, not explorers. They desired to follow the styles which were prevalent rather than forging ahead towards the originality which they were to show in later years. As we view the musical events of the gentile world, let it be constantly borne in mind that before the year 1840 there was virtually no Jewish composer or lyricist in America of any importance. It is with that one exception that we begin.

By the 1840's, the purchasing and singing of songs by the rich and poor alike was likened to "a passion" by the New York Mirror. "At quilting bees, ceremonies, men's clubs, dinners, everywhere people gathered, songs were sung."[2] From the very beginning of American music, the sentimental ballad was the most popularly received of all songs. Two Jews filled very prominent roles in the sphere of sentimental balladry in these early times. John Howard Payne and Henry Russell were masters of this popular type of music. Payne, who was born in New York City on June 9, 1791, was the son of a New York Jewish woman named Sarah Isaacs. In his youth he went to London where he wrote plays and at times appeared as an actor. His greatest success was in collaboration with Sir Henry Bishop, the British conductor-composer. Together they composed the opera Clari which opened in London on May 8, 1823. The principal song in this opera was "Home, Sweet Home." As the closing to the first act, the song served as a nostalgic remembrance of home and hearth. Its success in England was immediate; "Never has any ballad become so immediately and deservedly popular" stated the Quarterly Musician in London. It was heard in America for the first time on November 12, 1823, at the Park Theater in New York, with the same critical and popular response.

The New York Mirror of November 22 called the song "the most beautiful and tender we have ever heard. . . There was something inexpressibly tender." The success of the song was phenomenal. It is claimed that 100,000 copies were sold in the

first year of publication; the critics panned it, but millions of people loved it.[3] Payne's poem was written at a time when he was suffering the depression resultant in his separation from his home and people. Nineteenth century music critics shared his feelings and spoke to this point when commenting on the universality of Payne's sentimental emotions:

> During one of these seasons (when Payne was in Paris) with its attendant dejection and despair, in that meanly furnished room with the sounds of the happy, thoughtless crowds on the boulevard welling up through the tiny casement, the opening words of the immortal song "Mid Pleasures and Palaces" came to him as spontaneously as a sigh; and then and there he wrote the words that have since girdled the world . . . . Later Payne was wont to tell of a time when he stood on a Christmas Eve in a London street, penniless, hungry and cold, and heard with incredible feelings of loneliness "Home, Sweet Home" played in a rich man's parlor."[4]

> Certain of these songs of sentiment outlive those of more artistic compositions simply because they touch the hearts of the people. Each and every word is understood because it has been written for them, and the music usually is simple enough to be readily grasped. America has produced much music of this kind, songs that will never die because they essentially vibrate in the home life of the nation. Such a song is "Home, Sweet Home."[5]

Sadly for Payne, he did not benefit financially from the publication of this song or its enormous appeal. He wrote in his diary, "How often have I been in the heart of Paris, Berlin, London or some other city and have heard persons singing or hand organs playing "Home, Sweet Home" without having a

shilling to buy myself the next meal or a place to lay my head."[6] Money never did come his way, for the protection of the lyricist and composer by copyright laws was long in the future, but honor did; for in 1850, two years before he died, he was invited to the White House by President Zachary Taylor to hear Jenny Lind sing his song.

Payne died in 1852 while serving as United States Consul in Tunis, North Africa. When his body was brought back to the United States to be interred in Oak Hill cemetery, the funeral cortege included the President of the United States, his cabinet, and many high ranking officials of military and public life. Newspapers throughout the country repeated the theme that Payne had finally come home. Twenty-one years later another tribute to Payne and his ballad was paid when, with money raised by a series of benefit performances of the opera Clari, a statue of Payne was erected in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, complete with a thousand voices singing his song "Home, Sweet Home."

Henry Russell played a far more prominent role in the history of American popular music and lived a happier life than did Payne. He was the most significant composer of sentimental ballads of the middle nineteenth century. Russell was born in England and died there, but because all his ballads were written while he was a resident of the United States, and because it was here that they gained their immediate success, Russell's career can justifiably be called American. He was born in Sheerness, England, on Dec. 24, 1812. At age

twenty-one he came to America where he filled the position of organist at the First Presbyterian Church of Rochester, New York. It was early in the second of the eight years Russell served as organist that he heard a speech of Henry Clay which inspired him to write his first ballad. Russell wrote "Why should it not be possible for me to make music the vehicle of grand thoughts and noble sentiments, to speak to the world through the power of poetry and song?"[7]

Russell was more than a composer for most often he performed his own songs accompanying himself on the piano. Of his eight hundred compositions, by far the most famous was "Woodman, Spare that Tree." Russell's music clearly caught the fancy of his audiences, as did his performance of them. More will be said about him in a succeeding chapter.

The songs of the 1840's were so often bought and sung by women that the songsters of the time were carefully expurgated so that, in the words of the editor of The Parlor Companion, "nothing in them could tinge the cheek of modesty with the slightest blush."[8] Stephen Foster compositions exemplified the genre of songs which were sung in parlors around America, for he is known as a composer of more than negro and Southern songs. "Beautiful Dreamer," "Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair," 'Come where my Love Lies Dreaming," etc., were all tender, almost maudlin, songs fit for the ears of proper ladies to hear and the family to sing.

Maudlin is a perfect description for the type of ballad that had enormous popularity in the 1840's and 1850's. The

most common plot for this type of song described the untimely death of some sweet young girl. In 1848, Thomas Dunn English wrote "Oh Don't You Remember Sweet Alice" who, the song goes on to say, now "lies under a stone in an old churchyard in an obscure corner." "Lily Dale", written in 1852 by H. S. Thompson, tells of the sadness of loved ones over the death of "Sweet Lily, sweet Lily dear over whose grave blossoms the wild rose in a flowery vale."[9]

Popular songs in the 1840's and 1850's had the power to elect as well as the power to entertain. Political campaigning as we understand it began in 1840 with the presidential election between William Henry Harrison and the then President Martin Van Buren. Horace Greely was largely responsible for the growth in importance of the campaign song, for he included a new lyric in each of his issues of the Whig paper Log Cabin. Harrison won the presidential election of 1840 partially through the persuasion of songs which praised his heroism and mocked his opponent, "that queerman Van Buren." When a jeweler from Zanesville, Ohio, Alexander Coffman Ross, wrote the lyric "For Tippecanoe and Tyler, too!" the Whig party recognized a catchy phrase. It was so popular that the North American Review claimed "it sang Harrison into the Presidency."[10]

Popular demand for a song could be created in various ways in the era long before mass communication. Certain lyrics were published in newspapers and magazines, songs could be introduced in political rallies as was mentioned regarding the Presidential campaign of 1840, or they could be presented in

a minstrel show. The 1840's introduced this most American type of musicale to the world, beginning in the year 1843.[11] Political and economic reasons necessitated the creation of the minstrel show, especially during the depression of 1842. It became essential for the talent of the day, which was mainly engaged in blackface shows, to gather together and form collections of talent, rather than continue as singles. The first prominent group, the Virginia Minstrels, were formed in 1843 with their premier performance on February 17 of that year. One of the men involved with them was Daniel Emmett who is famous today for writing the song "Dixie". Emmett began his show business career working for a circus in Cincinnati, Ohio, for whom he wrote his first "nigger song" called "Bill Crowder". It is of interest here because of the story line. The melody Emmett took from an old song by "Daddy" Rice called "Gumbo Chaff." In this song, we hear the story of poor old Bill Crowder, a Negro living in Cincinnati, who is cheated and gets into a fight with a Jewish old-clothes-man. This song, as were all minstrel songs, was sung in blackface.[12]

The most famous of the minstrel shows was that founded by Ed Christy in New York. Its first performance was April 27, 1846, in New York. Christy formalized what was to be the traditional schema for all minstrel shows; there were three sections in each show. First was the "Olio" or what would be called today, the variety show. Here the performers would sit in a row, made up in blackface, costumed in frock coats and white gloves. Ensemble music would be performed. The second part

of the show was called the "Free Fantasy," which would showcase the special talents of the individual performers. Almost anything would be acceptable in this section ranging from song to gymnastics. The last segment of a minstrel show was the "Burlesque". In this section the performers would parody what had gone on in the first two sections. The minstrels claimed that the burlesques were original each night, theoretically because the performers did not know what would eventuate in the first sections; however, the burlesque section was the most carefully orchestrated and choreographed portion of each performance. It is interesting to note that the term "ham" referring to a performer, was invented at this time in the days before greasepaint, because the performers used hamfat as the base for their makeup. Hence one who used this type of makeup was referred to as a "ham".[13] Ed Christy's minstrels performed more than 2500 shows in the six years of their active creative life and then moved to England to introduce minstrelsy there. It is symbolic of their success that Gilbert and Sullivan found minstrelsy so prevalent in the early 1890's that they chose the Christy Minstrels as a fitting subject to parody.[14]

Other minstrel groups included the Kitchen Minstrels (1844), the Ethiopian Minstrels, the New York Minstrels, New Orleans Serenaders - who parodied other minstrel groups (1843), the White Serenaders (1846) who were a group of black performers who dressed in whiteface, and the Bryant Minstrels (1857), for whom Stephen Foster wrote.

Minstrels did not concentrate solely on entertaining peo-

ple; they were very active in political and social causes as well. In the late 1840's the Hutchinson family, the most prominent of the family minstrel groups, toured the U. S. with songs of reform as their major song repertoire. They were against drinking and war, and were strong supporters of women's suffrage and the emancipation of the Negro. Some of the songs of the day in the anti-alcohol campaign were "Temperance and Liberty", "Speed the Temperance Ship," "Young Man Shun that Cup," "Father's a Drunkard - and Mother's Dead," with the most widely known of all temperance songs being "King Alcohol - pro abstinence." The Drinkers had their own songs, the most widespread of which was entitled "We're Pro Drink, There's Nothing Like Grog."[15] In the 1850's, the feminists came up with a nationally popular song to voice their point of view entitled "Let Us Speak Our Mind If We Dare It."

However, in the late 1850's, the country had more vital issues than the perennial ones of alcohol and suffrage; for the country was gearing up for war. One of the issues which inflamed Americans was that of slavery. To respond musically to that issue, many singing societies were formed to further the emancipation of the Negro. These singing societies had many important supporters and contributors who took famous songs of the day and wrote new lyrics to the melodies. Even William Lloyd Garrison contributed his efforts toward the writing of anti-slavery songs, all of which were collected in an anthology entitled The Anti-Slavery Harp, 1851. A great example of this type of song is "The Battle Hymn of

the Republic" written by William Steffe, a Charleston, South Carolina Sunday School teacher. It became internationally recognized by another name, "John Brown's Body Lies a Mouldering in the Grave" presumed by the members of the anti-slavery movement to be the John Brown of the Harper's Ferry anti-slavery attack. It turns out, however, that the John Brown of the song was a Scotsman in a Massachusetts infantry battalion who was known for his penury and pro-Southern leanings. To mock him his fellow soldiers used a Southern hymn.

The second song totally misinterpreted was "Dixie" by Daniel Emmett. It was originally written as a "walk-around" song in the minstrel show for which Emmett worked. A "walk-around" is found after the Olio portion where the performers get ready to "strut their stuff" before they take their seats for the "free fantasy." On a Saturday night in 1859, Emmett was requested to write a walk-around to be introduced in the Monday show and it was "Dixie" that he composed. The song was premiered by Dan Bryant, the director and star of the Dan Bryant Minstrel Show, one of the great performers of the late 1850's and 1860's. His name was so tied to "Dixie" that he was persona non grata in Northern cities in the early Civil War years. When the song was taken on tour to New Orleans in the show Pocohontas, it became an enormous hit and was demanded at public functions, rallies, etc. Its popularity was heightened when, at the first performance, the mayor and officials of New Orleans stood up for the song, with the rest of the audience following suit. The people treated "Dixie" as if it

had been composed intentionally as a patriotic hymn. These Southerners forgot that the song was originally written as a nostalgic look at a time which had really never existed, by a Northerner who had never been "in the land ob Cotton." Northerners similarly forgot the real intent of the song and Emmett was assailed by anti-slavery newspapers, including William Lloyd Garrison's as a traitor to the Union.

CHAPTER TWO: 1860-1890

If the popular songs of the 1840's and 1850's expressed political emotions, they were tame when compared to the more virulent songs which followed during the war years. Music had become as important as the newspaper and the sermon in its power to move people politically and socially. There were many great songs of the Civil War period. The second great song of the Confederacy was "Maryland, My Maryland," written by James Ryder Randall, a professor of English at Pydras College in Louisiana. The lyrics Randall dedicated to his friend, Henry J. Leovy, Esq., 1861. The music was borrowed from an 1824 Christmas carol which had been borrowed earlier from a twelfth century Oxford University song.

The North had its share of songs; along with "John Brown's Body" which has been mentioned earlier, Julia Ward Howe created the lyrics which became "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" when she wrote a poem for the Atlantic Monthly in February, 1862. This song became the most often played song in the United States from the year of its introduction through the conclusion of the war, and its popularity has continued to this day. The third composer of the Civil War period was George Frederick Root, a native of Sheffield, Massachusetts. He had begun in popular music but at the commencement of the Civil War began to write the stirring music he felt was necessary for the war effort. His first song, mildly successful, was entitled "The First Gun Is Fired." The second song, however, earned the following com-

ment from an anonymous Union soldier: "It put as much spirit and cheer into the army as a splendid victory;" the song was "The Battle Cry of Freedom."[16]

The music of the 1860's proved that the United States of America could produce good war songs even when temporarily divided, and that martial spirit need not diminish the supply of honest sentiment and charming melody. The conclusion of the Civil War signifies the conclusion of the first section of music we will view; a time period when the Jews were not numerous and their contributions were, except in isolated instances, equally unremarkable.

* * * * *

During the years 1865 to 1900, however, the Jews came into their own as far as America and its music were concerned. These were the years of the great immigrations to America. Whereas in 1880 there were approximately 250,000 Jews in America, by the time of the turn of the century, there were 1,000,000, a large number of whom were born in America.[17]

In the late 1860's, music changed as the emotions of the people changed. The war was over and with it went the overly sentimental, coy and cloying songs of earlier days. There was less artificiality in the lyrics, and the propriety of the '40's and '50's gave way to fewer and fewer maidenly blushes as lyrics became more risqué.[18] Along with more colorful lyrics came a type of entertainment indigenous to America; the American stage musical. These shows began as "extravaganzas", the first important one being The Black Crook in 1866. It was entirely by

accident that the new type of production occurred, for initially all that was to have been produced was a newly imported French ballet. The theatre where the ballet was scheduled unfortunately burned down and the producers of this ballet approached a second theatre owner about the use of his facility. He had just purchased the rights to a melodrama, "The Black Crook," which he intended to present at his theatre. An agreement was reached to combine these different shows which might prove an attraction that would, in the producer's words, "certainly arouse curiousity."[19] The major novelty in the show was that the women's legs were encased in pink tights which looked as if they were wearing no tights at all. The Jewish composer Sigmund Romberg used the story of this first American musical as the plot for his musical production The Girl in Pink Tights. "The Black Crook" turned out to be a gilt edged investment for it earned the producers about 2,000,000 dollars in profit and ran for sixteen months.

Burlesque and vaudeville also made their initial appearances in the late '70's and '80's. Some of the most successful burlesque of the Reconstruction period were the series of "Mulligan plays" by Edward Harrigan and Tony Hart. Although not Jews, they were able to caricature many ethnic groups, primarily the Irish and the Jews,[20] who would be familiar to New York's lower strata of society. Harrigan and Hart had one way to make sure their Jewish caricatures more realistic. Their music director and composer was David Braham, a Jew from London. Born in 1838, Braham arrived in America when he was eighteen after

studying violin in England. Upon his arrival here, he earned his living playing in pit orchestras of various shows, later becoming music director for the "Mulligan" shows. In the 1870's he became a song writer, composing music for lyricists other than Harrigan; some of his songs included "You're the Idol of My Heart," "Over the Hill to the Poorhouse," "The Eagle," which was a tribute to America's centennial, "Money, the God of the Purse." In 1870, Braham moved to New York to assist Harrigan and Hart in their first "Mulligan" extravaganza. For the next several years, all of Braham's songs had lyrics by Harrigan. Harrigan and Hart broke up as a team in 1885, but Braham continued to write music with Harrigan lyrics. It is interesting to note too that Harrigan served not only as collaborator for Braham, he was also his father-in-law; Braham had married Harrigan's sixteen year old daughter in 1876. Braham died in New York on April 11, 1905.

The ethnic flavor found in the Harrigan-Hart-Braham comedies helped greatly to make them as popular as they were. This type of "localism" as it was called became very prevalent in the 1880's and 1890's mainly as a result of the influx of immigrants into New York and the east coast of the U.S. The easiest way to reach any particular audience was to present local customs on the stage in a humorous way; for example, Yiddishisms in a Jewish neighborhood[21] such as the antics of a greenhorn Jew upon his arrival in America,[22] or the business dealings and misdealings of a "Dutchman", the disguised caricature of a Jew or any immigrant from eastern Europe.[23]

Caricatures, complicated plots, memorable songs, all combined in the Mulligan shows to assure their popularity. There was one aspect, though, that had historical significance, for these shows were the first in American theatrical history to use as their settings places familiar to the American audiences. Many great songs came from these shows as well as their sister entertainment, vaudeville. Most of our greatest early song writers came from a background in vaudeville; Irving Berlin, Irving Caesar, Jerome Kern, etc. Great performers as well began their careers in the vaudeville circuit. The dominant vaudeville house of the late nineteenth century was Tony Pastor's Opera House. He introduced Weber and Fields, Sam Bernard, Sophie Tucker and his greatest star, Lillian Russell (Helen Luise Leonard). Miss Russell was married to a prominent English Jew named Edward Solomon, who came to America after beginning a successful song writing career in England. Among his songs were "Billie Taylor," "All on Account of Eliza," and "Reward of Virtue," all written in 1881 upon Solomon's arrival in America. More about vaudeville will be included later.

One must ask how did these songs become widely popular; the answer is simple, the great publishing houses. In this area the Jews truly shone and it was the 1880's when the great publishing enterprises began, specifically the House of M. Witmark and Sons. The story of this family dynasty reads much like the American dream. The firm was founded in 1886 by three brothers, Isidore, Julius (Julie) and Jay Witmark, aged

seventeen, thirteen and eleven. As they were too young legally to run a business, their father, Marcus, became the titular director of the company. Before the Civil War, Marcus had been a very successful businessman in Alabama and Georgia; unfortunately for the family fortunes, he chose to fight as an officer in the Confederate army and lost his fortune as a result of the war.[24] Isidore, Julius and Jay came into the printing business in a small way when they received a printing press from their school as a prize and they began earning a modest income printing Christmas cards and advertising flyers.[25] Their home at 402 West 40th Street became their factory.[26] Isidore and Jay operated the press while Julius earned money as a boy-singer of ballads with "Billy Birch's San Francisco Minstrels." He was labeled as "wonderful boy soprano" and later "celebrated boy baritone."

Isidore, who knew how to play the piano, also like to write songs. Several early melodies were published by other music houses before the brothers decided that Isidore should quit the water-filter business and go into writing songs for the brothers' company to publish.[27] Their precipitating reason was simple: the publishing house of Willis Woodward began the practice of paying any singer a percentage of the royalties accrued if he would sing songs published by Woodward. Julius agreed to this business deal and sang one song owned by the house at all of his performances, thereby creating great demand for the sheet music. After the song became a best seller, Woodward reneged on his agreement and attempted

to buy off Witmark with a 20 dollar gold piece. The brothers became so angry they decided to open their own publishing house to give Woodward some competition. Needless to say, there were many difficulties; they had no capital and no experience, but they did have certain important advantages. First there was Isidore who could write new and creative songs, secondly there was Julius who had the contacts and the voice to sing their songs, and lastly they had an office with a printing press in which they could publish their songs.

The Witmark brothers began their publishing career with quite a coup. Rumor had it that President Grover Cleveland was about to marry Frances Fulsom at the White House so Isidore decided to write a wedding march for the President.. The White House denied the reports and the Witmarks were stuck with many thousand of copies of Isidore's song which they had already published. Three days later the official announcement of the wedding was made and the house of M. Witmark and Sons was the first with an appropriate song. As a result they made a great deal of money and established themselves as a company with a good future. As a result also, the Witmarks introduced a new practice into the music business, that of writing songs about the front page stories of the day and creating songs which were suited to specific events. They also took over the tradition of paying their singers for presenting Witmark songs. As Julius was already a singer, he was able to find the talent who would sing their songs. Isidore became the firm's liaison between the talent and the busi-

ness, thereby becoming what would later become officially known as a "song plugger." As the list of songs published by Witmarks became greater, "We placed songs with almost every topnotcher at Tony Pastor's."[29] They became so successful that they were forced to find larger quarters and in 1888 they moved to 32 East 14th Street in Union Square, the first of the many publishers who did so.

The Witmarks published other song-writers' material as well. One of their earliest was a song called "When the Sun Has Set," written by an unknown composer from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His name was Charles K. Harris. Harris was to go on and write the most successful songs in the latter nineteenth century and there will be more about him in a later chapter. For the moment, though, Harris had the Witmarks publish his first song. Upon receiving his first royalty check from them, for the total of eighty-five cents, he was so enraged that he borrowed a thousand dollars from friends and opened his own publishing office at 107 Grand Street in Milwaukee. After only a year he had earned enough profits to repay the loan and move to more commodious quarters in the Alhambra Building in Milwaukee. Later he opened a branch office in Chicago. Harris had joined the Jewish group of up and coming publishers. In 1892, only four years after he began, Harris wrote his masterpiece, the first song in America to sell more than two million copies; the song was "After The Ball." Within a short time, Harris' song reached sales of 25,000 copies per week, eventually totalling five million.

Several others went into the publishing business after the success of Witmark and Harris; among them were Joseph Stern and Edward B. Marks who joined in partnership and became the Joseph W. Stern Company. They formed the company in 1886[30] and used as their first song a poem by Marks with music by Stern. The song was "The Little Lost Child." They had begun in the business world in entirely different professions, Stern had sold neckties and Marks had been a traveling notions and button salesman[31] but both had desired to be professional song writers. The song "Little Lost Child" afforded them the possibility. Marks had always been in the habit of writing "occasional verses" and Stern had gained a good business grounding as well as musical skill and could turn out adequate songs on very short notice.[32] This doleful little ditty was typical of the maudlin music mentioned earlier; the story of a little girl who while lost meets a policeman. He returns her to her mother who miraculously turns out to be the policeman's long lost wife![33] Marks, as the salesman for the company, tells of having to "lug around our music and songs in a briefcase. When meeting up with various singers or bands it was necessary to buy drinks for everyone to get them to play our songs."[34] The firm's name, Joseph W. Stern and Company, came about because Marks had not intended to make the music business his living. He had intended to return to the notions business. The success of "The Little Lost Child" convinced him that music was a better, more lucrative profession. The song's success was due to another inno-

vation. A Brooklyn electrician invented a process where he could flash a picture on a wall behind a singer to illustrate whatever lyric was being sung. Stern and Marks recognized a good thing when they saw it and provided the money necessary for the man to hire actors to produce the slides for illustrating "The Little Lost Child." The song and slides were introduced in 1894 to enormous popular acclaim. This innovation caught on and it wasn't too long before many songs were "plugged" through the use of song slides. Their song was to sell over two million copies of sheet music.

They had even greater success in 1896 with a song called "Mother was a Lady" or "If Jack Were Only Here." Involved here was the story of a waitress being taunted at a restaurant and responding to the customer, "you wouldn't talk that way to my mother for she was a lady. If only my brother Jack were here, he'd take care of you." This song was written in conjunction with William Fox who went on later to found Fox Pictures Corporation.[35] "Mother was a Lady" sold even more copies of sheet music than did "The Little Lost Child."

Marks and Stern served as the inspiration for another great song writing publishing house, that of Shapiro and Bernstein. Maurice Shapiro and Lew Bernstein opened their doors in 1896 after also being in the retail sales business. Joining the others who had preceded them, they opened their offices in Union Square. Harry Von Tilzer and his brother, Albert, Jews from Detroit, joined the business also as song writer/publishers; Leo Feist chose to combine songwriting

with publishing as well. He began in 1893 as a sales and field manager for the "R and G Corset Company"[36] when he decided that if anyone could sell corsets, so anyone could sell songs. Feist began his musical career by selling the song "Those Lost Happy Days" to the firm of Stern and Marks. When it became successful, he demanded to become a partner and they refused. To spite them he opened his own company with the famous slogan, "You can't go wrong with a Feist song."[37] Other songs he wrote and published were "Nobody Cares For Me," "Oh, Oh Miss Liberty," and "Smokey Mokes" (with the help of Harry Von Tilzer). Feist's importance to the music world was not as a composer or founder, but as a great organizer and publisher.

Why the aggregation of all these publishers in one place, Union Square? There were many reasons; within two blocks was the Tony Pastor Vaudeville house, the Dewey Theatre, several burlesque houses, the Alhambra where "Extravaganzas" were staged, as well as five other legitimate theatres where live performances were given. Equally important were the collection of restaurants and eateries which surrounded the area; it was here that the publishers could meet with potential buyers; wine and dine them, and sign them up.

The new publishers found that there could be a method to the madness of song writing. If a stereotype could be created so that songs could be mass produced for the market, they could be written, published and sold all the more quickly. That is exactly what was done. Various formulae were in-

vented where composers, even those who could not read music, could write their songs as the mood hit them. Immediately upon their publication, they were presented to the public and "plugged", as it was called. Many of the same men who published the songs also plugged them; "Julie" Witmark, Marks and Stern, Leo Feist, etc. But there were great singers who made their reputations in the plugging business. Two of the most important were Jews; Meyer Cohen, who gave up a career as a singer of ballads on the stage to become a plugger for Joseph W. Stern and Co., and Mose Gumble who worked for Shapiro-Bernstein and later for Jerome W. Remick and Co. The great singers of the day were the targets of the song pluggers' selling efforts, but of equal strategic value were managers, waiters, band leaders; almost anyone who had an audience near them. Soon it became fair game to accost the audience itself! When a song of a particular publisher was to be sung in a show, a plugger would be placed in the audience, so that after one or two verses, he could stand up and, as if by magic, could sing the new song, bringing the audience along. Gus Edwards, the soon-to-be producer and vaudeville star, made his start in this manner.

M. Witmark and Sons found another great hit which effectively made their fortune. It was a song called "The Picture That's Turned Toward the Wall" written by Charles Graham. In 1891, Graham had seen a play called Blue Jeans in which a farmer turns the picture of his daughter to the wall after she had run off with a lover of which he didn't approve. That

scene provided a song lyric for Graham and he sold it to Witmark's for fifteen dollars. They placed the manuscript in a file and forgot about it until an Irish tenor required a song; and they remembered "The Picture." He loved it and used it in his show; Julie Witmark, who by then was a topline entertainer as well, used it too. Isidore Witmark remarked on the success of the song in his autobiography: "'The Picture That's Turned Toward the Wall' was more than a financial success for the Witmarks. It brought them a coveted prestige. Formerly they had sold sheet music by the hundred copies; now they knew sales in the thousands . . . Jobbers who had scorned to deal with 'children' were camping on their doorstep for copies. Dealers who had refused them displays now buried other songs beneath 'The Picture.' Singers whom they had been obliged to chase now chased them."[38] Witmark hits were numerous in the '90's; "Her Eyes Don't Shine Like Diamonds" '94, "I Love You in the Same Old Way" '96, "Honey, You're My Lady Love" '97, "Just One Girl," "Just as the Sun Went Down" and "When You Ain't Got No Money - You Needn't Come Around" are all from '98.

Their most successful song of the nineties, however, was "When You Were Sweet Sixteen" written in 1898 by James Thornton, an English-born composer. The last song in the Witmark catalogue, and the one still popular today, was another sentimental ballad, "Sweet Adeline." Although published in 1903, it still belongs to the type of music which was prevalent in the nineties. A very sentimental echo song (the title is

echoed in the lyric every line) it caught the fancy of singers, audiences and barbershop quartets as well. It even played a role in politics, for John J. "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald used it three times as his theme song when running for Mayor of Boston. It was the last great song for the Witmarks.

Needless to say, the 1880's and '90's produced a brand new generation of song writers, although the largest outpouring of music came from only a few men; Charles K. Harris, Monroe H. Rosenfeld, Harry Dacre, etc. These were men who combined their writing with publishing, who joined with Marks, Stern, Shapiro, Bernstein, Kerry Mills, in a new and bustling business. More than just new writers, though, the public demanded new styles.

Early in the 1890's love and more specifically unrequited or disappointed love were very popular with songwriters and the public. This love was expressed in the morality of the day; a kiss and then immediately marriage. From the song hits, it soon became clear, that true happiness could only be found in waltz tempo! Next to love in importance came virginity, at least the virginity of girls. It was a deep source of maternal and music lyric solicitude.[39] The songs of the 1890's said one critic "were more cruelly characteristic of their time than ever before. They were inexorable in their revelation of limited human understanding, commonplace emotions and the platitudes of social intercourse. More songs were written and published than in any previous decade yet few were very good. Many are remembered today as museum pieces and objects of

ridicule. It is hard to believe that they were taken seriously, but obviously they were.[40]

Next to love songs in popularity came the lachrymose songs. Tears were considered good, right and natural. Charles K. Harris was the king of the tearful songs. Although he will have an entire section later, here is an illustration of Harris' songs which were the rage of the '90's. "The pardon came too late, the letter was edged in black; the widower sat on his wife's grave; with blinding tears falling he sang of his lost pearl; the child asked the switchboard girl for heaven because her mother was there and the wires seemed to moan; the soldier's last words were 'Just break the news to mother;' and the boy's last words were 'Don't send me to bed, I'll be good!'"[41] Each was a famous Harris composition!

But at this same time, another change was sweeping the country and its music showed this. The year 1892 saw the first million copy seller in the music industry, but it was also the year that Coca Cola ceased being advertised as a patent medicine. It was now proclaimed a pleasurable soft-drink. Fun was taking the place of moral uplift.[42] No more would be heard the gushing well-known mottoes, maxims and proverbs which had filled music from the 1870's through the nineties. The theatre of the nineties became filled with another type of music all together.[43]

CHAPTER THREE: 1890-1910

No longer would the maudlin and melancholy songs be the rage; as tears coursed down cheeks, now laughter would create tears. Yet each were in many ways equally forced and false. Up from the South and Midwest came the temper and tempo of new songs which would restore life to the song-writing business. It would wreck forever the rigidity of the waltz time morality which had, for forty years, pervaded the country's music. New immigrants helped in this, for in the melting pot, America produced a great stew of music. It was mixed with European sounds, spiced with ex-African syncopation, and it was called ragtime. It was perfect for the hustling and bustling of turn-of-the-century America. Anton Dvorák, on an American tour in 1892-95, wrote, "In negro melodies of America I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music."[44] A New England music critic disagreed with Dvorák, when he wrote, "Ragtime is a mere comic strip representing American vices. Here is a rude noise which emerged from the hinterlands of brothels and dives, presented in a negroid manner by Jews most often, so popular that even high society Vanderbilts dance to it. All this syncopated music wasn't American, it is unamerican. The Jew and the Yankee stand in human temperance at polar points. The Jew has oriental extravagance and sensuous brilliance. However, ragtime is a reflection of these raucous times; it is music without a soul."[45]

By the mid 1890's, many of the original publishers had

outgrown their offices and were forced to relocate. The first to do so was M. Witmark and Sons. They moved from what was the heart of the theatre district of 14th Street to an uptown area, around 28th Street. The others followed and by the late 1890's virtually every other publisher was on or near that street. Monroe H. Rosenfeld, a journalist-songwriter described walking down this street while preparing an article on popular music for a magazine. He came to 28th Street for material and while visiting Harry Von Tilzer, the songwriter turned publisher, Rosenfeld heard the sounds of a piano on which Von Tilzer had wound pieces of paper over the strings to give the tinny sound he like so much. Those sounds gave Rosenfeld the idea for the title of his article, Tin Pan Alley. From that time on, the area and eventually the American music business in general became known as "Tin Pan Alley." Later on, Von Tilzer claimed that it was he who had coined the name "Tin Pan Alley," but whether true or not, it was Rosenfeld who made the name stick by giving it large circulation.

Sing a song of Tin Pan
And Cock Robin, too;
Who really scores the hit
That magnetizes you?

"I," says the lyricist,
"With my words and patter;
Take my lines away
And the rest doesn't matter."

"I," cries the composer,
"With my tune and tinkle;

Without them the song
Would be dead as Van Winkle."

The arranger looks on
With a cynical frown.
"He thinks up the tune
But I set it down."

"You?" sneers the plugger.
"Go tell that to Grover.
You guys set it down,
But I put it over!"

Mr. Publisher smiles.
"And whose shekels stake it?
If it wasn't for me,
How could you fellows make it?"

From the wings speaks a ghost,
"How these kids run amuck!
Shall I tell them the truth, --
That it's me, Lady Luck?"[46]

Tin Pan Alley, as the American music business came to be called, became symbolic of the creativity which filled the music world from the 1890's to the 1940's. From hundreds of offices in several closely situated office buildings came words, music and chaos. From the windows of the Brill building and others, flew out songs and words which often lasted no longer than the time it took to write them. The song may have died, but the singing lived on. Early in the days of the Tin Pan Alley publishers, these offices were humble rather unpretentious rooms; dirty, filled with smoke and furnished with a desk, a piano, a chair and a spittoon. In those dingy

quarters were first heard the melodies which would entertain America and the world. Theodore Dreiser, the American novelist and brother of songwriter Paul Dresser, described Tin Pan Alley this way:

> In Twenty-seventh or Twenty-eighth Street or anywhere along Broadway from Madison to Greeley Square, are the parlors of the scores of publishers. . . rugs, divans, imitation palm plants make this publishing house more bower than office. Three or four pianos give to each chamber a parlor-like appearance. The walls are hung with the photos of celebrities neatly framed. In the private music rooms, rocking chairs. A boy or two waits to bring "professional copies" at a word. A salaried pianist or two wait to run over pieces which the singer may desire to hear . . . And then those "peerless singers of popular ballads" as their programs announce them, men and women whose pictures you will see upon every song sheet, their physiognomy underscored with their own "Yours sincerely" in their own handwriting. Everyday they are here, arriving and departing, carrying the latest songs to all parts of the land. These are the individuals who in their own estimation "make" the songs the successes they are. In all justice, they have claim to the distinction. One such, raising his or her voice nightly in a melodic interpretation of a new ballad, may, if the music is sufficiently catchy, bring it so thoroughly to the public's ear as to cause it to begin to sell . . . In flocks and droves they come, whenever good fortune brings "the company" to New York or the end of the season causes them to return, to tell of their successes and pick new songs for the ensuing season. Also to collect certain prearranged bonuses.[47]

The success of the Alley depended on the public, and the public depended on the Alley; it was a mutual need. There was no business so thoroughly Jewish as was the music business of

Tin Pan Alley; the men and women who worked in Tin Pan Alley were professionals in every sense of the word. They shared a heritage and a drive. Wrote one, "These are hard-boiled ladies and gentlemen, not in business for their health as they will assure you." "Staff notes into bank notes" might be their motto and their heraldic device a loud speaker rampant. The music business dealt in musical journalism in a way; the emotional tabloid which told of the day to day events that stirred the public. It was above all, opportunistic, and for that very reason, it is one of the truest indices of the public and its desires.[48]

The Witmarks, Charles K. Harris, Monroe Rosenfeld, Shapiro and Bernstein, the Von Tilzers, all were pioneers of popular music; each did his best to make and popularize a truly American industry. It was a trade which had no parallel in the rest of the world. Biographies of several will appear in a later section.

The publishers not only controlled what songs were published, they also had a hand in the style of songs which the public would receive. These businessmen could, through the reports of the singers who were involved with the public, tell what was being accepted and what wasn't. They eventually came to the conclusion that the public wanted familiar songs or new songs in a familiar style. Charles K. Harris, the most successful songwriter of his day, wrote the following words of advice for a songwriter just getting into "the business":

Watch your competition. Note their suc-

> cesses and failures; analyze the cause of either and profit thereby. Take note of public demand.
>
> Avoid slang and vulgarisms; they never succeed.
>
> Many-syllabled words and those containing hard consonants, wherever possible, must be avoided.
>
> In writing lyrics, be concise; get to your point quickly, and then make the point as strongly as possible.
>
> Simplicity in melody is one of the greatest secrets of success.
>
> Let your melody musically convey the character and sentiment of your lyrics.[49]

With such directions from the master, it is no surprise that many of the songs came out sounding exactly alike. But the songwriters of Tin Pan Alley had other ideas as well; for just as comedians long to play Hamlet, so the Alleymen desired to elevate themselves into theatre music. It is the next area into which Tin Pan Alley spread.

It was Charles K. Harris' song "After the Ball" which proved to the publishers the power of the musical theatre. This song was interpolated into a score by another composer in the show A Trip to Chinatown. "After the Ball" became the hottest music property in America up to that time. If there was profit to be made, the Witmark Publishing Company would not be far away. In 1898 they purchased the entire catalogue

of songs from the vaudeville team of Weber and Fields. By the mid-nineties and into the turn-of-the-century, Weber and Fields had become what Harrigan and Hart had been; humorists who made light of ethnic differences and the trials of daily life.

Joe "Mike Dillpickle" Weber and Lew "Meyer Bockheister" Fields were Jewish comedian-producer-musicians who became famous as "Dutchmen" par excellence. They began in vaudeville in the late 1870's when only nine years old, doing as many as fifteen shows a day for the enormous sum of six dollars a week. Later they played any house that would book them. In 1896, with three hundred dollars between them and fifteen hundred dollars more borrowed from a brother-in-law, they purchased a property on 29th and Broadway which became the W. and F. Music Hall. Such stars as Lillian Russell, Faye Templeton, and many others played their house so that within two years, in 1898, they were taking in five thousand dollars per week. Very quickly they augmented their musical talents by hiring away from the House of Witmark a staff composer, John Stromberg, who became the foundation of the Weber and Fields shows. By 1899 they were so successful that they hired Lillian Russell for a "run-of-the-show" contract in a Stromberg musical entitled Whirl-I-Gig. In the show were such luminaries as David Warfield, who had just starred as a Jewish comedian in the previous Weber and Fields show, Peter Daily, and of course Weber and Fields (as themselves). The interest was so enormous in the opening night of the show that seats were auc-

tioned; Weber and Fields were thrilled to realize from this single performance a net profit of $10,500, with Stanford White and William Randolph Hearst bidding as much as $750 for the best seats.

What was it that made these two Jewish talents so popular? Both men were cast as "Dutchmen", the euphemism for Germans, who were comical in all aspects of their personalities. Weber was short and fat while Fields was tall and thin. Both were dressed in enormously large clothing, checked suits and derby hats. Each sported small tufted beards under their chins and both hilariously butchered the English language. "I am delightfulness to meet you," Weber would say to Fields, to which Fields would respond, "Der disgust is all mine." Fields was the bully and Weber inevitably was the hapless victim; it was a perfect shlemiel-shlemazel situation. One of the most famous pieces of stage dialogue was a creation of Weber and Fields. "Who was the lady I seen you with last night?" said one. "That vas no lady, that vas mine wife." Visual jokes, pratfalls, ludicrous songs and dialogue were their stock and trade.[50]

Had Weber and Fields achieved nothing else, they would have been justly remembered for their creativity and producing skill. However, Fields also became the scion of a great Broadway theatre family. His daughter, Dorothy, became one of the twentieth century's most famous and prolific lyricists working with the great men of her time; Jerome Kern, Gershwin, Arthur Schwartz, etc. Her brothers Herbert and Joseph became

famous as librettists, playwrights, and directors. The family's culminating achievement was the script for Irving Berlin's musical Annie Get Your Gun. More will be present about Dorothy in a later chapter.

Weber and Fields, as was noted earlier, recognized that publishing their own music was more than they could handle, so they sold their catalogue of songs to Witmark and Sons for ten thousand dollars. Weber and Fields broke up their partnership in 1904 after the extravaganza, "An English Daisy," with music by the Jewish composer, Maurice Levi. Their split became an immediate national event and topic of conversation. The New York Herald reported it this way: "An audience which filled the large new theatre and composed of representatives of society clubdom, the world of first night, the theatre in every walk of life, called for the curtain to rise again. Then in response to demands, speeches were made by members of the company in which the two men who had made Weber and Fields household words were told that they were committing business suicide; were told that they were making a grievous mistake, amid cries of 'Right, right!' A Broadway audience is not particularly sentimental, but the tears that streaked the painted and powdered faces on the stage were multiplied many times in the audience as 'Auld Lang Syne' became the final number."[51] As it happened, that night in 1904 was not the final performance; Weber and Fields were reunited in 1912 and 1913 in nostalgic looks at the old time theatre of the nineteenth century.

Very quickly Tin Pan Alley's music had penetrated all parts of America and entertained most people who heard it. Within a few years, songs from Tin Pan Alley became oral tradition where people no longer remembered who wrote them; instead it seemed as if these songs had always been around. Tin Pan Alley did not draw on traditional music, it created the music.

The originality and innovative spirit of the founders of Tin Pan Alley, these early publishers and composer-lyricists, would be totally eclipsed by the achievements of the men and women who were to come on the scene in the next few years. The sophistication of the theatrical music which would soon be heard could not have come about had it not been for the firm basis which was provided by the men presented earlier. Where Tin Pan Alley had created songs, it would now introduce complete musical scores; where before the hits were individual and disconnected, now they would be tied together as musical units with identities interwoven with the plot of the new show. Tin Pan Alley had come of age.

Coming of age meant different things to different people; to the publishers on Tin Pan Alley, it meant selling music. More than ever, on Tin Pan Alley, 28th and Broadway, songs were produced as if on an assembly line. To keep up with the demand, publishers hired armies of composers, lyricists, arrangers, and orchestrators. Some of our greatest songwriters began as arrangers and orchestrators; song pluggers were another source of new talent. These arrangers were

hired on a contractual basis; it didn't matter how good the songs were, simply that they were written and published.

Creativity was not a strong interest at the turn of the century; if songs with girls' names in them were selling well, it could be guaranteed that there would be a spate of them. If specialty songs were big for the moment, then there would be numerous examples of the same type of song.

The only way of telling if a song was successful or not was in the sheet music sale; it was the only source of income for the publisher and writer. It was well known that a fortune could be made from a song; Charles K. Harris proved that with "After the Ball." Million copy songs were no longer unusual by 1900; between 1900 and 1910 there were one hundred such songs. Medium selling songs were in the 600,000 range. As a result of the success of these songs, the prices of sheet music dropped according to the sales figures and the economy. In 1890 a copy of sheet music cost 40¢, by 1900 about 25¢ and in 1910 generally 10¢.[52] Even with the drop in prices, a publisher could realize a $100,000 profit from a million copy sale from a hit song.[53] Several songs in the first decade of the twentieth century sold more than two million copies, such as Harry Von Tilzer's "A Bird in a Gilded Cage" 2,000,000 in 1900; Leo Friedmann's "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" sold five million copies in 1910. Some of Friedmann's other songs included "Coon, Coon, Coon -- I wish my color would fade"(1900) and "Meet Me Tonight in Dreamland" (1909).[54] Composers and lyricists who had songs which sold in the 600,000 to 2,000,000

copies in this time period included Gus Edwards, C. K. Harris, Ted Snyder, Irving Berlin, Joseph W. Stern, Ed Marks, Jean Schwartz, and Leo Edwards.[55] If the publisher was also the author of the songs he could earn twice the $100,000 amount. If not a publisher, the composer and lyricist split the $100,000 sum.

So that the songs would be more accessible, publishers sold their songs in department stores and dime stores. Wherever people were likely to be, there would be sheet music available. To assure good sales, publishing houses would send song pluggers to these various stores, theatres, and amusement areas in order to sell the songs more successfully. These song pluggers were originally called "boomers" because they had to be able to sing their wares. Around 1900 a prime source of boomers was the Lower East Side synagogues; these synagogues were canvassed for boys with large lungs and "rabbinic voices" who could be taught the music and could be planted in vaudeville shows or stores. They were trained to get up at a proper moment and sing the song along with the headliner.[56] Song pluggers such as Mose Gumble, the ace of pluggers who was mentioned earlier, were joined by newcomers who would go on to great achievements of their own. Harry Cohen, who became the boss of Columbia Pictures, and Jean Schwartz, who would become a successful songwriter, began as boomers. Their efforts guaranteed the success or failure of a song.

Jean Schwartz became a respected member of the Tin Pan Alley community on the basis of the success of his song "Be-

delia" which had been promoted by Mose Gumble into a three million seller; Schwartz was born in Hungary on November 4, 1878. When he was fourteen he came to America where he gained work as a song demonstrator in the sheet music department of a store in New York, Siegel-Cooper. Following this he became a song plugger for Shapiro-Bernstein. His first song was a piano cakewalk called "Dusty Dudes" (1889). In 1901 he formed a partnership with William Jerome, a lyricist of great repute. They wrote such songs as "Rip Van Winkle was a Lucky Man," "Any Place I Can Hang My Hat is Home Sweet Home to Me," "Don't Put Me Off at Buffalo Anymore," and "When Mr. Shakespeare Comes to Town."[57] Most of Schwartz's most successful songs were interpolated into the scores of musicals of the early twentieth century including several Weber and Fields extravaganzas. Their partnership broke up in 1914 and Schwartz went on to write with other lyricists. His most successful collaboration after Jerome was with the Jewish team of Joe Young and Sam Lewis. Together they wrote what became an Al Jolson classic, "Rock-A-Bye Your Baby with a Dixie Melody" from the musical, Sinbad. It is of interest to note that Sinbad had a more important place in the history of American musical comedy for it served as the show in which George Gershwin's most successful hit song, "Swanee", was introduced (1918). Schwartz contributed to various revues and shows until his retirement in 1928. He died in Los Angeles on November 30, 1956.

By 1900, ragtime was the rage of Tin Pan Alley. That is

not to say that the ballad had lost its appeal, for it never did that. Every year songs in waltz time which dealt with timeless love sold millions of copies. "My Gal Sal" (1905), "Down By the Old Mill Stream" (1910), 'Mother, A Word that Means the World to Me" (1915), and 'Till We Meet Again" (1918) were examples of the waltz songs.[58] Nostalgia was an important influence on the music of the early decade; people looked back on the simpler times of the 1890's with fondness and desired the old time songs to return. "Bird in a Gilded Cage" (1900), "Good Old Summertime" (1902), "Sweet Adeline" (1903), "Shade of the Old Apple Tree" (1905), "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now" (1909), "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and "Down By the Old Mill Stream" (1910) were examples of the old songs coming back.[59]

Another master of the old-type song which was recognized as anachronistic even when it was written was Gus Edwards. Born in Hohensallza, Germany, as Gustave Edward Simon, on August 18, 1879, Edwards and his family came to the United States in 1887 settling in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. During the day he would work in his uncle's cigar factory and at night he would search around the theatre district looking for work. As a song plugger and music salesman, Edwards learned the business until in 1896 he and four friends were booked as a vaudeville team. In 1898 Edwards introduced his first song into their act, a "coon song" entitled "All I Want is My Black Baby Back."[60] Edwards was unable to write down his music so he had his compositions transcribed for him which was a common

practice in the early days of the Tin Pan Alley era. During the Spanish-American war, Edwards entertained the troops at various camps and while at Camp Black, he met Will Cobb who would serve as his lyricist. Their first big success was the song "I Can't Tell You Why I Love You, But I Do, Do, Do" (1900).[61] In 1901 they had another big seller: "Mamie, Don't You Feel Ashamie." Four years later was a major year in the career of Gus Edwards. Firstly he wrote three of his great songs: "In My Merry Oldsmobile," "He's My Pal," and "Tammany" which became the theme song of the New York Democratic political machine, and in that same year he opened his own publishing house.

Two years later, in 1907, Edwards created a style of musical theatre with which he became totally identified. He wrote the song "School Days" which sold over three million copies of sheet music, and then he created a variety show entitled "School Days" where he served as emcee "Schoolteacher" and introduced new young talent. These shows were so successful and his search for talent was so widespread, that the phrase was coined "Pull your kids in, here comes Edwards."[62] Among the talent discovered by Edwards were Eddie Cantor, George Jessel, Walter Winchell, the Marx Brothers, and the Duncan Sisters. Most of the songs for these revues Edwards wrote himself. The most lasting from the "School Days" shows were "Sunbonnet Sue" (1908) and "By the Light of the Silvery Moon" (1909).

Edwards also wrote for theatre productions including

the Ziegfeld Follies and Weber and Fields extravaganzas. He retired in 1939 after a short career in movies and died in Los Angeles on November 7, 1945.[63]

It must be remembered that these old romantic songs were holdovers from the previous generation of songwriters. They never did fade totally from the scene, but they enjoyed a cyclical nature. As was said at the beginning of this section, the time had come for the dominance of ragtime.

The first use of the word "ragtime" occurred in 1893 on sheet music for 'My Ragtime Baby" by Fred Stone. By 1897 the term had been copyrighted and was commonly used. Although primarily a song style monopolized by Black composers such as Scott Joplin or James Scott, there were several Jews who used the genre very successfully. George Gershwin, long before he was to achieve any success in theatre or music, wrote "Rialto Ripples" in collaboration with Walter Donaldson in 1916. Joe E. Howard may have begun his stardom career with the sentimental ballad "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now" but his first success as a composer was with the ragtime song "Hello, My Baby" which he wrote with his wife Ida Emerson in 1899.

Howard was born in New York City on February 12, 1867. His father was a saloon keeper in the Lower East Side and it was in a back room of the bar that Howard was born. At eight years old, he ran away and found temporary shelter at a Catholic orphanage; he escaped from there to St. Louis where he sang in saloons and brothels to earn a living. At seventeen, Howard organized a vaudeville act with Ida Emerson, a dancer

he had met and they were soon married. By 1895 they were good enough to appear in a Chicago vaudeville house and it was there that Joe E. Howard made it big. Following their success, they were invited to New York to appear at Tony Pastor's club. Ida Emerson was one of nine women Howard married.

Between 1905 and 1915 Howard wrote the music for more than twenty different shows which were staged in Chicago. Several of these went on to greater success in New York. His greatest song, "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now" became the subject of a great lawsuit. Although Howard claimed that he had written it entirely himself, it turned out that it had, in fact, been written by Harold Orlob, who had worked for Howard in 1908-9 and had given the completed song to Howard. Although a sometime custom of the day, it was still unusual that the actual author received no compensation. Only in 1947, when a screen biography of Howard was being prepared, did Orlob demand credit for his song. He did not claim any damages, however, from Howard. The case was settled out of court with the credit for writing the song being split between Howard and Orlob; but Orlob was not given any money from the royalties.

From the depression to the post World War II days, Howard ran a successful night club, and occasionally did public appearances. He died on May 16, 1961 while doing a public benefit at the Lyric Opera House in Chicago, after finishing a chorus of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart."

The music of ragtime was also enhanced through the ef-

forts of L. Wolfe Gilbert who was born in Odessa, Russia, on August 31, 1886. Gilbert's family left Russia as a result of the anti-Jewish pogroms of Tsar Alexander III and came to America at that time. It did not take much time for Gilbert to be so Americanized that he was writing songs about places in America he had never seen. His most famous song was "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee" about a paddle wheel steamer. It didn't matter that he had never been on one, or that there weren't levees in Alabammy; what mattered was that the public liked the song. He wrote the lyrics for the song while watching a group of blackmen unloading freight from a Mississippi river boat in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After completing the song, it was brought to Al Jolson by a song plugger working for the Mills publishing house. Jolson introduced it into his weekly Sunday evening concerts and helped make it a multi-million seller. A second song for which Gilbert is justly remembered is "Lucky Lindy." Gilbert's success was so great that he quickly opened a publishing house of his own.[64]

One can hardly talk about ragtime without mentioning the most famous of the so-called ragtime songs; even though it really wasn't. The public considered it so, and Irving Berlin did not disagree. It was "Alexander's Ragtime Band" that truly helped make ragtime the primary song style on Tin Pan Alley. As was said earlier, however, it is not really a ragtime song at all. Except for one phrase it lacks the syncopation required for a true ragtime piece; it is closer to a march. The song nevertheless made Berlin the "ragtime king."

Berlin exhibited his interest in ragtime as early as 1909 when he wrote the song "That Mesmerizing Mendelsohn Tune" which was a ragtime version of Mendelsohn's "Spring Song."[65] In 1910 Berlin wrote "Yiddle on Your Fiddle Play Some Ragtime" followed by "Violin Ragtime" which were incorporated into the act of an unknown performer named Eddie Cantor. "Alexander's Ragtime Band" was written in 1911 and made Berlin the dominant force in American music he was to be for the next fifty years. Needless to say, his story will be presented in a later section. The ragtime years culminated in Berlin's writing of a ragtime production, "Watch Your Step," which was billed as a "syncopated musical." It opened on December 8, 1914 at the New Amsterdam theatre. After the success of "Alexander's Ragtime Band" Berlin went into the publishing business as a partner of Waterson and Snyder who had been his original publishers. It was the beginning of a fantastic business relationship and creative collaboration. By 1919, though, Berlin had become too big and he left the partners opening his own company. After all, he had one of the most valuable collections of songs on Tin Pan Alley, the works of Irving Berlin.

CHAPTER FOUR: 1910-1920

> Jerome Kern and I were one time contemplating writing a musical version of Donn Byrne's "Messer Marco Polo." Discussing the general problems of adaptation, I confronted Jerry with what I considered to be a serious question about the score. I said, "Here is a story laid in China about an Italian and told by an Irishman. What kind of music are you going to write?" Jerry answered, "It'll be good Jewish music."[66]

The era between the two World Wars was the golden age of music in America. Many talented songwriters and lyricists turned out hundreds of popular and brilliant songs which came from America but soon spread over the entire world. To mention their names would be to illustrate a fact already emphasized. George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Oscar Hammerstein, Richard Rodgers, Jerome Kern, Harry Warren; each had one aspect in common other than creative brilliance: all were Jews. In the history of the popular music world, in each period of time there was one group which dominated events. For the years 1910 through 1940 that group was the Jews. Jews played a small part in the popular music world before the twentieth century probably because of their small numbers, but the problems in Russia and Europe at the turn of the century guaranteed Jewish immigration to America. By 1910 there were about a million Jews in New York City alone. These new immigrants saw the theatre as a way to become Americanized. The theatre was a school as well as entertainment.[67] Many

of these immigrants were poorly schooled academically, but were trained as far as a skill was concerned. Although they may have encountered less anti-semitism than they did in Europe, still it existed. Therefore these immigrants went into trades and fields where Jews had already joined. The music and entertainment industries were two major examples.

They anglicized their names; Israel Baline became Irving Berlin, Billy Rosenberg became Billy Rose, Asa Yoelson became Al Jolson. Harry Jolson wrote, "As Asa and Herschel we were Jew Boys, as Al and Harry we were Americans."[69] More than becoming Americanized, these Jews formed the music to suit themselves. Popular songs were soaked in the wailing of the synagogue style. The Yiddish singing style with the cry in the voice and the heart on the sleeve was typified by Al Jolson, Norah Bayes, Sophie Tucker. These were vaudeville stars who made the Tin Pan Alley songs into hits. They fused Yiddishisms into all-Americanisms. "My Mammy" was a Yiddishe Momma as well as American as apple pie.[68]

The vaudeville circuit by 1910 already 2000 strong, was largely dominated by Jews; the Shubert brothers Sam, Lee, and Jake were the sons of a Lithuanian peddlar named David Szemanski who came to America in the 1880's.[69] The nightclub business was invented by a Jew. Jack Levy in 1907 induced several restaurants at which he was a patron to accept singers to be entertainment during eating hours. It became a new place for songs to be heard, and it became another place where Jews played important roles.[70] Marcus Loewe,

Adolph Zukor, Martin Beck who founded the Orpheum circuit and whose real name was Morris Meyerfeld[71] all were founders of the Hollywood movie industry as well. They were joined by Louis B. Mayer, Samuel Goldwyn, the Selznicks, William Fox, and the Warner brothers. Irving Howe described them in this way:

> Often vulgar, crude and overbearing, they were brilliantly attuned to the needs of their business; they commanded and used to the full a profound instinct for the common denominator of taste; and they left a deep imprint on American popular culture. Trusting their own minds and hearts, shrewd enought not to pay too much attention to the talented or cultivated men they hired, the movie moguls knew when to appeal to sentiment, which twirl of fantasy, which touch of violence, which innuendo of sexuality, would grasp the native American audiences. It was something of a miracle and a joke.[72]

Why did the Jews dominate the entertainment industries? First, in part, it can be attributed to talent. Another factor was that Jews already were in the business which made it easier for other Jews to enter; anti-semitism was not so difficult a problem. Irving Howe said it this way:

> Just as blacks would later turn to baseball and basketball knowing that there at least their skin color counted less than their skills, so in the early 1900's Jews broke into vaudeville because here too people asked not, who are you? but what can you do? It was a roughneck sort of egalitarianism, with little concern for those who might go under, but at best it gave the people a chance to show their gifts.[73]

No matter how one views the song industry in America, the Jews cannot be left out. Songwriters, lyricists, performers and publishers of songs certainly were dominated by American Jews. They contributed a distinct Jewish flavor and style that was unique which added much to the flavor of earlier popular songs. As early as 1903 performers were taking the songs of the day and adding Yiddish dialect to them.[74] Irving Berlin would ably represent all these new comers, but there were many others as well. Jerome Kern, Berlin's contemporary, will also receive longer treatment in a later chapter. Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Harold Arlen, Oscar Hammerstein, many others continued this trend and contributed to the glory that is Tin Pan Alley. Alexander Woolcoot, in summing up the contribution of Berlin and other Jews to American music, said it this way: "And if anyone, on hearing Jerome Kern say that Irving Berlin IS American music, is then so fatuous as to object on the ground that he was born in Russia, it might be pointed out that if the musical interpreter of American civilization came over in the foul hold of a ship, so did American civilization."[75]

Not quite so high class, but just as important musically, was the contribution of the Jews to burlesque. This burlesque should not be confused with the type mentioned earlier involved with the minstrels, or the types which starred Weber and Fields or earlier Harrigan and Hart. This was the burlesque which showcased beautiful females in various states of undress involved with dance and fancy sets. From this type

of entertainment came the striptease and off-color shows which have come to be known as burlesque today.

By the earliest part of the 1900's the formats of burlesque had been set. These included "blackouts" which were quick skits followed by a short period of darkness in which to change the scenes, then "German" or "Jewish" comedians, followed with slapstick, dancing and lots of girls. Al Shean of Gallagher and Shean got his start in burlesque (he was the uncle of the Marx brothers), Eddie Cantor received the first public attention by performing in an amateur night which became traditional in burlesque. Sophie Tucker changed from being a "coon caller" in blackface to whiteface with the advent of burlesque. In 1910, Fanny Brice, who also had been billed a coon singer, asked Irving Berlin to provide some specialty material for her. She tells the story, "Irving took me in the back room and he played 'Sadie Salome' . . . a Jewish comedy song . . . So, of course, Irving sang 'Sadie Salome' with a Jewish accent. I didn't even understand Jewish, couldn't speak a work of it. But I thought, if that's the way Irving sings, that's the way I'll sing it. Well, I came out and did 'Sadie Salome' for the first time ever doing a Jewish accent. And that starched sailor suit is killing me. And it's gathering you know where, and I'm trying to squirm it away, and singing and smiling, and the audience is loving it. They think it's an act I'm doing, so as long as they're laughing I keep it up. They start to throw roses at me."[76] That song changed Fanny Brice from a balladeer to a

comedienne, as well as the outstanding interpreter of Yiddish comedy songs. As a result of this performance, Florenz Ziegfeld signed her for the Follies of 1910.

Although not as important as in other genres of show business, the songs which found their place in burlesque received great exposure. 'To place a song in a burlesque show was the infallible method of establishing a hit and insuring great profits. The runs were long and by the time one show after another presented a song, the whole country knew the tune by heart."[77]

Florenz Ziegfeld played an enormous role in the history of burlesque and its higher class sister, the Broadway revue. The more successful he became, the less popular he seemed to be. 'To know him was to dislike him" became the music world's pet phrase when describing Ziegfeld.[78] There is a question as to Ziegfeld's religion, with several sources claiming him as Jewish and others denying it; there is no question that his first wife was Jewish and that Ziegfeld's efforts provided the beginning for many Jewish talents. For that reason if no other, he is included here.

Born on the twenty-first of March, 1868, in Chicago, Ziegfeld was the son of Dr. Florenz Ziegfeld, president and founder of the Chicago Musical College which he had begun the year before his son's birth. Ziegfeld Senior's contemporary, George Ade Davis, referred to the music professor as 'One of the most picturesque figures in the history of musical development in America, a pioneer who has lived to see

the successful combination of his labors, to watch the growth, the budding and the blossoming of musical development and even to see the matured and ripened fruit as well. His autograph across the pages of musical history will never be defaced."[79]

Florenz the younger began his impresario career in the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition where he assisted his father in importing acts for the main show. His first efforts were enormous disasters costing him his job; however, he regained his position as a result of an act he signed called "Sandow the Great" who was a handsome young muscle-builder able to lift automobiles, houses, and withstand three elephants walking across his chest. The major public relation coup was Ziegfeld's invitation of Mrs. Potter Palmer, Chicago socialite and grand dame to visit Sandow after the show to inspect his musculature. The news of her favorable reaction created a sensation which provided Ziegfeld with a ten times improved box office. His next achievement was the signing of the Gallic idol, Anna Held, a Polish Jew by birth, who was the quintessence of French spice and personality. Her great success in American theatre and music included a song which she wrote for her show The Parisian Model (1906) called "It's Delightful to be Married." She was married to her producer, Florenz Ziegfeld. When publicity was waning, Ziegfeld invented the story that Miss Held took daily milk baths to improve her beauty and skin tone. Immediately dairies noted a high growth in milk sales and the publicity carried both Miss Held and Mr.

Ziegfeld to great notoriety with the public.

Using the Follies Bergere as his model and his French wife as the impetus, Ziegfeld decided to create an American follies equal in quality to the famous French version. In 1907 he achieved this dream and with three exceptions, a Ziegfeld Follies would brighten the stage of New York for the next twenty-five years. He desired to make the "Follies girls" synonymous with taste and beauty, but he did not skimp on the sets, costumes or talent. Ed Wynn, W. C. Fields, Fanny Brice as has been mentioned, Harry Ruby, Irving Berlin, Leo Edwards, Eddie Cantor, etc., all received a push for their respective careers which no one else could have given. Such songs as "My Blue Heaven," "A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody" (Irving Berlin) which became the Follies theme song, "Peg O' My Heart" "Mr. Gallagher - Mr. Shean" all were Follies numbers. Jerome Kern, Rudolf Friml, Gus Edwards, Louis A. Hirsch, Jean Schwartz, were among the men who wrote for Ziegfeld.

Even then, when something was popular, there were always those who would borrow on the success and create their own. Just as was said in the directions to write commercial popular music, "one should fashion a song around a previous hit; to use the model as a take off. Then the chances would be that you'll finish up with something different enough to be choice, but not avant garde."[80] So Ziegfeld provided the model for the theatre-music world's most successful entrepreneurs, the brothers Shubert. Levi, Sam, and Jacob, who became Lee, Sam, and J.J., came from the most poverty stricken

of backgrounds. Their father, David Szemanski, was a peddlar from Lithuania who fled his hometown of Shervient to England and then to the United States.[81] Within a short time he earned enough money to bring his family of six children (Fanny, Sarah and Dorah were the other three) and his wife to America. The most difficult problem for David was his drinking problem; most of the profits from his peddling went to whiskey.[82]

Upon the family's arrival in New York, they were asked their names and David Szemanski from Shervient became David Shurbent. Apparently the script was hard to read so it was changed by a later official to Shurbart then to Shobart and finally to Shubert. The year was 1882 when nearly 15,000 Jews came from Russia to the United States; included were many whose biographies appear here.

The Shuberts individually were men of great intelligence, humorlessness and drive. Each handled a certain part of their operation. It was J.J. who was the producer-businessman, Lee was the producer-artist, and Sam became the international traveling real estate agent and talent scout. Although most of their productions were labeled the "Messrs. Shubert," it was largely the results of Lee's efforts which the audience viewed on stage. Fred and Adele Astaire began their careers in a Shubert show, the revue Over the Top with music by Sigmund Romberg. By 1912, the Shuberts opened their competition to Ziegfeld's Follies called the Passing Show. They attempted to hire away various Ziegfeld talents, includ-

ing Ed Wynn, the composers Hirsch and Schwartz as well as the aforementioned Sigmund Romberg. Ziegfeld eventually lost the competition, as did anyone who challenged the Shubert domination of musical theatre, when the brothers bought him out and began presenting The Shubert Ziegfeld Follies. By 1924, the Follies and Passing Show revues went out of business; the competition from the new musical comedies as well as other more modern and innovative revues took over the public's interest. By the late 1920's, the revue format passed from public favor.

The Shuberts became the most powerful force in the theatre music world in the first fifty years of the twentieth century. There was hardly a city in the country which did not sport a Shubert theatre; New York had more than six, Chicago, three. With their enormous booking power came their artistic power. By the beginning of World War I, virtually all the great theatrical musical talent in the United States was under Shubert control. Tin Pan Alley was the most famous Alley in New York; Shubert Alley was second.

Another theatrical opportunity for music was the "extravaganza" which has been mentioned earlier. The Shuberts contributed greatly to the extravaganzas when they built the Wintergarden Theatre in 1911. In the first production which opened the building, there was a Spanish ballet, then a Chinese opera; but what made the evening really historical was the third piece -- "La Belle Paree" written by a newcomer to the theatre, Jerome Kern. His story will be told later in this

thesis.

A further debut in "La Belle Paree" was Asa Yoelson, by then known as Al Jolson. He was born in Srednicke, Lithuania in 1886, the son of Moses Yoelson, a hazzan who later worked in New York then Washington, D. C.[83] Al began as a young man who sang along with the audience when Eddie Leonard sang, "Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider." With the resultant appreciative applause of the audience, Al had found his profession. By 1909 he was a head attraction of the "Lew Dockstader Minstrels" and then the next year at Hammerstein's Victoria in New York. Even at this young age, he was a polished performer. He would stop in the middle of the show in which he was playing, come downstage to ask the audience if they wouldn't rather hear some of his own favorite songs instead of those in the show and more often than not, they agreed. The newspapers noted this innovation as did the audiences, and his performances became very popular. This was made into a permanent attraction when Shubert's Wintergarden Theatre began Sunday afternoon concerts where Jolson could sing whatever songs he chose. Although originally a blackface performer, on those nights he would appear whiteface. During one of his performances in the Jean Schwartz musical The Honeymoon Express, Jolson was suffering from a painful ingrown toenail. To relieve the pain, Jolson went down on one knee and threw out his arms for balance. To the audience it appeared as if he was embracing the entire group and they loved it. This motion became a Jolson trademark.

Jolson wrote some of the songs he made famous, most notably "California -- Here I Come." He introduced such great songs as "Swanee", "Rock-A-Bye Your Baby with a Dixie Melody," 'Toot, Toot, Tootsie, Goodbye," and "April Showers." The man who was born to poverty and begging for nickels, died in 1950 leaving an estate of four million dollars.[84]

One of Jolson's favorite lyricists was the German-Jewish refugee, Gus Kahn. Born in Koblenz on November 6, 1886, Kahn came to the United States in 1891 where his family settled in Chicago. He began publishing specialty material in 1908 and wrote his most famous show in 1927 called Whoppee for Eddie Cantor. "Love Me or Leave Me" came from there; but Kahn was responsible for many other hits including 'Toot, Toot, Tootsie," "It Had to Be You," 'Yes, Sir, That's My Baby," and "Ain't We Got Fun."[85] Kahn wrote several of his songs with composer Walter Donaldson, the two most famous being "My Buddy" and "Nothing Could Be Finer than to be in Carolina in the Morning." The story is told that Kahn and Donaldson were attempting to write songs while in the Kahn living room. When Kahn's son, Donald, started yelling "dada, dada, dada," Kahn stomped into the room where the boy was playing a toy guitar. Kahn yelled to Donaldson "I'll stop him Walt, don't worry!" "No wait, Gus!" Donaldson then repeated the phrase the boy had played on the piano and it became the source for 'Carolina in the Morning."[86] It should be noted that son Donald became a well known songwriter in his own right.

Kahn was asked once why so many "songboys" wrote about

the South as he had with 'Carolina in the Morning." He said that the Southern places and state names lent themselves to rhyming, but more than that . . . 'Our song boys are of the North. Paradise is never where we are. The South has become our Never, never land, the symbol of the land where the lotus blossoms and dreams come true."[87]

If blossoms and lotus were unnatural to the surroundings of Broadway, so was the operetta. Conceived originally in Europe, this musical style had great success in America. Its original sources, ranging from Gilbert and Sullivan to Offenbach, invaded America, gaining musical success and sheet music sales. It was not long before so-called "Americans" created local versions of the European originals. Sigmund Romberg, mentioned earlier, was the greatest of this genre's composers, but there were others. Emmerich Kalman, a Jew who was born in Siofok, Hungary, in 1882, blended his native Hungarian music with the grace of the Viennese operetta. His best works in America fused the classical style with that of jazz; The Duchess of Chicago and The Violets of Montmart were the most successful. His original American effort was Parisian Love, which opened at the Shulman and Goldberg Public Theatre in New York, The show played only Friday evenings, Saturday and Sunday matinees and evenings. This was enough to make a profit and Kalman's reputation.[88]

Another who began in operetta, but went into regular Tin Pan Alley popular song writing, was Gustave Kerker who was born in Herford, Westphalia, Germany, on February 28, 1857.

His family came over in 1867 to Louisville, Kentucky, where Kerker began writing a few years later. His most famous songs were "Forty Miles from Schenectady to Troy," "The Belle of New York," and "The Telephone Girl." He died in New York on June 29, 1923.

By the 1930's operetta had become passe. The Broadway musical had taken its place. The greatest operetta composer, Romberg, died in 1950, the last of the operetta composers in America.

Unlike the decade immediately before it, the second decade of the twentieth century was much faster. The auto was already the established means of locomotion, motion pictures began to compete with the shows people could see on stage. Ragtime, which had already affected melody as well as rhythm as a syncopation device, suddenly created a new musical experiment, jazz.[89] Harry Von Tilzer wrote "I'll Lend you Everything I've Got Except My Wife (And I'll Make You A Present of Her)." Jean Schwartz and Bert Kalmar continued the Hawaiian craze by writing "Hello Hawaii, How Are You." Suddenly any oriental or foreign sounding songs became the hits. "Siam," "Bom Bombay," Rudolph Friml's "Allah's Holiday" were the songs of 1915. All had one thing in common, they were danceable. For 1910-1920 was the time in which America went dance mad. Before, the largest percentage of songs were waltzes; the crooners accented and lengthened songs so that they became difficult to dance to. Songs had many choruses and several verses because they had to tell a story. By the

mid-decade, though, if you couldn't dance to them, they couldn't achieve any success. The year 1911 even saw the first 'Castle Walk" wedding named after the two greatest dance partners in America, Irene and Vernon Castle. It all took place at the wedding of an Eizendrath to a Stein![90]

Sophistication was in, the natural life was out. There were always a few jeers at the hicks; New Yorker-Russian Irving Berlin wrote about "Farmer Brown raising the dickens, in a cabaret far from cows and chickens . . . This is the Life!" (1914). Even the stately dances of the 1880's attended by high society returned as a source of musical inspiration; "At the Ragtime Ball," "At the Old Maids' Ball," even "At the Yiddish Society Ball."[91] Sadly enough, the idyllic simplicity and classic sophistication of those years did not last, because political events got in the way. Tin Pan Alley responded as always.

* * * * *

With the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria by a Serbian nationalist in Sarajevo, war broke out between Austria and Serbia. It didn't take long for Germany, England, France and Russia to be drawn into it; and with their involvement came a change in the music of Tin Pan Alley. Firstly came a spate of patriotic songs such as Harry Von Tilzer's "Under the American Flag" or Edgar Leslie and Archie Gottler's "America, I Love You."

Tin Pan Alley was in a bit of a quandary. There was an enormous need for music, yet in the desire to 'Make the World

Safe for Democracy" there were many on the Alley who were convinced that the Central Powers, German, Hungary and Austria, would be the victors. Furthermore they recognized that the Germans were favored by much of America. Germans were perceived as a "comfy people," who made the comforts of life like beer, hot dogs, and hamburgers. They were friendly, fat comics and could even make love. Such an "all-American" as Irving Berlin wrote in 1914 "Oh, How that German Could Love."[92]

Still others were distinctly pacifist. "I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier" and "Our Hats Off to You, Mr. President" (which praised President Wilson for his campaign promise to keep America out of war) served as musical outlets for that political position. In opposition to the pacifists were those more martial songs. Several of these parodied songs from the above list. "I Did Not Raise My Boy To Be A Coward" and "I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier, I'll Send My Daughter To Be A Nurse" are good examples.

April 2, 1917 saw President Wilson, who had vowed to keep us out of war, ask a cheering Congress for a declaration of war against the Germans. He recognized the value of songs in winning the war; the War Industries Board allowed supplies of paper to be provided for the music publishers. In an economic move, however, the tall sheets on which music had been printed were shrunk with the art work removed and replaced by war slogans. "Eat more fish, cheese, eggs and poultry. Save beef, pork and mutton for our fighters."[93]

It is interesting and not surprising that the songs of the war years had many of the same themes as before the war, merely transposed to a different setting. The ballad songs of separation were the most popular. Lew Brown and Albert Von Tilzer wrote "I May Be Gone for a Long Time" and "Au Revoir but not Goodbye, Soldier Boy." "Hello Central, Give Me No Man's Land" by Lewis, Young and Jerome was about a young child calling her daddy who is stationed overseas. If there is a distinct similarity to the C. K. Harris song entitled "Hello Central, Give Me Heaven" it was intentional. The composers and lyricists intended to remind the listener of that already popular song.

Of course there were specialty numbers from the war, songs of humor and lightness. The musical Sinbad, from which George Gershwin and Irving Caesar's "Swanee" came as well as "Hello Central, Give Me No Man's Land," also included "How'd You Like to be My Daddy" by Sam Lewis, Joe Young, and Ted Snyder.

Sam Lewis was born in New York on October 25, 1885, where he became a runner for a brokerage house and at night sang in cafés. Soon he turned to writing his own material as well as songs for "Lew Dockstader's Minstrels" and "Van and Schenck." His partner, Joe Young, was born in New York on July 4, 1889. He began his professional career as a card boy, the one who placed name cards for different acts on the marquee, for a vaudeville house. He graduated to become a song plugger for several publishing houses. He died in 1939. Some of the songs songs they wrote together rank among the standards of

Tin Pan Alley including "Rock-A-Bye Your Baby With A Dixie Melody," "Five Foot Two, Eyes Of Blue," 'How You Gonna Keep 'Em Down On The Farm," 'My Mammy" (with Al Jolson), "Dinah," and "I'm Sitting On Top Of The World."

Ted Snyder, the third of this group, was born in Freeport, Illinois, on August 15, 1881. He began as a cafe pianist before he opened his own publishing house in 1908. Later he merged with Irving Berlin's publishing house and retired to California to run a nightclub. His most famous songs were "The Shiek Of Araby" which he wrote with Billy Rose in honor of Rudolph Valentino and "Who's Sorry Now?"

Harry Von Tilzer wrote another comedy type song with "Buy A Liberty Bond For The Baby," but the master of the comedy song was Irving Berlin. 'They Were All Out Of Step Except Jim," "Oh How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning," and "I'm Gonna Pin My Medal On The Girl I Left Behind" were all songs from Berlin's primary contribution to the musical war effort, the show Yip Yip Yaphank. Berlin's music was even parodied by some of his competitors with a song like "When Alexander Takes His Ragtime Band To France," which was written by Cliff Hess and Edgar Leslie in 1918. Edgar Leslie wrote another song, one of the most popular of the war years, called "For Me And My Gal" along with E. Ray Goetz, Irving Berlin's brother-in-law.

The lyrics to "When Alexander Takes His Ragtime Band To France"are worthy of inclusion here:

When Alexander takes his ragtime band to France,
He'll capture every Hun, and take them one by one.
Those ragtime tunes will put the Germans in a trance;
They'll throw their guns away, Hip Hooray,
and start right in to dance.

They'll get so excited they'll come over the top,
Two step back to Berlin with a skip and a hop.
Old Hindenburg will know he has no chance,
('I haff nein Chaaance!')
When Alexander takes his ragtime band to France.[94]

Leo Feist Inc. was the chief publisher of war songs, and when the war was almost over he began to look for another enemy beside the Kaiser and the Germans. He chose the so-called enemy within the country. Feist songs encouraged citizens to "Knock the bull out of the Bolsheviksi. With anarchy and bloodshed, our freedom's at stake, so let's wipe out each cause of it and trample on the snake."

Feist was not the only composer-publishing house which planned for the aftermath of the war; Jack Yellen and George Meyer wrote a series of songs dedicated to the return of "the boys." "Everytime he looks at me, he makes me feel so unnecessary. Oh, just think of it Clarice, he spent two months in Paris, and Oh, oh, Johnny's in town." It soon became clear that the public wanted no more war songs or righteous morality songs; the twenties were coming and with them the "normalcy" of Warren Harding. But not before Billy Rose wrote a stirring epitaph to the soldiers of the war.

Rose was born William Rosenberg in the Lower East Side

of New York,[95] on September 6, 1899. He began his career as a champion stenographer, becoming chief of the stenographic department for the War Industries Board. His first song, "Barney Google," was an enormous hit which allowed him to produce and write for others as well as himself. His songs included "That Old Gang Of Mine," "It's Only A Paper Moon," "Me And My Shadow" which he supposedly wrote with Al Jolson (in truth Jolson got credit because he had successfully plugged the song and it was a legal way to pay him off for his efforts) and "I Found A Million Dollar Baby In A Five And Ten Cent Store." After becoming a producer, critic and newspaper columnist, Rose went into the nightclub business. He died in 1966.

It is fitting to conclude this section dealing with World War I and its music with Rose's lyrics. This type of song sounded the death knell for the one finger composers of early Tin Pan Alley. Soon they were replaced by more creative composers and lyricists who were better versed in classical formal music and words. It was not a coincidence that Romberg, Kern, Gershwin, and Rodgers were thorough musicians as well as tune men.[96] Their time was to come.

There's a grave near the White House
Where the unknown soldier lies,
And the flowers there are sprinkled
With the tears of mothers' eyes.

I stood there not so long ago
With roses for the grave
When suddenly I though I heard
A voice speak from the grave.

'I am the Unknown Soldier,'
The spirit voice began,
'And I think I've got a right
To ask some questions, man to man.

'Are my buddies taken care of?
Was their victory so sweet?
Is that big reward you promised
Selling pencils in the street?

'And that baby that sang
"Hello Central, Give Me No Man's Land,"
Can they replace her daddy
With a military band?

'I wonder if the profiteers
Have satisfied their greed?
I wonder if the soldier's mother
Ever is in need.

'I wonder if the kings
Who planned it all are satisfied?
They played their game of checkers
And eleven million died!

'I am the Unknown Soldier
And maybe I died in vain,
But if I were alive and my country called
I'D DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN!'[97]

CHAPTER FIVE: 1920-1940

The War to end all wars was over and Americans wanted no more songs which would depress them or remind them of the years they had just suffered through. The warmth, sentimentality and remembrance of things past suddenly became a mad desire to do anything, absolutely anything, that was new. To live for today was the theme of the decade known as "the roaring twenties." Morality, at least the morality which had been the norm in the first decade of the twentieth century, was gone, and in its place were the flappers and the so-called "flaming youth." Love was free, and as the greatest of the non-Jewish composer-lyricists, Cole Porter, said in 1934, "Anything Goes." Hedonism was the way; fads came and went, there seemed to be no end to the prosperity people were enjoying. Movies became an entertainment norm and its stars became the gods and goddesses of the day.

With all these drastic changes, as it always seemed to, Tin Pan Alley changed as well. The first big change was the introduction of the word "jazz." It was not an immediate or overnight phenomenon, anymore than ragtime had been, rather jazz gradually substituted for ragtime. It merely carried on the distortions of ragtime a little bit further.[98] For the sake of this thesis, the man who would personify jazz was George Gershwin. His contributions truly made jazz a popular music form with serious classical underpinnings. By 1922 Gershwin was recognized as a musical and jazz genius. Although

a more complete biography of Gershwin will appear later, one story is appropriate here. On November 1, 1923, at a concert in the Aeolian Hall in New York, concert singer Eva Gauthier performed a concert of classical music by Bellini, Byrd and Purcell as well as more modern composers such as Hindemith and Schoenberg. In addition, she included the music of some modern American popular song masters including Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern and three songs by George Gershwin accompanied by Gershwin himself.

Deems Taylor writing in the "New York World" said, "The jazz numbers stood up amazingly well, not only as entertainment but as music . . . . Young Mr. Gershwin began to do mysterious and fascinating rhythmic and contrapuntal stunts with the accompaniment."[99] Gershwin continued to write jazz for the theatre when he wrote the 1922 George White Scandals. Included in this score was a black opera entitled Blue Monday. The opera never appeared after the first night, for White feared it was too depressing for the audience, but the seeds were planted for Gershwin's masterpiece, Porgy and Bess.

The beginnings of jazz weren't the only changes in the music industry with the onset of the 1920's. For the music world was spreading out; a geographic place called Tin Pan Alley no longer existed. Just as the Witmarks had moved their quarters when things became too crowded, so the music publishers spread out, going into the higher numbered streets around Broadway. The theatre district was moving into the neighborhood it inhabits today, between 42nd and 50th Streets

and Broadway and with this came the moving of the publishing houses. Irving Berlin had just opened his own publishing firm after splitting up with Waterson and Snyder in 1919, and he transferred his firm to the Strand Building in the west 40's. Remick's and Feist's moved to West 40th Street, Harms was on West 45th, and Charles K. Harris moved to West 47th. Many of the smaller publishers found space in the Brill Building, 1619 Broadway. Why the move to follow the theatres? It is an easy question to answer. By the middle 1920's, the Broadway show had become the prime source for Tin Pan Alley songs. Vaudeville was in its last few years, totally disappearing by the early 1930's and even the revue was showing signs of change, as was noted in the previous chapter.[100]

If a song could be interpolated into a hit show, it too would become a hit; if a composer had the good fortune to write a hit show, the sheet music sales would be guaranteed. Often times, though, the reverse was true. A popular song could save an otherwise doomed Broadway show.

Several song writers made their debut in the early years of the '20's; each had learned the trade by working in the publishing business as had so many before them. Sammy Fain, who was born in New York on June 17, 1902, began as a song plugger and pianist for the Jack Mills publishing house. Soon afterwards he toured the vaudeville circuit and went into radio entertaining. His first song was written in 1925 entitled "Nobody Knows What A Red-Headed Mama Can Do." In 1927 Fain met Irving Kahal who had been born in Houtzdale, Pennsylvania,

on March 5, 1903. Kahal began songwriting at the same age as Fain, eighteen. When they met, Kahal was a vaudeville singer who had performed with the Gus Edwards Minstrels. Together they wrote several standards including "Let A Smile Be Your Umbrella," "Wedding Bells Are Breaking Up That Old Gang Of Mine," and "I'll Be Seeing You." Together they had also written one of the most successful musical comedies in the 1930's, Hellzapoppin, with Olsen and Johnson. Their other shows included Sons O'Fun and Boys and Girls Together.

Con Conrad had been born in New York's Lower East Side as Konrad A. Dobert on June 18, 1891. By age sixteen Conrad had become a seasoned vaudeville performer leaving the footlights for the dingier offices of Tin Pan Alley. He was a natural piano player who on the side also entertained at silent movie houses. His first song was "Down In New Orleans" which was interpolated into the Ziegfield Follies of 1912. After its success, he formed a publishing company with Sam Waterson (who later became Berlin's partner), which published his next several songs.

In 1920, Conrad enjoyed a major success with the publication of his song "Margie" named for Eddie Cantor's daughter. Cantor continued Jolson's method of interpolating songs into shows when he used the Conrad song in a Winter Garden concert. Other Conrad hits included "Ma, He's Makin' Eyes At Me," "Barney Google," and "Memory Lane."

The 1920's were times filled with almost hysterical enjoyment and silliness; the music reflected these feelings.

Gus Kahn wrote of this when he wrote "Ain't We Got Fun" and "Carolina In The Morning" or Lewis and Young's song "I'm Sitting On Top Of The World" which was made famous by Al Jolson. It was a difficult time for the less flexible writers of Tin Pan Alley for the public desired certain types of songs.[101] Nonsense songs, songs about places exotic or otherwise, even domestic political issues were the subjects of the day. The comic strip "Barney Google" inspired two great songs; one already mentioned was "Barney Google" with the music written by Sammy Fain. The lyrics were supplied by Billy Rose. Among other Rose hits were "Come On, Spark Plug" (who was Barney Google's horse) and "That Old Gang Of Mine," all written in 1923.

Political songs came back into popularity as they had been in the late nineteenth century. In 1920 Harry von Tilzer and William Jerome wrote "If I Meet The Guy Who Made This Country Dry" and Irving Berlin composed "I'll See You In Cuba," both of which dealt with the nation's animosity towards prohibition. Imagine the returning troops' surprise and anger when they came back to find that the wine to which they had become accustomed in Europe was no longer available. Canada and Cuba became very popular places! Gus Kahn wrote very movingly about the returning boys as well as those who did not return in his song "My Buddy." The bitterness and sorrow felt by many in this country helped propel this song to national prominence.

Caruso's death in 1921 fostered a real triumph of bathos

when the song "They Needed A Songbird In Heaven, So God Took Caruso Away" was written by the non-Jewish team of George Walter Brown, George A. Little, and Jack Stanley. As in Charles K. Harris' day, crying was still a popular emotion.[102] Irving Berlin fostered emotional songs, as always, when he wrote in 1921 "All By Myself" and "Say It With Music." Rodgers and Hart wrote of love in "Poor Little Ritz Girl" as did Vincent Youmans and a young man known as Arthur Francis with "Two Little Girls In Blue." Arthur Francis had a more famous name when he wasn't writing lyrics. His given name was Ira Gershwin.

Although Rodgers and Hart will not have a separate section in this thesis, it is interesting to note here their choice of a team name. It was far more common for the name of the composer to be listed second in a team name: Gilbert and Sullivan, Lerner and Loewe, Hammerstein and Kern, Fields and McHugh; in each case the lyricist came first. Rodgers would not have it that way. Even when he wrote with Oscar Hammerstein, Rodgers demanded to be billed first. Already by 1925, Rodgers and Hart were recognized as the Gilbert and Sullivan of America.

By far the most famous and outlandish song of the 1920's was "Yes, We Have No Bananas" with the lyrics written by Irving Cohen and Frank Silver in 1923. The story of the title goes as follows: it seems that Silver and Cohen overheard a Greek fruit seller say that line to a customer. However, another story was spread that "yes, we have no bananas" was

a password from the Spanish American War and was used in the Philippines! Still another "midrash" has the title coming from a comic strip character in the newspaper. As to the music, we know the answer. It was the most successful song ever written by a committee! Apparently the entire staff of Shapiro and Bernstein publishers got together to write the song as a joke. These men included Hanley and McDonald who had written "Indiana" and "Trail Of The Lonesome Pine," Lew Brown who later joined with DeSylva and Henderson to write "The Best Things In Life Are Free" and "Button Up Your Overcoat," and finally Shapiro and Bernstein themselves.

The song they came up with contained snippets of various songs each contributed by the several composers. These included "Hallelujah Chorus" from The Messiah by Handel, "My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean," "An Old Fashioned Garden," "The Bohemian Girl," "I Dreamt That I Dwelt In Marble Halls," and finally "Aunt Dinah's Quilting Party." It was introduced in a restaurant but really did not become a hit until Eddie Cantor interpolated it into one of his shows. The audience reaction was enormous and the song became a permanent addition to Cantor's songs.

For Jews, it was a good time to be in the music business as far as working on Tin Pan Alley, but when you got out on the road, things were much more difficult. Even so great a theatre personage as George M. Cohan, the great "Yankee Doodle Boy" and Irish Catholic was barred from a hotel because he was presumed to be Jewish.[103] The Claridge Hotel of New

York City's management offered a five dollar bill to any Jew who would willingly leave the hotel after registration. This action caused the hotel's closing. Even the image of the Jew in the songs of the day wasn't terribly flattering. Jews were presented as money grubbing, hand rubbing old men who wore crepe hair and ran pawn shops. Sadly the Jews of Tin Pan Alley continued this stereotype. A popular song mentioned earlier in this thesis, "The Yiddishe Society Ball," typified the rather anti-Jewish representation of the period. "Abie Stein orders some wine when he knows he is broke and when the waiter brings it, Stein says, 'Can't you take a joke?' Louie Fink who thinks he's smart, says, 'Bring me some more "a la carte" and all the guests go around the hall 'trottin' for nothing."[104]

But there were big changes on Tin Pan Alley for a new form of entertainment had begun sweeping the country, the movies. Soon movie companies began purchasing the great publishing houses; for example, Warner Brothers purchased Remick and Company and received along with all the songs which Remick had published, all the staff composers as well. Harry Warren and Al Dubin went along in the deal and provided several of Warner's greatest movie musicals including the songs "42nd Street" and "I Only Have Eyes For You." At the same time that Tin Pan Alley was spreading out around the theatre district of New York, much of the Tin Pan Alley talent went out west to California. Talkies had revolutionized the movie industry.[105] But it didn't come quite so quickly. First there had been the silent movies which had benefitted from Tin Pan Alley tune-

smiths. With no sound to take up the audiences' attention, songs were needed to provide mood music and underscoring. Even so great a musical talent as Victor Herbert provided music for the "flickers." At times the musical score was more memorable than the movie itself. One such example was D. W. Griffith's sequel to his masterpiece Birth of a Nation entitled The Fall of a Nation. A music critic in "Musical America" wrote, "It is not only synchronized with the picture but its rhythms are in absolute accord with the tempo of the action. Mr. Herbert's stimulating score clearly indicated the marked advance that music is making in the domain of photoplay and should prove encouraging to composers who have not yet tried their hand at this type of work."[106]

Song pluggers from Tin Pan Alley recognized that the movies represented an as yet untried field for selling their songs; song slides, amateur nights, any thing which could sell songs was attempted. The most successful song from a movie in the twenties was written by L. Wolfe Gilbert. It was called "Ramona" and was composed in 1927. Sung by Dolores Del Rio, the star and title character of the film, she was accompanied by Paul Whiteman's orchestra. A recording of the title song sold over two million records. With this song came the changes which altered the popular music industry forever.

It will not be the place of this thesis to develop the effect of music in the film industry except to delineate several of the earlier presented composers who moved to the screen as well. Al Jolson became the first to benefit from

the screen's conversion to sound with his historical movie The Jazz Singer, a film version from the Broadway play by Samson Raphaelson. The story is by now famous; a young man gives up his father's dream of his becoming a cantor in the synagogue by instead choosing a career as a jazz singer. On the evening of Yom Kippur, when the elderly chazan is lying on his death bed, the wayward son returns to chant Kol Nidrei as the picture ends. It was an enormous success and proved with little doubt that sound films were to be a permanent entertainment feature. The Jazz Singer grossed over three million dollars, an unheard of sum in those days. Within two years, in 1929, came the first composer and lyricist team who wrote just for the movies. Irving Thalberg, the director of production at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, decided to have original music for his film, The Broadway Melody. To write the lyrics, he chose Arthur Freed.

Freed was born Arthur Grossman in Charleston, South Carolina, on September 9, 1894. He began his education at the best private school in America, the Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. After being a piano demonstrator for a Chicago music house, he became a song writer. This resulted in his association with the Gus Edwards revues and the Marx brothers who were touring around the country in a vaudeville show accompanied by their mother, Minnie. With Louis Silver he wrote songs and shows for New York restaurants continuing this activity in World War I. After the war, they continued this activity, going to Seattle and then Los Angeles to manage a theatre. It was in this position that Freed began writing his

own material for shows which he himself produced.

Freed went on to become a lyricist, author and motion picture producer of great fame and repute. Arthur Freed's name generally meant a class production with great attention to style.[107] His song lyrics exhibited the same characteristics. These included "You Were Meant For Me," "Singing In The Rain," and "You Are My Lucky Star." Eventually Freed became the producer directly in charge of all M.G.M. movie musicals.[108]

Sigmund Romberg, the Gershwins, Rodgers and Hart, Jerome Kern, even Maurice Ravel came to Hollywood to write for the movies. Gus Kahn, Howard Dietz and Leo Robin each moved from the stage to the screen. By 1929, even the king of Tin Pan Alley travelled westward, Irving Berlin. His influence was enormous; he contributed several of the greatest hits ever recorded for a film including "Cheek To Cheek," "I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm," "White Christmas," "The Easter Parade," and "The Night Is Filled With Music," His talent was recognized in the first musical movie which featured the music of only one composer, Alexander's Ragtime Band. All the great Berlin hits from the stage were included, which allowed an entirely new group of people to see, listen and enjoy them.

George and Ira Gershwin came to Hollywood in 1930, achieved little success and returned to New York. They came back two years later and settled down. While in Hollywood, at the insistence of their old friend, Fred Astaire, they were hired to write several musicals; these songs rank among the finest

written by the pair: "They Can't Take That Away from Me," "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," "A Foggy Day in London Town," "Love Walked Right In," and lastly, "Our Love Is Here to Stay." George Gershwin died while working on his fourth movie.

A composer who wrote primarily for the movies is Harold Arlen. Born in Buffalo, New York, on February 15, 1905, with the name Hyman Arluck, he was the son of a cantor. Arlen reached the top of the music business with movies like The Wizard of Oz and Cabin in the Sky or musicals such as Bloomer Girl and St. Louis Woman. His partner and lyricist, E. Y. "Yip" Harburg, was equally successful in Hollywood and on Broadway.

Harburg was born in New York City on April 8, 1898, and was educated in the public school system. After college he began by writing poetry for popular magazines and edited the City College of New York's college magazine. After this, Harburg travelled to South America as an agent for a firm that went bankrupt soon after his arrival. He held down several more jobs in South America and returned to America in 1921 where he opened an electrical supply company. Because it finally failed during the Depression, Harburg left business for the lyric writing world. He wrote, "I had my fill of this dreamy abstract thing called business and I decided to face reality by writing lyrics."[109] Write lyrics he certainly did; first for the stage he wrote several revues and shows including Finian's Rainbow, Bloomer Girl, Life Begins at 8:40, and Flahooley. His greatest success was in the movies where he

wrote the lyrics and/or screenplays for The Wizard of Oz, Cabin In The Sky, and Gold Diggers of 1936. Among his numerous great song hits were "April In Paris," "Brother Can You Spare A Dime?," "Old Devil Moon," and "How Are Things In Glocca Morra?" His career also encompassed stage directing and film producing.

It must not be understood that with the growth of the movies in the twenties the Broadway musical had died. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just between the years 1924 and 1925 there were forty-six musicals on Broadway, each of which was a variation on the "gals and gags" theme of burlesque and the revue. The 1920's provided the golden age of Broadway. The revue which has been mentioned as an innovation of an earlier time, and which reached maturity through the efforts of Florenz Ziegfeld, enjoyed its full glory. The Ziegfeld Follies in the 1920's were not as bright as their earlier versions, and competition set in. Along with the Shuberts came other revue type shows, most notably George White's Scandals of 1919. It was White who gave George Gershwin his start, allowing him to write the Scandals of 1920 through 1924. Among the more than forty songs in these shows were two of Gershwin's greatest: "I'll Build A Stairway To Paradise" and "Somebody Loves Me."

Gershwin left the George White Scandals in 1924 in order to write musical comedy and more serious music and he was replaced by the team referred to several times, De Sylva, Brown and Henderson. It is Lew Brown on which attention will be fo-

cused. Brown was born in Odessa, Russia, on December 10, 1893, and came to New York with his family at age five. He was educated at New York public schools and for fun wrote parodies of popular song hits of the day. As a result he became a song writer. His first hit was in 1912 with "I'm The Loneliest Gal In Town" the music having been written by Albert von Tilzer. After several years with von Tilzer, Brown met Ray Henderson with whom he went into partnership in publishing as well as writing. Buddy De Sylva was the third member of the team. After a period of success in the publishing business they sold it and left for Hollywood. Among their song hits were "Life Is Just A Bowl Of Cherries," "The Best Things In Life Are Free," "Don't Sit Under The Apple Tree," and "You're The Cream In My Coffee."

Irving Berlin continued to have an enormous effect on the stage musicals of the period. His Music Box Revue was housed in an entirely new theatre built especially for the shows by the team of Sam H. Harris and Berlin. All the songs of the first show in 1921 were written by Berlin and they were brilliantly received. The most successful was "Say It With Music." Three editions followed with such songs as "What'll I Do" and "All Alone." The most innovative and witty musical revue of the pre-1940 years was called As Thousands Cheer in 1933 with book by Moss Hart and Berlin. The story line was based on the pages of a newspaper with news stories and features each represented in song. Berlin wrote "The Easter Parade," "Heat Wave" and "Supper Time" for this show. Characters

included Franklin D. Roosevelt, Gandhi, Douglas Fairbanks, and John D. Rockefeller Sr.

Very interestingly, the revue saw another change in its usual ethnic makeup. In 1928, Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh wrote the songs for an all Black revue entitled Blackbirds of 1928. Among the songs in this show were "Doin' the New Low Down," "I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby," and "Diga, Diga Doo." Dorothy Fields was the daughter of Lew Fields, of Weber and Fields fame, as well as the sister of Joseph and Herbert who became famous as librettists for musicals. She began her professional career as an art teacher in a high school in New York, but was directed into song writing by composer J. Fred Coots. Although her first efforts were, by her own admission, terrible, she did not lose faith and continued her work. She was born in Allenhurst, New Jersey, on July 15, 1905; soon after her family returned to New York where she was educated. Along with teaching, Fields wrote poetry for magazines which led Coots to suggest she write lyrics. Her first partner, Jimmy McHugh, she met while working for the Mills publishing company. Although their first assignment was a failure, they were given another, to write the Blackbirds show mentioned above. Although not an immediate hit with the critics, Fields and McHugh waived their royalties and the show continued on. Only after the institution of a Thursday midnight show did the revue catch on and become the biggest hit of the season. "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" went on to sell three million copies of sheet music.

Fields became famous as a librettist and book writer working with her brother, and lyricist collaborating with some of the most famous names in Broadway history. Among her partners were Jerome Kern, Sigmund Romberg, Harold Arlen, Arthur Schwartz, Burton Lane and Cy Coleman. Her songs included "On The Sunny Side Of The Street," "I'm In The Mood For Love," "A Fine Romance," and "The Way You Look Tonight."

Dorothy Fields was always "au courant" as she like to describe herself. She wrote hit shows in every decade from the 1920's through the 1970's always within the style of the day. Undoubtedly her greatest achievement was the book and libretto she and her brother wrote for Irving Berlin's Annie Get Your Gun. Even though the show is over thirty years old, it is still used as the quintessence of the Broadway musical script. Although never retired (she died while in the midst of writing a new set of lyrics for a show to follow her last hit, Seesaw), she also was active in civic and Jewish philanthropies.[110] Dorothy Fields was far and away the most famous woman to write for the Broadway musical or Tin Pan Alley.

Appropriately, one of Dorothy Field's collaborators began his career very soon after she did. Arthur Schwartz was a successful lawyer and author before he decided to contribute to a new kind of revue which made its debut in 1922-1923. Called the Grand Street Follies, it was a slimmed down show with little or no scenery or fancy costumes, relying instead on wit and satire. As the show advertized itself, "A Lowbrow Show for Highbrow Morons." Far from that, the show was so successful

that it moved from off Broadway to a regular theatre and ran through several different "editions."

Schwartz was born in Brooklyn on November 25, 1900, where he lived most of his early life. He attended Brooklyn public schools and received a Bachelor of Arts from NYU as well as his law degree. Before becoming a lawyer, Schwartz taught English literature at a high school and wrote songs for NYU. Between 1924, when as a Phi Beta Kappa he was accepted into the bar, until 1928, Schwartz was a fairly successful lawyer. In 1928 he began writing songs professionally. His career did not limit itself to songs; Schwartz was also a successful librettist and producer of movies and plays. Among his shows were The Band Wagon, Stars In Your Eyes, A Tree Grows In Brooklyn, and Inside U.S.A. which he also produced. His songs were equally numerous: "Dancing In The Dark," "You And The Night And The Music," "I Guess I'll Have To Change My Plan," and "Something To Remember You By."

Schwartz's talents were seen in many avenues; but more than his own ability, he fostered a type of show which affected all of Broadway. The big musical revues with enormous sets, costumes and budgets were on the way out. In their place were the smaller more intimate shows as Schwartz had written. A group of young members of the Theatre Guild got together to write a show which became known as the Garrick Gaieties of 1925. Among the songs and skits were parodies of plays on Broadway, as well as prominent actors and actresses. Herbert Fields served as the choreographer and two of the new contri-

butors who enjoyed hearing their first songs on Broadway were Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart. "Manhattan" and "Mountain Greenery" became the great Rodgers and Hart hits of the first two Garrick shows, and were a taste of the brilliant theatre songs this team was to produce. Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart set the pace for Broadway from that day until fifteen years later when the team split.

The Little Shows were sophisticated small revues much like the earlier Gus Edward's School Days. The shows helped introduce several unknowns to the world of Broadway by highlighting the special talents of the new stars. Among those who received their first exposure were Fred Allen and Libby Holman. The experienced performer of the troup was Clifton Webb. All the sketches and songs were written by Howard Dietz, who was to achieve much fame as Arthur Schwartz's lyricist in later years. Dietz was born in New York on September 8, 1896, where he went to public school and on to Columbia University. Among his classmates at Columbia were Oscar Hammerstein II and Lorenz Hart. While there he became a contributor and editor of the college newspaper as well as for several local New York papers. After winning a $500 prize in advertising, Dietz went into the business professionally. In 1924 Dietz became advertising director and promotion manager for M.G.M. where he stayed for thirty years, eventually becoming vice president. All during these years he wrote lyrics, first with Jerome Kern, and most successfully with Arthur Schwartz. His songs included "Body and Soul," "Dancing in the Dark" and "Louisiana Hayride." He is

also remembered today for his English lyrics to the Strauss operetta Die Fledermaus which is today the standard translation in use.

Vernon Duke, or Vladimir Dukelsky as he was born, was a unique man who combined classical training with Tin Pan Alley. Duke was born in Pskoff, Russia, on October 10, 1903, where he studied music composition and eventually entered the Kiev Conservatory of Music. As a result of the Russian Revolution, Duke left Russia in 1920 and went into classical music professionally. He began in Constantinople at the Y.M.C.A. where he came across the music to "Swanee" by George Gershwin and Irving Caesar. He became so interested that upon his arrival in New York, he called Gershwin who then became his mentor. Gershwin even helped Dukelsky to anglicize his name to Vernon Duke. By 1932 Duke had written his most famous song, "April In Paris," with lyricist E. Y. Harburg. His other great songs include "Autumn In New York," "Taking A Chance On Love," and "Cabin In The Sky." His numerous classical compositions, which he wrote as Vladimir Dukelsky, ranged from concerti to symphonies with music for the piano, cello, flute and bassoon.

The 1920's and '30's saw musicals by the men and women who today are viewed as the masters: Jerome Kern, Oscar Hammerstein, George and Ira Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart, Lew Brown, Irving Berlin, and Kurt Weill. Of those, only Weill has been left unmentioned. Weill was born in Dessau, Germany, on March 2, 1900, where he was well educated in classical music at the Berlin College for Music and in private

lessons. His major musical activity was writing serious operas most of which were well received by the critics. They ranged in subject matter and style from a surrealistic opera, The Protagonist, to The Rise and Fall of the City Mahogany, which dealt with a fictional town in Alabama run by three ex-convicts. In their socialist state everything was either pardonable or permissable.

Weill's greatest success was The Threepenny Opera which he wrote with Bertold Brecht patterned on the original opera by John Gay. The Threepenny Opera swept Germany by storm so that by 1929, a year after its premier, it had been performed over four thousand times in one hundred different theatres around Germany. Within five years it had been translated into eighteen languages and was exported to the United States and around the world. The Threepenny Opera enjoyed its greatest success in America with the 1954 revival where the song "Mack the Knife" became a hit parade success, selling over three million records.[111]

Weill was forced to leave Germany in 1935 with the ascension of Hitler to power, and after a short stay in Paris, came to the United States where he wrote the music for Franz Werfel's tribute to Jewish history entitled The Eternal Road. This show did not appear on Broadway for two years, until another Weill production, his anti-war musical Johnny Johnson, was presented. All-American in style, it exhibited Weill's ability to change his music to suit the public taste. By 1938, Weill was writing truly American musicals with patriotic settings.

Knickerbocker Holiday was such a musical production. By using New Amsterdam of the 1600's as the setting, Weill was able to write about fascism as he saw it developing in Europe. His most famous song, "September Song," came from that score.

With George Gershwin, Weill is held in the highest critical esteem of any American composer.[112] His death in 1950 was a great blow because he was just finding an American idiom. George Gershwin was his close friend and Ira was his best lyricist. Their feelings about liberty and freedom truly affected Weill's work. In Knickerbocker Holiday, Weill identified what he thought was the way to know "How Can You Tell an American." For him a true American was the man who loves and supports liberty. Weill made that love his theme.

Often what makes a man great in the eyes of his peers is his ability to look into the future. Weill did that perfectly for he predicted the civil and social unrest of the 1930's several years before it occurred. On October 29, 1929, "Black Thursday," Wall Street "laid an egg" as "Variety" reported it. By 1931, nearly 30,000 businesses folded, 2500 banks failed and ten million people were out of work. Depression was everywhere and the songs of Tin Pan Alley recognized the emotions and fears of the masses. Money was something no one had, so all of a sudden came a spate of songs whish promised that money wasn't needed for love. "I Found a Million Dollar Baby in a Five and Ten Cent Store" by Mort Dixon, Billy Rose and Harry Warren was typical. Rodgers and Hart wrote "I've Got Five Dollars" with "debts beyond endurance" and coats and collars

"which moths adore." The most representative song, which was mentioned earlier, was Harburg's "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime." This song lamented and eulogized our now-ended confidence in America. There were songs which lamented the depths to which America had sunk, but others were written to cheer up the populace as well. "Happy Days Are Here Again," was such a song; it was used as Franklin Roosevelt's theme song, later by Harry Truman, and finally by John F. Kennedy, until it became a Democratic Party anthem. Written by Jack Yellen and Milton Ager, it was introduced on the evening of Black Thursday, and became an almost "hysterical" hit; everyone in the room needed cheering up. Of a similar vein was "On the Sunny Side of the Street" written by Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh (1930).

Previously mentioned were the stern social criticism of Kurt Weill. His songs were the precursor of two very important revues in the history of American theatre. The first show was entitled Pins and Needles. Originality and fresh spirit were combined in a unique way; all the cast were members of the International Ladies Garment Workers and naturally the show was definitely a union production. With a leftist point of view, its desire was to "Sing me a song with social significance, all other songs are taboo." The composer and lyricist for the show was new to Broadway; his name was Harold Rome. Born in Hartford, Connecticut, on May 27, 1908, Rome was educated in Hartford, later going on to Yale University where he received a degree in arts and architecture. Before graduation,

Rome played with the Yale Orchestra and toured Europe with the group. He also played piano with jazz bands in an attempt to earn extra money. Following his graduation, he went to New York where he accepted a job in architecture which provided him no salary but much experience; in order to earn a living he wrote popular songs and played piano in bars. For three summers he was musical director of an adult camp in the Adirondacks called "Green Mansions," where he was required to write three complete musicals each summer. All told, Rome composed 90 songs for these various shows.

One of the benefits he gained was meeting Charles Friedman who served as a collaborator in these camp shows. Friedman had been asked by the I.L.G.W.U. to write a musical revue for the union and Friedman asked Rome to compose the songs. As a result, Rome was introduced to the professional theatre.

Pins and Needles had been intended as a show for the unionists and their friends, but it was so well received by the critics and public that it began a professional run which continued for 1,108 performances, one of the longest runs in Broadway history up to that time. In order to keep the "social significance" up to date, new material was introduced every few weeks. Rome continued to write for left-leaning musical revues and later wrote several complete Broadway shows including Destry Rides Again, Wish You Were Here, and most successfully, Fanny.

Rome's success fostered the second political satire revue mentioned earlier. This one was far more politically oriented.

The composer-lyricist was Marc Blitzstein, born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on March 2, 1905. Blitzstein was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and the Curtis Institute of Music, and enjoyed several years of study under the best music teachers Europe had to offer. Among his teachers were Nadia Boulanger and Arnold Schoenberg. Upon his return to America, he was a soloist with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra and soon became involved in the popular music business. Blitzstein lectured at Vassar, Columbia, and the Brooklyn Institute for the Arts as well as the New School for Social Research. His popular music orientation was strictly in the socialist sense, for he wrote about the masses getting trampled on, and the class struggle in America. Blitzstein's crowning achievement in the musical area was his production The Cradle Will Rock, presented on June 15, 1937.

Its story is a most interesting one. Originally written in 1936, Blitzstein's show had been accepted for production by the W.P.A.-Federal Theatre whose producer was John Houseman and whose director was Orson Welles. Although scheduled to premier on that June night, the opening was temporarily postponed by several civic groups who were angered by the play's anti-capitalist, anti-government libretto. Through the efforts of these groups, the Federal Theatre was closed in which the show was to have run. While the cast attempted to entertain the audience, the producer frantically searched for a new place in which to present it. The nearby Venice Theatre was procured and cast and audience went there. As it was impossible to move

the costumes, sets and orchestra to the new theatre, Blitzstein and his cast proceeded to do the show without the benefit of those trappings with Blitzstein at the piano explaining the scenes as they came along. If judged by the revues the show received, this unique presentation enhanced rather than detracted from its effect. Brooks Atkinson wrote "The Cradle Will Rock is the most versatile artistic triumph of the politically insurgent theatre."[113] The plot took place in a night court which set the steel workers against their employers in the latters' attempt to create a union. The capitalist, Mr. Mister, who controlled the entire community including the school, the newspaper, the church and the court, formed a Liberty Union to break the workers' union, but failed and the workers were the victors. Clearly in the songs and lyrics, the influence of Kurt Weill was evident. This proved to be a most successful and financially rewarding show to its producers as well as being the theatrical event of the season.

Popular songs of these times reflected the split in society. On the one hand there were the politically conscious songs, for the decade of the 1930's was largely spent in recovering from the excesses of the previous decade. The depression lay heavily on people's minds and pop-music became less bouncy and original. More often than not, the arranger became the creative force in the Tin Pan Alley world. Composers left it to the arrangers to create new and jazzy treatments of fairly pedestrian songs.[114] While the Hollywood movies were being brightened by the musicals of Busby Berkely, the musical the-

atre tackled subjects of current concern. George and Ira Gershwin indicted World War I war profiteering in their musical Strike Up the Band. In fact, it was so politically potent that it was recalled and rewritten in a less virulent manner. Even Irving Berlin dealt with serious issues when he condemned police corruption in his Face the Music production.[115]

By 1935, radio had changed the music business greatly. Songs no longer needed to be plugged in individual theatres or shows, now they could be played on the radio and the exposure there would propel record sales. Sheet music sales were no longer the marker by which a hit song was decided, now it was record sales and air play on the radio. A new invention of the publisher-producers was the "hit parade," a program which played various recordings and then rated them by sales and popularity. For example, so thoroughly had Tin Pan Alley been infiltrated by the new breed of theatre composers that of the top twenty songs of the year, most were written by Kern, Rodgers and Hart, Gershwin, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Harburg and Arlen, Vernon Duke and Howard Dietz. The top three songs of the year were Kern's "Lovely to Look At" and "I Won't Dance" with Gershwin's "Soon" coming third. The next year Irving Caesar's song "Is It True What They Say about Dixie" headed the list continuing the tradition of songs about the South written by Jews who had never been there![116]

The year 1938 saw a most interesting event as far as Jews were concerned. The most popular song of the year and almost of the decade had originally come from the pen of Sholom Se-

cunda and Joe Jacobs, two men who wrote for the Yiddish theatre. The song was recorded on November 24, 1937, by Patti, Maxine, and Laverne Andrews; the name of the song was "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen."

Two different stories are told of the history of this song. One was that the agent, Lou Levy, brought the song to the attention of the sisters thinking that an all Yiddish song sung by three gentile girls would be an amusing hit in New York City. Supposedly they cut the demonstration record, all in Yiddish, until Jack Kapp, the president of Decca Records, told them that English words had to be used.

Sammy Cahn, however, the creator-lyricist of the English words (along with Saul Chaplin), told another story in his autobiography I Should Care. He said that he heard the song at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem being sung by two black men entirely in Yiddish. Even though the audience couldn't understand a single word, Cahn was impressed how much they seemed to enjoy the song, so he went out and bought the sheet music. With this copy of the music, he interested the Andrews sisters who tried to convince Jack Kapp of Decca to let them record it. He agreed only on the premise that Cahn translate the words into English. After that agreement, Cahn bought the rights for $150. The record earned three million dollars for Decca, and Cahn and Chaplin attempted to repeat the success with another Yiddish song called "Joseph, Joseph" by Nellie Casman and Samuel Steinberg. It became a second hit of the 1938 record year.

Sammy Cahn was born in New York on June 18, 1913, where

he received his education. His parents helped in the founding of a synagogue upon their arrival from Galacia and it was at this synagogue in New York that Sammy was bar mitzvah. As a boy he had been trained in the violin and for lighter entertainment as well as spending money, Sam organized his friends into a dance band. One of his friends was Saul Chaplin with whom he began writing song lyrics. It was after he began writing that he changed his name from Cohn to Cahn.[117] Most active in the movie industry, he wrote such movie music classics as Anchors Aweigh, Three Cheers for the Boys and Toast of New Orleans. His stage musicals include High Button Shoes, and Look to the Lillies (a flop). Cahn's list of songs is enormous, but among his best are "Three Coins in the Fountain," "Let It Rain, Let It Rain, Let It Rain," "Papa, Won't You Dance with Me," and "Be My Love."

With Hitler's political activities in Europe and all the old world preparing for war, Americans turned inward and patriotic songs came back into vogue. Harold Arlen and E. Y. Harburg wrote the song "God's Country" in the anti-war musical Hooray for What! Al Jacobs wrote what became an American standard when he wrote the lyrics to "This Is My Country," which Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians introduced. However, as is fitting, I suppose, the song to lead the way as far as patriotism belonged to Irving Berlin.

Written originally as the second act closing for the World War I show Yip Yip Yaphank, Berlin cast the song aside when he decided that having soldiers sing about their love for

America as they marched through the audience on the way to war was simply gilding the lily. He left the song out and virtually forgot about it for almost a quarter century. In 1938 Kate Smith returned from a trip to Europe and decided to present a radio broadcast dealing with patriotism and her pride in being an American. She approached Berlin for such a song and he remembered the song he had discarded those twenty plus years earlier. She was given the rights to the song without any payment, but with the stipulation that any profits the song might accrue should be given to the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Campfire Girls. The song earned them over half a million dollars.

Berlin's song earned the status of becoming almost a second national anthem, so much so that on February 18, 1955, President Eisenhower presented to Berlin a gold medal engraved "GOD BLESS AMERICA." It is that song as much as any for which Irving Berlin will be remembered.

CHAPTER SIX: HENRY RUSSELL

Henry Russell was probably the most popular songwriter in the British Isles during the first half of the nineteenth century. Without question, he was the most influential writer of American songs before Stephen Foster. In fact, Russell was the first writer who spent his formative years in America, rather than coming here after having made a reputation. Russell was born in Sheerness, Kent, England, on December 24, 1812; he made his debut on the stage at the age of three and began piano lessons at the age of six. His ability and talent allowed him the opportunity to play in a children's opera company managed by the director of the Drury Lane Theatre in England, Robert W. Elliston. Russell recounted in his autobiography Cheer, Boys, Cheer, that while in this production he was brought before King George IV who kissed Russell while he was sitting on the king's knee.[118]

There were two major events in Russell's life which he claimed were pivotal in his decision to go into the theatre and music world. First was a meeting with the great tragedian, Edmund Kean, when Russell was ten years old. He reported in his autobiography that Kean said, "My dear boy, you will never become either a great actor or great singer unless you learn to speak every word you utter distinctly and clearly. Unintelligibility and slovenliness in speech are the curse of the profession."[119] Apparently Russell took Kean's words to heart for he began lessons in speech and music. When his voice

changed and he was no longer a child soprano but became a baritone, he took off to Italy to study the new rage in England: Italian opera. He arrived in Bologna in 1825 where he studied with Vincenzo Bellini, the opera and bel canto composer. He also became acquainted with Donizetti and Rossini, two other greats of the Italian opera. As a result he became thoroughly versed in the musical style of Italian opera both as a singer and as a composer.

After a brief stay in Paris where he met Meyerbeer, he returned to England where he attempted to earn a living. It proved more difficult than he thought and he decided that opportunities were better in the New World. In the early 1830's, he sailed for Toronto, Canada, where he met with no success. His next stop was Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he appeared in the opera La Sonnambula as the character Elvino. When this position ended he accepted a job as organist and piano teacher in Rochester, New York. He served as organist for the First Presbyterian Church. Within a two year period he was appointed "professor of music" at the Rochester Academy of Music which was an honorary title at most.

Russell remained at the church for eight years and it was during his tenure there that the second of those pivotal events took place. He heard the great orator and politician, Henry Clay. Although not moved by the content of Clay's words, he was impressed by Clay's ability to motivate and grip the audience. Russell wrote, "That speech of Henry Clay affected me to a singular extent. It may sound a strange statement, but

I don't think I should be talking extravagantly, if I declare that the orator Henry Clay was the direct cause of my taking to the composition of descriptive songs."[120] He wrote further that "Why should it not be possible for me to make music the vehicle of grand thoughts and noble sentiments, to speak to the world through the power of poetry and song?"[121]

As a result of that speech and the sentiments he expressed, Russell wrote a new composition in the ballad style he made so famous and popular. It was entitled "Wind of the Winter's Night, Whence Cometh Thou?" "All through the night I paced up and down in my room arranging the music for the poem and I remember that the notion uppermost in my mind was to infuse into my music the subtle charm, as it were, of the voice of Henry Clay."[122] The poem was set in a type of music familiar to Russell for it had many of the attributes of an Italian opera. Containing many mood changes to match the lyrics, the song resembled a dramatic prelude to an aria with a rich piano accompaniment of a very melodramatic style. The vocal part demanded a very considerable range. Outside Rochester, Russell was unknown, but the publication of his songs soon changed all that.

In 1836, at the age of twenty-four, Russell went to New York to establish himself as a singer of ballads. He had, said the critics, "a pleasing but light baritone voice" but more importantly, he carried a collection of his own songs. As a musical competitor, J. H. Hewitt, wrote about Russell, "Russell's voice was a baritone of limited register. The few good notes

he possessed he turned to very good advantage."[123] John Hill Hewitt continued in his description of Russell, the performer, when he wrote in his book Shadows on the Wall, "He was rather stout, but not tall. His face was prepossessing, of the Hebrew cast, dark and heavy whiskers and curly hair. He was an expert at wheedling applause out of audiences and adding to the effect of his songs by a brilliant piano accompaniment. With much self-adulation he often used to describe the wonderful influence of his descriptive songs over his audiences."[124]

Russell's first appearance in New York was in October of 1836 and after touring around the country he came back to New York in the spring of 1837 where he was billed as "the Popular Ballad Singer." Within a year a contemporary reviewer wrote, "His fame was now fully established and devoting his whole attention to composition and singing, he traversed the States of America from extremity to extremity with a rapidity without parallel, singing at all places and at all times to multitudes that all but idolized him."[125]

His songs came off the press with amazing speed; Russell wrote ten major songs in the next three years. Of the same style as his Italian Opera "Wind of the Winter's Night" was his song "The Maniac" written in 1840. This was the story of a man who is wrongly committed to an insane asylum and who is being driven mad by the situation in which he finds himself. The Hutchinson Family singers, a famous New Hampshire singing group, had enormous success with this song. John Hutchinson himself described the effect this lurid portrait of an insane

man had on his audience. "I sang it alone to the accompaniment of the brothers. Judson and Asa would commence a prelude. Meanwhile I would be in my chair behind them with the finger of each hand raising the hair on my head and bringing it in partial dishevilment. Then I would rise, with the expression of vacancy inseparable from mania and commence." The delivery of the line of the refrain, "No, by heaven, I am NOT mad" was always calculated to make the blood of the audience freeze. Said a friend of the Hutchinsons, "John performed it with appalling power."[126]

More typical of Russell's songs, and more important to the development of music in America were his simple ballads and romantic lachrymose songs which filled the concert halls and living rooms of America before Stephen Foster's day. His most successful song in this genre was written in 1837 with words by George P. Morris, a writer for the New York Mirror. The song was entitled, "Woodman, Spare That Tree" and was inspired by a ride the two shared near Morris' country home. While driving along, Morris was recalling a tree that had been planted by his father and in curiosity asked if Russell wouldn't mind going to see if the tree still stood. Russell agreed and as they arrived at the site, they found a farmer readying to cut the tree down. Morris persuaded him not to fell the tree and Russell found a suitable theme for a song. "Woodman, Spare That Tree" enjoyed enormous popularity well into the twentieth century but at the time of its original presentation, a large part of the success was due to Russell's

presentation. Wrote an eyewitness to a Russell concert: "He had finished the last verse . . . . The audience was spell-bound for a moment, and then poured out a volume of applause that shook the building to its foundations. In the midst of this tremendous evidence of their boundless gratification, a snowy headed gentleman, with great anxiety depicted on his venerable features, arose and demanded silence. He asked in a tremulous voice, 'Mr. Russell, in the name of heaven, was the tree spared?' 'It was, sir,' replied the vocalist. 'Thank God, thank God, I breathe again!' and he sat down overcome by emotion."[127]

The second of Russell's popular songs in a similar vein was "The Old Arm Chair" written in 1840. It is considered the first "mammy" song which became so popular in the years that followed, and contained a musical range of only five notes! "I love it, I love it, and who shall dare, To chide me for loving that Old Arm Chair, . . . for my mother sat there." The song illustrated through different stages of the singer's life how he had seen his mother seated in her favorite chair.

> "I've treasured it long as a holy prize,
> I've bedewed it with tears, and embalmed it with sighs.
> 'Tis bound by a thousand bands to my heart;
> Not a tie will break it, not a link will start.
> Would you learn the spell -- a mother sat there,
> And a sacred thing is that old arm chair."

Finally the song concludes in a torrent of tears when the singer "Learnt how much the heart can bear, When I saw her die in

that old arm chair."[128] With songs like that Russell became known not only as an expert performer, but also as an expert in wheedling tears from his listeners.[129] Russell discovered the nostalgic power of the word "old" which only would be recognized later by the writers on Tin Pan Alley. He wrote such classics as "The Old Family Clock, " "The Old Spinning Wheel," "The Old Bell," and "That Old Gang of Mine." A jokester sent him a lyric which was entitled "The Old Fine Toothcomb" and a Boston critic wrote that Russell's programs had every antique but "The Old Boot Jack!"[130]

Russell wrote over eight hundred ballads, most with his own lyrics. But not all were the sentimental or dramatic types. Some espoused causes such as temperance or the abolition of slavery, others presented downtrodden characters worthy of respect. Such a song was "The Indian Hunter" written in 1837. It is credited as being the first American popular song which was both a tribute to the Indian and which demanded equal justice for the redskin.[131]

Yet another type of song presented by Russell with much success was of the religious variety. An example of these is "Our Way Across the Mountains, Ho" which he wrote based upon words from the psalms. This particular song was dedicated to the outstanding Jew in mid-nineteenth century America, Mordecai Manuel Noah who had been gracious to Russell when he first arrived in America.[132]

Russell was an extremely popular performer around America within five years of his debut in New York in 1836. As early

as 1838 the New York Commercial Advertiser commented in its October 15th issue: "His vocal exertions to please are always rewarded with a full attendance; and it is not surprising, for his voice and style are eminently qualified for general popularity."[133] Although concerts made up of different performers were the general rule at the time, audiences would not tolerate other singers on the same program as Russell:

> Mr. Russell is the only singer we have ever known, who could sustain a concert alone. Madame Caradoni Allen and all the other stars, have to introduce other voices to vary the scene and help keep the interest. But if Mr. Russell introduces any other person, the audience soon grows impatient and are glad to get rid of this interruption.[134]

One such audience member who loved Russell's songs was Abraham Lincoln. It is said that Lincoln's favorite song was "The Ship on Fire" which had words by Charles Mackay. The story was of a tragedy at sea. The extended piano introduction sketched a picture of a violent storm. As the lyrics to the song began, they described a driving gale in which a helpless ship was being tossed and twisted. Inside the boat, a mother with her small child in her arms fell on her knees to ask God for mercy. Next to her was her husband who dreamt of the peace and quiet of their cottage by the shore should they survive the storm. Suddenly fire broke out and they realized the ship was doomed. The mother, father, and child were lowered into a life boat, "a mere speck on the wave," when cries of joy rose from the other members in the lifeboat, for from

a distance a boat was drifting to them with help. With that knowledge, the mother stood up and yelled, "Thank God, Thank God, We're saved!"

Another maritime song by Russell was his "A Life on the Ocean Wave" with words by Epes Sargent. This song achieved such popularity that the British Royal Marines adopted it as their official march in 1889. Stephen Foster is said to have heard this song and was inspired to write songs in a similar style.

In 1841 Russell journeyed to New York again, this time to form an ensemble of fellow English performers to give concerts around the east coast. After it broke up, he continued his solo touring. He returned to England in 1842 presenting his first concert in London on March 8, 1842. After a brief trip back to America, he returned to England where he attempted to reestablish himself. He finally retired from the music business and entered the finance business where he worked as a very successful money lender and bill broker.[135] Having made his fortune, he devoted himself to charity concerts for the poor, for temperance and other groups. It is interesting to note that in the days before royalties were paid for a song, it was not the writing which gained a composer his livelihood. Russell freely admitted that he sold his songs outright to publishers, usually for the sum of ten shillings. He earned only £400 from their sale. More often than not, the publisher made a fortune from these songs; Russell made his money from the concerts which he gave. "Had it not been that I sang the

songs myself, the payment for their composition would have meant simple starvation." He earned over $50,000 from his last three season American tour, for example, all of which was lost when his New York bank failed.

Russell was married twice; the first wife was the daughter of a gentile banker named Lloyd and they had two sons, William Clark Russell (1844-1911), who was a novelist and biographer, and Henry Russell (1871-1937), who became the manager of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and founder-manager of the Boston Opera Company. Russell's second wife, a Miss De Lara, was Jewish, and their son was Sir Landon Ronald (Russell). Born in 1873, he was famed as a conductor of symphonic and opera music. He conducted at Covent Garden in 1894, toured America with the great Australian concert singer Dame Nellie Melba, and became known for his interpretation of the music of Sir Edward Elgar. He further conducted for British musical theatre and became principal of a music school, the Guildhall School of Music in London from 1910 to 1937. Knighted in 1922, he died in 1938.[136]

Russell senior died in 1900 and was buried according to the rites of the Christian church.[137]

Henry Russell paved the way for sentimental balladry in America. He would have many fellow Jews who would follow in his footsteps, for in many ways, the American popular song began with him.

CHAPTER SEVEN: MONROE ROSENFELD

Cincinnati can claim many favorite sons and daughters, but in the music world the first prominent one of these is Monroe Rosenfeld. Although born in Richmond, Virginia, he was given his first jobs in music while living in Cincinnati; the impetus for becoming a professional was provided by a Cincinnati publisher and Rosenfeld's first songs were published by a Cincinnati publisher while Rosenfeld lived here. Rosenfeld had many vocations, including newspaperman, press agent, lyricist, short story writer, arranger and adapter of popular songs. He left Cincinnati[138] in the early 1880's at the advice of the publisher Frank Harding, going to New York where he began as a newspaperman.

Not a drinker as were many of his fellow song writers, his intemperance ran to poker and horse racing.[139] As a result he was a most popular man, known all up and down Broadway and the street he named Tin Pan Alley; all the bookies knew him, the race track owners and jockies were both his personal friends and his downfall. If he wasn't at the track himself he bet heavily and when he bet he usually lost. With his money gone, he would hunt up a publisher and sell a song usually to cover his immediate needs. When under extreme financial pressure he had another tactic, equally effective. He would create a title for a song, present it to a publisher receiving a ten or fifteen dollar advance, and then would farm the song out to one of the many hack writers who filled Tin

Pan Alley. They would write the song for him, he would collect the rest of the fee and split the payment with them.[140] He was even able to sell one song to two publishers and let them fight it out as to whom the song belonged. If all else failed, Rosenfeld was willing to pass bad checks. At one instance when the police closed in on him, he jumped out of a second story window and permanently injured his leg. As a result he walked with a limp and for the rest of his life he wore bell-bottom sailor pants to cover the disfigurement.

Rosenfeld wrote under several pseudonyms, including F. Heister, F. Belasco, and Monroe Rosevelt, depending on the type of music he was composing.[141] In 1884 Rosenfeld wrote about a major event of the day, the failure and bankruptcy of the Marine Bank of Brooklyn which was run by Ferdinand Ward Jr. Ward's major financial backers were General U. S. Grant and his son; with the bank's closing the Grants lost their entire fortune.

The title page of the sheet music presented a well dressed man carrying a suitcase filled with money standing in front of a bank emblazoned with the Marine Bank name. The caption read, "Take the next boat to Canada, free passage to bank presidents." Yet another Rosenfeld song which was the result of a scandal was "Ma! Ma! Where's My Pa?" which he wrote under the name of H. R. Monroe. While campaigning for the presidency, Grover Cleveland admitted that he had fathered an illegitimate child. The rest of the song lyric answered the song title's question with "up in the White House, dar-

ling, making the laws, working the cause, up in the White House, dear."[142]

Rosenfeld began his song writing career working for the T. B. Harms Company in 1881,[143] and only later wrote for any publisher who would purchase his songs or titles. He was a tear-jerker specialist as well as a comic journalist for the New York Herald.[144] As a result of a series of newspaper articles for the Herald he became a well known character in music circles.[145]

His earliest song hit was the 1886 song "Johnny Get Your Gun" which was written in jig time, but the melody he had borrowed from an earlier song entitled "Johnny, Get Your Hair Cut." This did not stop another song writer from borrowing some of Rosenfeld's words for George M. Cohan used the opening lines in his song "Over There." But that is not all, for it seems that the composer of the earlier song "Johnny Get Your Hair Cut" had borrowed his melody from an even earlier song, "The Arkansas Traveller" or as it is known today, "Turkey in the Straw," written originally in 1852.

Rosenfeld did have a great number of original songs. As will be seen later, a famous topical song of the 1898 year was "Let Me Shake the Hand That Shook the Hand of Sullivan" which was a tribute to John L. Sullivan, heavyweight boxing champion of the world. But it was not the humorous topical songs which proved to be Rosenfeld's forte; his greatest success came in the maudlin melancholy ballads so popular in the 1880's and 1890's. These ballads reflected the pious atti-

tudes of women at home and men's concepts of how their wives, sisters and daughters should behave. Monroe Rosenfeld fed this market with tear drenched ballads and verses.[146] In 1884 and 1885 Rosenfeld gained great success with two such songs, each written under a pseudonym. First was "Hush Little Boy, Don't You Cry," which he wrote under the name of F. Belasco, and the second, "Goodbye, Boy, Goodbye." The early 1880's (1884) also saw the composition of a great Rosenfeld hit entitled "Climbing Up the Golden Stairs" which was an enormous minstrel hit usually sung in Negro dialect. Rosenfeld wrote this song under the pen name of E. Heiser. It is interesting to note that these songs were fairly popular when pseudonyms were used by the composer, but when it was known that Rosenfeld was the real composer, sales jumped enormously.

A fellow composer-publisher, E. B. Marks, described Rosenfeld as "a vulpine thin faced man with a silky moustache and a hypnotic line. He was a most persuasive salesman and a melodic kleptomaniac."[147] "Melodic kleptomaniac" does not really adequately describe Rosenfeld. He was not at all upset about "borrowing" somebody's melody even if the composer was likely to hear about it. Such an example was the 1888 song "With All Her Faults, I Love Her Still." The melody was pilfered from a German song composed by Theodore Metz, author of "Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight" entitled "Mein Himmel auf Erden" ("My Heaven on Earth") which Rosenfeld had heard Metz play at Wilson's Pavilion in Harlem. Perhaps Metz's anger and amazement can be understood when as director of the

Primrose and West Minstrels, he was handed a copy of the Rosenfeld song "With All Her Faults" and received no credit for the melody. Nevertheless, it was Metz's company which introduced this ballad and singer Dick José of the Minstrels who made it popular.[148] Rosenfeld and Metz were very close friends. They got together soon after this event to collaborate on a new show. When Rosenfeld was told of Metz's anger regarding the use of Metz's composition, he simply remarked, "Teddy has his German up!"[149]

As an example of the "echo" song, where the title of the song is repeated several times in the course of verses, "With All Her Faults, I Love Her Still" has become a classic. It also enjoyed great popularity among barbershop quartets and schools. The moralizing slant of the lyrics does not seem to go far enough in specifying the faults of the man who was jilted by his girl. In fact one critic of the day wrote that the girl did herself a favor in leaving the self-appointed hero. The jiltee laments,

> "With all her faults I love her still,
> And even though the world should scorn;
> No love like hers, my heart can thrill,
> Although she's made that heart forlorn.
> (The chorus thus begins and ends with
> the heart-breaking echo.)
>
> No love like hers, my soul can thrill,
> No other love can win my heart.
> I love her still! I love her still!
> With all her faults I love her still."

Rosenfeld wrote other songs in the waning years of the 1880's but they are musically and historically of little con-

seuqence. It was in the decade of the 1890's that Rosenfeld really hit his stride turning out several of the greatest song hits of his day. These included "I Was Once Your Wife," "Don't Ask Me to Give Up Mother," "Don't Say I Did It, Jack," "Those Wedding Bells Shall Not Ring Out," "That Old Gang of Mine," "Take Back Your Gold," and "She Was Happy Till She Met You." Needless to say, as a newspaperman along with being a lyricist and composer, there was often the question if Rosenfeld actually meant those songs he was writing or if his tongue was stuck "derisively" in his cheeks. He regularly claimed that these sentiments were genuine. However, it is difficult to believe his sincerity when hearing his 1894 song hit "Her Golden Hair Was Hanging Down Her Back." The sheet music credited Rosenfeld as the composer, however the melody was in fact the creation of Felix McGannon for whom Rosenfeld had done the arrangement. It might be added here that there is some question if Rosenfeld had anything to do with the song besides arranging it. Some give credit for words and music to McGlennon. These lyrics dealt with a "simple maiden" and her first trip to New York.

There was once a simple young maiden
  Came to New York on a trip,
And her golden hair was hanging down her back.
Her cheeks were like the roses,
  She'd a pout on her lip,
And her golden hair was hanging down her back.

When she landed at the station here,
  She took a little stroll,
At ev'rything she wondered
  Till she lost her self-control.
Said she, "New York is quite a village,

Ain't it? Bless my soul!"
And her golden hair was hanging down her back.

Rosenfeld undoubtedly desired his audience to accept his song on its sentimental face value. It is equally clear that he provided a bit of humor and satire in the song's last two lines: "But alas and alack, She's gone back, With a naughty little twinkle in her eye." It seems she wasn't the only one with a twinkle in her eye! It is important to recognize that during these times songs were so popular that often one song could launch a publishing house. "Her Golden Hair" was such a song, providing the impetus for the Leo Feist publishing empire. "You can never go wrong with a Feist song" was first emblazoned on the cover of sheet music because of the Rosenfeld-McGlennon song.[150]

As has already been intimated, Rosenfeld would do about anything to earn extra money needed for payment of his gambling debts. Along with song writing he worked as a journalist reviewer for the New York Herald and the New York Clipper. Between the years 1891 and 1898 he worked as a poet-reviewer for the Clipper. While on this assignment, he wrote many pieces of doggerel which continued sentimental emotions. Again the cynicism of the "Golden Hair" song is easy to recognize:

Oh dear little maid so demure
Has eyes that are filled with devotion;
That other you scarce can endure
So spiteful she is to you notion.

Alas see them when they are wed,
How strangely deceived was each lover;
There's only one word to be said,
You can't tell a book by its cover![151]

In addition to the newspaper writing, Rosenfeld also made a living editing and correcting manuscripts belonging to other composers. At other times, whether from a sincere desire to help or because of a promised share of a new song's royalties, Rosenfeld would put his own name to another's creation. It is said that he unwittingly aided a future theatre great's career when he gave advice to the then twenty year old John Golden when Golden showed Rosenfeld some poetry he had written and asked if Rosenfeld would set them to music. Rosenfeld demurred, thinking thoughtfully while stroking his moustache, and said, "John, my boy, you'll never make a fortune writing songs. Stick to the theatre and if you've got the stuff, you'll never regret it." Golden went on to become a theatre production giant. Whether it can be credited to Rosenfeld or not will never be known.[152]

In 1895 Rosenfeld joined forces with his old friend and musical competitor, Theodore Metz. Together they wrote an Indian operetta entitled Poketa which was an enormous disaster. Metz wrote the music and Rosenfeld was the librettist. In spite of the failure of the show, Metz commented later that he had great respect for Rosenfeld's ability. "You could stretch out a topic for Rosenfeld to work on and he'd have the job done before you were through talking. As for Poketa, that's just how we did it. I outlined the plot, situations, and the rest, and that very night the libretto was finished in Rosenfeld's room."[153]

Whether Rosenfeld was attempting to placate his critics

who claimed that he falsely took credit for other peoples' work, or more likely because he desired to reward a singer for introducing a new Rosenfeld ballad, Rosenfeld gave half the royalties and lyricist credit to Louis W. Pritzkow for the song "Take Back Your Gold." Written in 1897 entirely by Rosenfeld, Pritzkow received this billing as a return payment for his introducing the song in the Primrose and West Minstrel show in which Pritzkow was a performer. It is ironic that Pritzkow was not the performer who really made the song famous. In fact Emma Carus was the plugger who really sold the song. Carus was the shouter who prefaced her shows with the statement, "I'm not pretty, but I take care of my family!" Carus plugged "Take Back Your Gold" often in her act, perhaps as a way of repaying Rosenfeld for discovering her and giving her her first break. He had liked the quality of her speaking voice and had urged her to become a song plugger. This delivery was perfect for the song's sentiments especially in the defiant ending of the song, "She spurned the gold he offered her and said, 'Take back your gold, for gold cannot buy me!'" This song helped launch the success of another great publishing house, Joseph W. Stern and Co. Rosenfeld made sure that the song would be well received for he not only wrote it and sent it to a popular singer, he even wrote the review of the song for the New York Herald in his own column![154]

Actors, singers, in fact almost everyone liked Rosenfeld and would scramble to introduce a Rosenfeld song if it needed plugging. When in 1897 he wrote "I Don't Care If You Never

Come Back" there were many willing to sing it for him, but it was given to Bert Williams, the black vaudeville star and half of the team of Williams and Walker to introduce it. The same year saw the introduction of another great Rosenfeld hit, this time "Just for the Sake of Our Daughter." It enjoyed enormous popularity during the last years of the 1890's probably because of the high drama found in its story line. There were three lengthy verses about a night of tragedy involving a policeman, his faithless wife, their maiden daughter and the burglar who turns out to be the wife's lover!

The year 1898 saw the last two big hits from the pen of Monroe Rosenfeld. The first was "Gold Will Buy Most Anything but a True Girl's Heart." Here the story was about a wealthy man offering jewels fit for a queen to a poor girl in order to tempt her not to marry the man she really loves. She responds proudly, "I'd rather have my Jack than all your gold, for gold will buy most anything but a true girl's heart."[155] The same year he wrote a contemporary commentary song mentioned earlier entitled "Let Me Shake the Hand that Shook the Hand of Sullivan" which was a farcical look at the popularity of the famed prize fighter. In light of the sophistication shown by Rosenfeld in songs like this one, one must question the sincerity or maudlin corniness of songs such as "Gold Will Buy" or "Take Back Your Gold." However, Rosenfeld recognized that his audiences wanted the ballads and it was ballads which he continued to compose.

A valid question may come to mind as to why there were

several songs which dealt with gold and the precious metal's effects. It should be recalled, as was said in the beginning of this thesis, that songs often mirrored the events of the day. In 1897 the great Klondike gold rush had begun with the discovery of gold in the Yukon. Many prospectors made their way quickly to the Bonanza Creek in Alaska to make a fortune, and the Tin Pan Alley song writers attempted to make theirs in music. Sadly for Rosenfeld, as had been his custom, he sold these songs for a pittance simply to pay gambling debts; the ones who made the fortunes were his publishers. In the case of "Gold Will Buy Most Anything but a True Girl's Heart" the publisher was Howley and Haviland.

Rosenfeld was one of the first Jews to play a role in the creation of the American music business for he was one of the earliest composers of Tin Pan Alley.[156] His contribution to the music world will be remembered as long as the music industry remembers the phrase "Tin Pan Alley" for it was Rosenfeld who coined the term while reporting for the Herald Tribune. This contribution will be recalled long after his songs have been forgotten.[157] The last song presented by Rosenfeld, in 1905, was a minor success, "Down Where the Silv'ry Mohawk Flows." By then he had become an elder statesman, giving encouragement to new composers and lyricists. One such example was a review he wrote for the St. Louis Globe Democrat in 1903. "St. Louis boasts of a composer of music who, despite the ebony hue of his features, has written more instrumental successes than any local composer."[158] The new talent was the ragtime

master, Scott Joplin.

Rosenfeld's songs graced the publishing catalogues of many of the best publishing houses on Tin Pan Alley. He was to die bankrupt, but his creativity left the popular music world richer for his contribution.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CHARLES K. HARRIS

Perhaps more than any other song writer Charles Kassel Harris represents the attitudes and methods of the first generation of Tin Pan Alley composers. Born in Poughkeepsie, New York, on May 1, 1867, Harris was one of nine children.[159] When only one year of age, he and his family moved to East Saginaw, Michigan. As a young boy he was very interested in minstrel shows and constructed a banjo from an empty oyster can and old wire. On this home-made instrument he played his favorite songs which he had heard in these shows. In his autobiography, After the Ball, Harris wrote that he didn't know how to play the banjo and had always wanted to, so he made a deal to run errands for one of the minstrel musicians if he would teach Harris to play. At the age of fourteen the Harris family moved to Milwaukee which by then had a population of 14,000. It was there that he began to earn some spending money by playing banjo and singing minstrel songs in several small clubs and variety theatres around Milwaukee.

Harris soon became very adept at the banjo and after being called upon to perform in several of these clubs, he decided that, rather than buy someone else's songs, he would write his own. For the Phoenix Club of Milwaukee he wrote his first songs: "A There, Stay There," "If I Were the Chief of Police," "I Heard Her Voice Again," and "Bake that Matza Pie."[160] As a young teenager he rented a room and hung a sign outside the door announcing "Banjoist and Song Writer. Songs Written to

Order." Yet he was totally self-taught. A contemporary of Harris said it this way: "C. K. Harris could not distinguish a note of music from a cuckoo's egg!"[161] Harris said the same thing in a more serious way: "The reader will naturally wonder how it was possible for me to write music to a song when even to this day I cannot distinguish one note from another. The answer is simple. As soon as a melody occurred to me, I hummed it. Then I would procure the services of a trained musician for the purpose, hum or whistle the melody for him and have him take it down on paper with notes. He would then arrange it for piano."[162] The four songs mentioned earlier were written for some amateur singing friends of Harris who needed material for local shows they were doing. But Harris' "chutzpah" was even more outrageous when he began giving private concerts and banjo lessons without the slightest knowledge of music. He learned all he knew by talking with performers, hanging around theatres and studying the George C. Dobson Banjo Book![163]

A result of hanging around theatres was the big break Harris needed. When he was sixteen he attended a performance of the musical The Skating Rink which starred Nat C. Goodwin. He became convinced that several songs were unfit for the show and that he could write better ones. With his companion and best friend, Charles Horowitz, Harris decided to write a song to replace one which had offended him. It was entitled "Since Maggie Learned to Skate" and Harris somehow managed to convince Goodwin to use it instead of the other song. Harris ad-

mitted later that it was a "dreadful number" but it was a beginning! Other early numbers by Harris were "Creep, Baby, Creep" and "Let's Kiss and Make Up" both of which were composed especially for talent coming to Milwaukee whom Harris thought he could persuade to perform them. By 1891 Harris had written five songs which were interpolated into shows, had been a bellhop, a pawnbroker and a banjo player.[164] In that year he became a published song writer by having his song "When the Sun Has Set" printed by the new company M. Witmark and Sons. For all his creative efforts, Harris earned eighty five cents. As a result he realized that the money which could be made would be found in publishing more than writing. This first royalty check was sent by Isadore Witmark six months after the song had been published. Harris wrote back that he would frame the postal order check as a souvenir of the smallest royalty statement on record. Julius Witmark wrote back that Harris should "Hang up your music. Yours is the only song we ever published that didn't sell."[165]

In the year 1891 Harris went into the publishing business starting at 207 Grand Avenue in Milwaukee with a $7.50 per month rented office.[166] He had borrowed $1500 from three friends and in the first year made a three thousand dollar profit, so that by the next year, 1892, he bought them out. He was the only printer-publisher-song writer in America.[167] From where had this success come? Harris conceived of a new idea as far as songs of that day were concerned. He decided to write songs which fit individual situations. Previously songs had

been thrown into various performances promiscuously, just as long as these songs provided a performer an opportunity to display vocal and dramatic prowess. Harris wrote, "My idea was to never write a song which didn't fit some situation." This shrewd scheme resulted from the principles upon which he had worked as a young man in Milwaukee.

One of the first songs written by Harris for his own company was "Alderman Michael O'Rourke" which he wrote for ten dollars. When the song was to be presented Harris hired a friend to sit in the audience and applaud wildly. Perhaps the first plugger, the friend fell asleep but the song was a hit anyway!

Another early Harris song was "Thou Art Ever in My Thoughts" which he contracted to another publisher and which earned him $16.75 in royalties. Harris decided that there were greener pastures than those in Milwaukee so he travelled to Chicago. While there he met and befriended Will Rossiter, a prominent Chicago song writer. It was Rossiter who instructed Harris in the copyright laws, introduced him to printers and publishers, essentially showing him the publishing ropes. Rossiter also introduced Harris to the manager of the Chicago Opera House by whom he was invited to write songs for the extravaganze Ali Baba. In payment Harris was given an envelope with the instructions "Don't open this until you are on the boat to Milwaukee." Harris forgot to open it at all and his mother found the envelope later. Opening it she found four fifty-dollar bills and she promptly fainted. It was the biggest sing-

le payment Harris had ever received.

That same year, 1891, while Harris was beginning in the publishing business, he became a performer as well. Angered by the shoddy presentation of his songs, he decided he could do better. Although it was difficult, there were a few brighter spots. Harris recalled one in his autobiography: he had been invited by his brother to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to play a concert. Song after song was greeted by enormous waves of applause, more than Harris had ever experienced. He finished with the song "Home Sweet Home" written by John Howard Payne, and asked the doctor with whom he ate dinner after the performance what college this was that he had played. The doctor replied, "College? This is no college. This is the Northern Hospital for the Insane!"[168]

The first song published by Harris was "Hello Central, Hello" which he intended to be payment for banjo lessons he had been given. Instead, Harris was cheated by the plate maker who engraved the sheet music covers and internal pages thereby forcing Harris to abandon the promised payment. He learned a lesson, though, and attempted from then on to hire his own people with the talent to do all the different aspects of the music publishing business instead of having to spread out the different contracts for printing.

In 1892 Charles K. Harris made musical history for he took the music business a major step forward by writing and publishing the first popular song to sell several million copies of sheet music. The story for the song "After the Ball" was in-

spired by an event Harris attended in Chicago, when he saw a friend of his break his engagement after a big party. In order to make his former fiancée jealous, he escorted another girl home. The fiancée saw that her place had been filled by another girl and with tears in her eyes tried to cover her sadness with a smile. Harris thought of the line "Many a heart is aching, after the ball." Upon his return to Milwaukee, he was approached by his tailor, Sam Doctor, who was also an aspiring singer, to write a new song. Harris remembered the event in Chicago as well as the line he had thought of and "in one hour's time I wrote the complete lyric and music of "After the Ball."[169] He described the piece as a "song story" because the lyric was a long and sad tale of confused identity which is told in three long verses after which the chorus is repeated. The story and melody of "After the Ball" were typically Victorian. A little girl climbs upon her old uncle's knee. "Why are you not married and why have you no home?" "I had a sweetheart once, but I caught her kissing another man at a ball." The old man never forgot her or forgave her and it turned out that the man she was kissing was her brother. "I never married because I broke her heart, After the Ball."[170] This type of story-ballad was a Harris specialty written for middle class ladies to perform at home on their pianos. At the time mostly women played the piano, or touring performers from Europe, for it was thought that men who were musical were effeminate. [171]

The first performance was an enormous failure when the

tailor-minstrel Sam Doctor forgot the third verse of the long story song and had to leave the stage in great embarrassment. Harris decided that "never would an amateur introduce my songs." Harris next showed the song to May Howard who was appearing in Milwaukee, but she and her husband thought it was ridiculous and suggested that Harris dispose of the song. The Primrose and West Minstrel show came through Milwaukee next and Harris offered it to Dick Jose; Jose liked one of Harris' earlier songs more, "Kiss and Let's Make Up." The next big show in Milwaukee was A Trip to Chinatown which had opened in New York on November 9, 1891, and was touring the country. It is important historically for no show up to that date had as many songs which have remained active parts of our musical heritage.[172] Already one of the most successful shows of the decade, it included several songs by Percy Gaunt including "The Bowery." Harris knew the manager of the show, Ben Singer, and through him was introduced to J. Aldrich Libby, one of the most popular ballad singers in the country and the star of the show. Because of this popularity, Libby was in the position to interpolate any songs he wanted into the score. Not only did Harris show Libby his song, he also told him that he, Harris, was the correspondent for the New York Dramatic News and could guarantee a brilliant review if Libby would sing the song. Finally he would give Libby $500 as well as a piece of the royalties.[173] The leader of the touring show's band, Frank Palma, made an orchestration of the song for the payment of a good cigar and Libby introduced the song at the first matinee.[174]

When Libby finished the first verse and chorus, "not a sound was heard. I (Harris) was ready to sink through the floor. He went through the second verse and chorus and still complete silence reigned. I was making ready to bolt, but my friends held me tightly by the arms. Then came the third verse and chorus. For a full minute the audience remained quiet, and then broke loose with applause. The entire audience arose, and, standing, wildly applauded for five minutes."[175] They cheered and demanded more than six encores of the chorus.

The technique of the old man talking to his niece was a particularly inspired one for it allowed Harris to use the word "pet" whenever an extra syllable was needed to complete a line. It is used several times in the verse with great success. The chorus has become one of the most familiar of nineteenth century music.

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.

Julius Witmark immediately offered Harris $10,000 for the rights to the song, but Harris recognized that if it was worth that much to the Witmarks, it would be worth twice that amount to himself. Within a very few days, the song was being presented in three cities around the country by three leading bal-

lad singers and the Oliver Ditson company wired Harris from New York for 75,000 copies of the sheet music: 25,000 for Boston, 25,000 for New York and 25,000 for Chicago. Unfortunately the song was not yet printed and no Milwaukee press could handle that size order. However, Harris found a Chicago publisher who could and within ten days the orders were sent. Ditson's in New York sent Harris the first of many checks for "After the Ball" amounting to $14,250, along with an order for one hundred thousand more copies of the song. The success of "After the Ball" proved to be phenomenal, selling over ten million copies and earning $25,000 per week for the Harris firm.[177] Harris, the then king of the ballad, had cut himself into the lion's share of the music business profits by publishing his own song. He would show the way for future composers.[178] Harris' success with this song provided extra dividends. During 1892 Harris went to Chicago to set up arrangements with a printer and to open a branch of his publishing company. While there he was invited to a party where he was introduced to a Cora Lehrberg from Owensboro, Kentucky, who had just moved to Chicago. She later became his wife. While there he went to the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition where his song had become the favorite. John Phillip Sousa reported to Harris that people invariably requested it over and over; "Confound you, Harris, the playing of your song has tired me out." Perhaps so, but Sousa included "After the Ball" in each of his Exposition programs as well as for years later.[179] He did much to popularize the song around the country. Harris' success was such

that Milwaukee referred to the late 'nineties' as "the Harrisian Age." With "After the Ball" Milwaukee basked in the double fame of its flowing Schlitz and its flowing melodies.[180]

Harris' family seemed quite unaware of how much money "After the Ball" was making, for Harris didn't tell his mother, with whom he lived, until one Saturday when he sent her to a matinee show and had a decorator come in to measure the house for totally new furnishings. The next Saturday he sent her to another matinee and had the entire house refurnished; each room was redone in the best velvets and heavy woods that Milwaukee could provide. When Mrs. Harris returned she thought that she was in the wrong house and went back outside the door to check the number. Her newly hired maid assured her that indeed she was in the right place. Harris wrote that this was the most meaningful action he had ever taken.[181]

With that one song, Harris became a pillar of the popular music establishment; as a further result, Harris moved his center of operations from Milwaukee's Alhambra building where he had moved when he bought out his original investors, to New York's Union Square around 14th Street. He followed several others whose stories have already appeared in this thesis.

It is interesting that "After the Ball" so typified the songs of the 1890's that Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern used it in their show Show Boat as the perfect period piece.[182] This gigantic hit and tearjerker seemed the ideal way for Magnolia, the romantic singer of Show Boat's Cotton Blossom boat, to conquer an unruly crowd on New Year's Eve. Perhaps that is

the finest tribute of all.[183] To the day Harris died, he was convinced that "After the Ball" was the musical masterpiece of the nineteenth century.

Harris had made many friends in Milwaukee through his music and publishing enterprises. As a result of his success he was asked to join several prestigious clubs as well. One of those contacts, the editor of the Milwaukee Sun, heard that Harris' bank had loaned more than the bank could cover which caused a bank panic at that institution. Four other banks closed down as well. With money still coming in from orders for "After the Ball," Ditson and Sons sent the next check in American Express cash which Harris converted to silver. With this silver, Harris went to the hardest hit of the banks which had long lines of investors wishing to withdraw their money and he deposited twelve thousand dollars in silver. His confidence and deposits stopped the bank panic.[184]

Although Harris never had a hit of the magnitude of "After the Ball," he did have several which were great hits of their day. In 1897 he introduced "Break the News to Mother" which was written while Harris was in a barber's chair with the subject matter being the death of a fireman. Set in the Civil War, it seemed very out of date until Harris changed the fireman to a soldier which increased its popularity. He still could not get the song off the ground until he sent it to Julia Mackey. She introduced it the night after the battleship Maine was blown up in Havana Harbor and the song caught the public's fancy. A rival publisher is said to have commented

"Harris' luck, it took a war to make his song popular."[185] This song contained one of Tin Pan Alley's favorite rhyming sequences rhyming "mother" with "love her"!

One of Harris' close friends was Paul Dresser, the brother of author Theodore Dreiser. Dresser's great song success was "On the Banks of the Wabash" which Harris predicted would be an enormous success. It was Harris' influence which convinced a publisher to present the song in New York. Dresser predicted that "Break the News to Mother" would be an equal hit. Fortunately for the music world, Dresser was a better composer than he was a prognosticator. In fact, whether by coincidence or talent, Harris had an uncanny knack for picking successful song writers to publish and for knowing in advance how many copies a song would sell.[186] That same year Harris attempted to have lightening strike twice by writing a sequel to "After the Ball." Entitled "While the Dance Goes On" the story is about a mother who is enjoying herself at a dance while her baby is dying at home.

With his success, instead of approaching others to sing his songs, famous singers now came to him for help. One singer who did was J. Bernard Dyllyn, one of the most popular baritone singers in the 1890's. For him Harris created the song "Just Behind the Times." This was the true story of an elderly minister who had served his congregation for many years. He was ousted by the young people desiring someone more up to date. He wrote in his autobiography, "Here was a man who had given the best years of his life to the members of

his congregation, soothed their sorrows, married them and buried their loved ones for ever so many years, and who was now to be cast aside, like an old worn out glove, for a younger man:

A party of young people gathered
In their little church,
A meeting of importance there to hold
They then decided that their minister,
Although they loved him well,
He must resign, for he was growing old.
They sent to him this message,
He read it through and through,
While burning tears fell on the cruel lines,
For it was written in that message
That his sermons were too dry.
It also read, "You're just behind the times."

CHORUS

Behind the times, so they told him;
He's just behind the times.
His voice has lost its sweetness,
Like bells that no more chime.
He cannot hold their attention,
He faltered o'er his lines;
His power has gone, though few will mourn,
For he's Just Behind the Times.

On Sunday morn the church was crowded
For t'was rumored round the town
A younger minister was going to preach;
And in that same old dusty pulpit
Where the old man reigned for years
Another man had come his flock to teach.
He spoke of love and politics;
He spoke of fashion, too;
Of sights he'd seen in many different climes.
The old man sat alone and listened,
Then he sadly shook his head --
"I guess they're right, I am behind the times.

And so at last the sermon ended
And the old man slowly rose.
"Just let me say a few words ere you go."
Then slowly up the aisle he staggered,
To his pulpit as of yore,
With trembling limbs and face as white as snow.

"I've buried all your loved ones,
I've wept beside their graves,
I've shared your joys and sorrows many times."
Just then he gave a start, for his poor heart
Had broken from its pain.
His last words were: "I am behind the times."[187]

Harris persisted in his habit of writing songs based on incidents or events of the day. Yet for a while he ran a dry spell. He wrote three flop songs in a row because he was suffering from exhaustion. He and his wife took a trip to Washington, D. C., and Louisville, and upon their return, refreshed, he wrote three smash hits in a row. Harris' comment: "My advice to anybody, not only song writers, is: Don't try to write love ballads while suffering from indigestion." Harris was filled with advice based on his success as a song writer. He wrote a book called How to Write a Popular Song. In it he showed his pride in the business he belonged to, the "song manufacturing" business. To his readers he offered this advice: "Look at newspapers for your story line, acquaint yourself with the style in vogue, avoid slang, and know the copyright laws."[188] Harris even published rules on how to write a 'coon song.' For example, "the introduction or prelude should be four, eight or sixteen measures finishing on a dominant seventh chord." It is no wonder then, that he called his business "song manufacturing."[189]

Charles K. Harris was a very innovative person and there are several features of the music world which are attributable to him. Harris invented the practice of placing popular singers' photographs on the songs they introduced. It was a type

of ego "plugging." For the song "Is Life Worth Living" to be sung by Joe E. Howard, Harris invented the illustrated song using three backdrops painted with a scene to illustrate each verse. The enthusiastic reception for this spurred Harris on to new creativity. His song "I Loved Her Just the Same" was illustrated with stereopticon slides of real actors presenting scenes from the song. They were of enormous advertising value and the songs were easy to illustrate because, said Harris, "My songs always told a story based on incidents taken from life -- and always contained a moral. The audience would follow along, and by the chorus, would find themselves singing along."[190] Harris was the first composer to have a movable keyboard which could transpose songs simply by moving the keys. Harris couldn't play the piano well at all, and what little he could, was exclusively on the black keys.[191]

Many of Harris' songs were so popular that there were requests to use them as the basis of melodramatic plays. Al Woods, the founder of the production company Woods, Sullivan and Harris, asked permission to use several song titles for their plays. Harris granted permission for any song title except "After the Ball." In fact they used three, "Cast Aside," "Fallen by the Wayside" and "One Night in June."[192]

Not long afterwards, Harris met Lewis J. Selznick who suggested that Harris write scenarios for the newly invented movie process. When the script was completed, Selznick reneged on his promise and Harris produced it himself. Selznick later stated that if the film was good, he would pay all the

expenses plus a large fee for the script and would give Harris half the eventual profit after the release. Harris went on to write sixteen scenarios for the movies all of which were great financial successes. Selznick was not the only famous person with whom Harris had business dealings. Early in his publishing career Harris was begged by a new composer named Gustave Luders to publish one of his songs, but Harris was too busy publishing his own music. It was a major mistake for the score turned out to be the Prince of Pilsen which ran on Broadway for several years and earned an enormous fortune for Luders and his publishers. The four Cohans were another group of Harris' friends. He and George M. Cohan had an argument as to which type of song would last longer: George's "coon and comic" songs or Harris' ballads. George's mother took Charles K. Harris' side! Later Harris offered Cohan a blank check to publish his songs, but Cohan had already signed with a rival company. It was a great financial disappointment.

S. L. Rothafel, more familiar today as "Roxy" was introduced by Charles K. Harris to Mark and Spiegel with whom he joined to start the Roxy Theatre chain which included the Strand, the Rivoli and the Rialto. Roxy never forgot the favor done him by Harris and served as the backer for several Harris ventures.[193] One such venture was the production of the film version of "After the Ball." During the run of the movie a young man rushed into Harris' publishing office requesting a singer to sing "After the Ball" during the changing of reels at the Gem Theatre in Williamsburg. He said he was a new man to the

business and apparently didn't even recognize that he was speaking to the composer himself! All he wanted, said the man, was to make good. Harris said that he didn't know of a singer, that he certainly wasn't one himself, but that he would come anyway. "When my movies appeared in Broadway theatres I have been offered $1000 or more to make personal appearances which I refused. But when a young Jewish boy just starting in the business as a manager of a motion picture theatre and eager to make good came to me and laid his cards on the table, I decided to help him out, and here I am." With that opening speech, the audience in the Williamsburg theatre went wild. But Harris continued: "Don't be ashamed to sit upstairs in the gallery. I sat up there many a time. In fact, I shined boots to pay my way up there. If you will work hard and be honest, you too will all be able to sit downstairs like the other folks."[194]

Harris was fascinated by certain themes and the most common one of all found in his music was children. His second most successful song, written in 1901, was "Hello Central, Give Me Heaven" and was inspired by a news item about a child:

> I remember one morning at breakfast my wife called attention to an interesting item in a newspaper. It was the story of a coal dealer in Chicago who had lost his wife, leaving a little daughter, aged seven, to comfort him. As he was reading his evening paper, his little girl, who had been playing with some wooden blocks close by, suddenly threw them aside and climbed on a chair so as to reach a telephone hanging on the wall. Cranking the small handle of the old fashioned telephone then in use,

she said: "Hello, Central, give me heaven, for my mama's there."

When the child's message reached the operator in the telephone exchange the latter was rendered speechless. She told the other girls to listen in, which they did.

"Gee, I don't know how to answer the kid," said the operator.

One of the girls said: "Just say you're her mother and console her. It will soothe her little heart."

The father then took the little girl upon his knee and kissed her; and with a smile on her face, the child fell asleep in his arms.[195]

This song was one of the first "Hello" songs which became very popular soon after it was introduced. An even bigger success was the World War I song "Hello Central, Give Me No Man's Land."

In 1903 he was still capitalizing on the child theme. This dealt with a neglected child forgotten by his parents who was "Always in the Way." It was the last of Harris' big sellers.

An appropriate song which also dealt with the sadness of youth was the 1898 composition, "The Rabbi's Daughter." In it are all the Harrisian themes all rolled into one: love, sadness, parental disapproval and authority, death; it is a perfect example of Harris' art.

A rabbi sat one evening with a Bible on his knee.
His daughter knelt beside him for she loved him tenderly.
Come tell me child, the rabbi said,
Why do you weep and sigh? Don't be afraid to trust me, dear,
Tell me the reason why.

She gazed into his dear kind face and said:
Will you forgive?
I love a man with all my heart, without him
I can't live.
The Rabbi looked down at his child, "One
question answer me,
Is he of Jewish faith or not" -- her head
sank on his knee.

CHORUS

You are the Rabbi's daughter and as such you
must obey,
Your father you must honor unto his dying day.
If you a Christian marry, your old father's
heart you'll break,
You are a Rabbi's daughter, and must leave him
for my sake.

The hour of midnight sounded, the world seemed
all at rest.
The maiden kissed a picture and she held it to
her breast.
I'm told I must not love you, dear, I ne'er
must see your face,
And that you cannot marry me, for you're not of
my faith.
But I shall have no other love and though my
heart should break,
To you my love I'll faithful be, though I may
never wake.
Her words came true that very morn, for on
her bed so white,
The Rabbi found his only child had died for
love that night.[196]

What is interesting to note is Harris' curious detachment from his songs. In his autobiography, he often wrote of how moved his audiences were when ever they heard his songs, but never that they moved him as well. One thing he was moved by was financial matters and it was for that reason in 1908 that he went to see President Theodore Roosevelt about an issue which greatly troubled the song writers of the day. At the time there was no copyright law in America and Harris represented a group of writers which included Victor Herbert, Re-

ginald de Koven and others who wanted to see that situation corrected. President Roosevelt took great interest in Harris' presentation and personally wrote introductions to the two members of Congress in charge of committees which were examining the question, Senator Smoot and Congressman Frank D. Currier. Then the President sent Harris to the copyright office for further information. Harris noted that the President gave him a forty minute interview which was one of the longest President Roosevelt ever gave.[197] As a result of their efforts, the 1909 Copyright Bill was passed which created the basis for the 1918 foundation of A.S.C.A.P., the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers which protected songwriters.

Harris concluded that even with A.S.C.A.P. his songs were not receiving their just treatment, so in 1925 he came out of retirement and went into Vaudeville to advertize his own songs and to try to clean up the lyrics found in popular songs of the day. According to Harris, the 1920's and 1930's were days of ruin; it was the 1890's when there were geniuses on Tin Pan Alley. "Fellows then wrote music and the words while by the 1920's you saw two names for the words and two more for the music." At least according to Charles K. Harris, the era of geniuses was gone.[198]

Harris' days were over by the 1930's; where songs unfolded endless tales of woe, in triple verses centering around a repeated refrain, with melodramas about villians, death, women wronged, children abandoned, where vice was conquered and virtue was at last restored. He has been treated very harshly

by modern critics. After his death on December 22, 1930, his wife sold his company to the Southern Music Company.[199] At that time Sigmund Spaeth wrote of him: "The career of Charles K. Harris remained convincing proof of the fact that one can become an enormously popular songwriter without ever writing a really good song. His work was a perfect reflection of the essential naivete of his period."[200]

Whether one likes Charles Kassel Harris' songs or not, he, more than anybody else, initiated the style that was to dominate Tin Pan Alley for a generation. His songs are still sung today, almost ninety years after they were written. It appears that he and George M. Cohan reached a draw.

CHAPTER NINE: THE VON TILZERS

It was no coincidence that in 1903 when Monroe Rosenfeld began his famous series of articles about the music business, he went to the offices of Harry von Tilzer for his research. Firstly, von Tilzer was one of the most popular men in the business, and secondly, he was also one of the most successful. It was in von Tilzer's offices that Rosenfeld heard the unique sound of player pianos tinkling away reminding him of tin pans. It was there that he coined the phrase "Tin Pan Alley" although in later years Harry von Tilzer claimed it as his own![201] That Rosenfeld should have sought out von Tilzer for information when von Tilzer had only been in the business for a few years, and had been publishing for himself only one year, illustrates how quickly von Tilzer's success came. For many years he was called "Mr. Tin Pan Alley." When Tin Pan Alley died, Harry von Tilzer's career ended as well.

If quantity is the criterion for a composer's importance, then Harry von Tilzer ranks as one of the top men in the field. He claimed to have written eight thousand songs, two thousand of which were published.[202] More than a dozen of these songs sold more than a million copies,[203] and von Tilzer estimated that several hundred million copies of his songs were sold in his career.[204]

Born on July 8, 1872 in Detroit, Michigan, his real name was Harry Gumm.[205] His parents were Jacob and Sarah Tilzer Gumm and they had five children. Four of the boys went into

different phases of the music business. When Harry was a young boy the family moved to Indianapolis where his father purchased a shoe shop beneath a loft where a theatrical troupe gave performances. Harry loved going to see this group and when he could collect enough money, he would go to the minstrel shows and burlesque theatres which were in town. When not doing that, he would sit in hotel lobbies waiting to get a glimpse of his favorite talents.

At fourteen years of age he succumbed to the lure of the stage and ran away from home, joining the Cole Brothers Circus. He had prepared himself for several months before this by learning a tumbling act so that he could be an active member of the circus troupe.[206] Soon after joining Cole Brothers, his parents apprehended him, brought him home and hoped that he would forget show business. Not quite a year later, he ran away again, this time to Chicago where he became a "spieler" for a medicine show; later in an itinerant theatrical troupe he became actor, pianist, composer and juvenile lead.[207] Fearing that with a name of Gumm he would never get anywhere, he adopted his mother's maiden name, Tilzer, and added a "von" for good measure. With this theatrical company he found a ready outlet for the songs which he was writing in great profusion. While in Chicago he wrote his first song which was published. Entitled "I Love You Both" it served as his entree to the world of vaudeville; the star Lottie Gilson liked the song so much that she persuaded her publisher to present von Tilzer's song. It was published in 1892 by Willis Woodward. Asked in the song

"Who do you love more?":

> I love you both, Papa with all my heart.
> I love you both, from Mama I never could part.
> Father, you've always been good to me.
> And a mama that's sweeter there never could be.
> So to answer that question, its quite hard
> you see,
> I Love You Both.

By this time he had written a number of songs, several of which Miss Gilson liked, including "De Swellest Gal in Town" which was soon after published. She gave him some sound advice; there were far greater rewards in song writing than in acting, and the place for song writing was New York, not the "sticks". By working as a groom for a trainload of horses, he got to New York. Arriving in 1892 with only $1.65 in his pocket, he found a cheap room near the Brooklyn bridge and procured a job playing piano in a saloon for fifteen dollars a week.

By working at the saloon, he found ample time to compose dozens of songs every month selling them anyplace available, sometimes for as little as two dollars. His diversity was amazing; these songs included waltzes, German dialect and Irish brogue songs, even minstrel-coon songs. Little by little his songs were becoming known; some even made it to the stage of Tony Pastor's Music Hall in Union Square, the future site of Tin Pan Alley. In June, 1896, von Tilzer himself became a performer joining up with George Sidney in a German dialect comedy act. Most of these early songs were unsuccessful, but when he had hits, they were enormous.

Von Tilzer shared a room with a lyricist named Andrew B.

Sterling and it was with him that von Tilzer wrote his first enormous smash song. The year was 1898 and the song was "My Old New Hampshire Home." Late one night on the top floor room they shared on Fifteenth Street, they wrote the song. It was written on the back of a rent bill by the light of the outside street lamp because they were afraid to turn on their lights due to owing three weeks' back rent! The next day they made the rounds of all the publishing houses around Union Square but no one purchased the song. Finally they sold it to a local printer named William C. Dunn, who controlled a music company called Orphean Music Company. Before Dunn even knew if the first song was a hit, he bought another entitled "I'd Leave My Happy Home for You." Amazingly enough, "My Old New Hampshire Home" went on to sell over two million copies.[208] "I'd Leave My Happy Home for You" sold almost as many, but was somewhat different than what the vaudeville audience was used to. It was a coon song, based on the following real events.

In 1897 von Tilzer was appearing in a show in Hartford, Connecticut, when he was approached by a young girl who pleaded with him to find her a position in the theatre; she came from a wealthy home and was ready, she said, to sacrifice everything in order to be on the stage. To rid himself of this nuisance, he told the girl that he would try to find her something after the run of the show ended. Immediately after closing night, the girl was in the theatre waiting for him, ready to follow him anywhere. She even said, "I'd leave my happy home for you." Von Tilzer dismissed the girl, but her comments interested him

enough that he brought the idea to lyricist Will A. Heelan. Heelan quickly scribbled out some words with a slight "negro flavor" to them including the repetition of nonsense syllables "ooo-ooo."

> I'd leave my happy home for you, oo-oo-oo-oo,
> You're de nicest man I ever knew oo-oo-oo-oo.
> If you take me and just break me in de
> business, too, oo,
> I'd leave my happy home for you, oo-oo-oo-oo.

The song was used first by Annette Flagler in vaudeville and then Blanche Ring presented it at Tony Pastor's Music Hall where she enjoyed enormous success with it.

As a result of the success of the songs, Dunn became a very wealthy publisher and von Tilzer became a recognized song writer. Dunn soon sold out his company to two newcomers to the music business, Lew Bernstein and Maurice Shapiro. These two men exhibited great business sense when they recognized von Tilzer's possible value and Shapiro took von Tilzer off the vaudeville stage, and paid him $4000 royalties for "My Old New Hampshire Home" as an advance for the money they might earn from the song. This gesture was simply one of good will because Shapiro and Bernstein owned the song outright and did not have to pay anything; soon after they made him a staff song writer and then a junior partner, the company then being called Shapiro, Bernstein and von Tilzer.[209]

Their wisdom was rewarded within two years; von Tilzer wrote a two million copy seller called "A Bird in a Gilded Cage" with lyrics by Arthur Lamb. When the lyrics were brought

to von Tilzer, he refused to write any music until it was clarified that the heroine in the song was married to the rich old man, not just living with him. The song pointed up a moral that was very fashionable in the 1890's: that gold does not buy love or happiness. Von Tilzer put the "poem" in his pocket and went to a party that ended in a 'road house of unsavory reputation.' There he composed the tune.[210] When some of the "women" there broke down into tears he exclaimed: "If these ladies weep real tears over my song, I have composed a hit!"[211]

"A Bird in a Gilded Cage" was typical of the early Tin Pan Alley style both in content and in music. It was a lovely waltz which was appropriate in that the story was set at a ball.

> The ballroom was filled with fashion's throngs,
> It shone with a thousand lights.
> And there was a woman who passed along,
> The fairest of all the sights.

The rest of the story dealt with a young woman who married an old wealthy man. She does not outlive him as she had expected, and the chorus serves as a eulogy over her grave.

> 'Tis sad when you think of her wasted life,
> For youth cannot mate with age,
> And her beauty was sold
> For an old man's gold,
> She's a bird in a gilded cage.[212]

The comparison to several of the songs written by Charles K. Harris is obvious; although brilliant, it really cannot be claimed that von Tilzer was thoroughly original. He received a handsome payment for "A Bird in a Gilded Cage" from his

bosses, but he decided to follow Harris' lead and establish his own publishing firm. After working with Shapiro and Bernstein he wrote many great hit songs including "Shine On, Harvest Moon" and "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nelly" but he enjoyed his greatest success in the year immediately after he started his own firm on 28th Street.[218]

Between 1902, when he started the firm, and 1906, he wrote seven major hit songs. Four of them were composed in the initial year of the firm, 1902, and sold over five million copies of sheet music. The first was "The Mansion of Aching Hearts" which was a sequel to "A Bird in a Gilded Cage." Here von Tilzer preached against diamonds and gold buying happiness. Irving Berlin, as a little boy, sang this song on the streets of the Bowery, earning pennies in the process. As will be seen later, his relationship with von Tilzer became much closer.

The second of these songs was "Down Where the Wurzburger Flows" which was intended to be a German drinking song in the Broadway musical Wild Rose. It was not used so von Tilzer attempted to interest other singers in it. Nora Bayes, who was still a relative newcomer to the stage, accepted the song and she premiered it at the Orpheum Theatre in Brooklyn. Von Tilzer sat in one of the boxes and as all good song pluggers did, he rose and sang several refrains when Miss Bayes had finished singing hers.[214] He was so good as a "stooge" that he was hired for a week to continue plugging the song![215] Miss Bayes sang the song so many times that she became known as "the Wurzburger Girl." In 1903 von Tilzer wrote a sequel to this song

entitled "Under the Anheuser Bush"!

"On a Sunday Afternoon" started out as an idea he had at Brighton Beach in Brooklyn. While enjoying the sand and view he came upon the idea "people work hard on Monday, but Sunday is one fun day." Von Tilzer gave this appealing title to his lyricist, Andrew B. Sterling, who created a lyric for him. Von Tilzer gave the song to Weber and Fields; with their help the song was selling ten thousand copies of music each day in New York City alone. "On a Sunday Afternoon" was one of the earliest seasonal songs produced on Tin Pan Alley.[216]

The fourth example of the hits von Tilzer wrote in that first year was "Please Go 'Way and Let Me Sleep," for which von Tilzer also wrote the lyrics. This song became a success as a result of brilliant song plugging conceived by von Tilzer himself. When the minstrel Arthur Deming introduced the song to vaudeville, Harry von Tilzer was sitting in the audience, pretending to be sleeping, and snoring loudly. Deming stopped his singing, ordered an usher to wake the rude fellow and to escort him out. As von Tilzer was being shaken, he began the chorus in a sleepy kind of fashion saying, "Please go 'way and let me sleep." The publicity gained from this assured huge music sales.

This semi-coon song typified a style often used by von Tilzer. He had great success with coon songs beginning in 1901 with "Down Where the Cotton Blossoms Grow" lyrics by Andrew B. Sterling. Two others were "Alexander, Don't You Love Your Baby No More?" and "What You Goin' to Do When the

Rent Comes Around?" "Alexander, Don't You Love Your Baby No More" which was the song on which Irving Berlin based "Alexander's Ragtime Band" was created from personal experiences. While at a vaudeville performance of the minstrel team McIntyre and Heath, von Tilzer saw that the audience continually laughed at the name "Alexander" when McIntyre talked to Heath. He decided that Alexander was a good name. Some time later he overheard a black woman comment to her boyfriend, "Don't you love your baby no more?" Together they were the impetus von Tilzer needed.

"What You Goin' To Do When the Rent Comes Round" received its inspiration when von Tilzer was at a railroad station in Miami, Florida. While standing there, he heard a black lady berating her husband for his lazy ways. "What you goin' to do when the rent comes round?" she asked. Von Tilzer used that as his theme and named the fellow in the song Rufus Johnson Brown.[217]

Actually von Tilzer wrote songs in many styles. He wrote "mammy songs" such as "I Want a Girl Just Like the Girl that Married Dear Old Dad" (1911) and ballads such as "Wait Till the Sun Shines Nellie." This song sold more than one million copies when it was introduced. Its derivation is questioned now; some say it came from a remark by a reporter when speaking to a family whose property had been destroyed by a storm. Others maintain that von Tilzer had the idea when he heard somebody make that remark while standing in the lobby of a hotel. Whatever the source, it became one of the most successful songs

he wrote. It was even used by relief workers after the San Francisco fire to cheer up the people: "Wait till the sunshine's Frisco."[218]

Harry von Tilzer wrote songs about Ireland, "A Little Bunch of Shamrocks," about the South, "Down Where the Cotton Blossoms Grow," about telephones, "Hello Central, Give Me 603" which came to be known by the name of "All Alone" (about thirteen years earlier than the Irving Berlin song of the same name). This was the first song to use an actual telephone on stage as property. Von Tilzer still attempted to write the kinds of songs the people had enjoyed in the 1890's. A fine example, written in 1905, was the song "Where the Morning Glories Twine" which spoke of a desire to return to the innocence of lost youth.

> Mother dear will come to meet me
> And a sweetheart's kiss will greet me,
> Where the morning glories twine around
> the same old door.[219]

Von Tilzer introduced the fad of writing songs about popular dances of the day. The first he wrote was "The Cubanola" which was to have been interpolated in a musical called The Girl from Rector's. Instead it was introduced in 1909 by Harriet Raymond and served as the pioneering song for other dance songs such as "The Bunny Hug," "The Grizzly Bear," and "The Turkey Trot."

It is most likely that Harry von Tilzer was the most prolific writer in the history of Tin Pan Alley. His last song

hit was "Just Around the Corner" which he wrote in 1925. He had not had any success for a number of years when the Broadway producer Elizabeth Marbury wrote him a letter to console him, saying, "Just around the corner the sun will shine for you." With this statement and the help of Ted Lewis and his band, von Tilzer's last song became a success.

Albert von Tilzer, Harry's younger brother, also played an important role in the history of the American music business. He was born in Indianapolis on March 29, 1878. As a young boy he learned to play the piano and for a time became the music director of a small vaudeville troupe. Called to Chicago by his brother to work in the Shapiro, Bernstein and von Tilzer office there, he got involved with writing songs. Soon after he left for New York where he became a shoe salesman in a department store. In 1900 Albert wrote his first song "Absent Minded Beggar Waltz." In 1903 his brother Harry published a song for which Albert had written both words and music.

Albert von Tilzer will be remembered for two reasons: first, in 1903, he and his brother Jack opened their own publishing firm called York Music Company, and secondly, for writing two very successful songs. In 1908 Albert von Tilzer wrote the song "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" which has become the national anthem of the sport, and secondly he wrote the song, "I'll Be with You in Apple Blossom Time" which was made popular in vaudeville by Nora Bayes and later by the Andrews Sisters.[220] Albert died in Hollywood where he was writing movie songs on October 1, 1956.

Harry von Tilzer deserves a place in a history of the Jewish contribution to American music even if he had not written a song himself. He was the first man to publish a song by George Gershwin which was called "When You Want'Em, You Can't Get 'Em; When You Get 'Em, You Don't Want 'Em" with words by Murray Roth;[221] and von Tilzer was the man who gave Irving Berlin his start in the music business.[222] Berlin served as a song plugger for von Tilzer at Tony Pastor's club and was helped along by von Tilzer's advice. Von Tilzer's company was the first to publish a Berlin song, "Just Like the Rose."

More than a song writer and publisher, Harry von Tilzer was a family man. He was happily married on August 10, 1906, and lived with his wife until his death on January 10, 1946. He spent his last years as a companion for his friends, resting on his musical laurels. He was one of the few composers to show development in his writing; he had written in all styles found in the popular music world; he had helped mold and satisfy the public tastes. If the 1890's could be called the Harrisian age named after Charles K. Harris, then the 1900 decade could be called von Tilzerian.

In Harry von Tilzer's office before he died, 1587 Broadway, he was asked where Tin Pan Alley was: "Where is it? Songs. The real songs were written in the old days when pluggers were pluggers. A team gets excited now when it turns out a song that sells a few hundred thousand copies, why I've had one-hundred-eighteen songs that sold over half a million copies a piece.

Under that number I wouldn't dream of calling it a hit."[223] When von Tilzer died, Tin Pan Alley died, too. For many years they were synonymous.

CHAPTER TEN: JEROME KERN

Jerome David Kern was the first and the best; the teacher and the master of American musical theatre composers. They all recognized this; Richard Rodgers said, "If you were at all sensitive to music, Kern had to be your idol. You had to worship Kern."[224] His work towered over his contemporaries. His songs inspired other "embryonic" artists who became his disciples. George Gershwin felt a similar impact when he heard two of Kern's songs for the first time. He was sixteen and attending his aunt's wedding when the band played two Kern songs. Impressed with the unusual quality of the music, he went to the leader to ask the composer. It was Kern. The songs were "You're Here and I'm Here" and "They Didn't Believe Me."[225] Gershwin wrote later, "I followed Kern's works and studied each song he composed. I paid him the tribute of frank imitation, and many things I wrote at this period sounded as though Kern had composed them himself."[226]

Kern's sometime lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II wrote that Kern would spend hours working on a single modulation of a song. Wrote Hammerstein, "Kern would almost frantically work to ferret out some attractive and unusual way for creating a bridge from a verse to a refrain. I have seen him take off his shirt and work in his undershirt, the sweat pouring off of him, forgetting completely that I was there and that he was using up my time as well as his own."[227]

From the early nineteen-twenties until his death in 1945, Kern created a strong base upon which theatrical music could

stand. Although he was never convinced that show music shouldn't be operatic in style, he still provided a typically American style to what had been a European genre. When one views the thirty-six shows he wrote, the number of classic songs included therein is amazing. He conformed to the stylistic pattern of popular music of his day; most of the themes he used were not unusual. It was the fact that each aspect of every song fit into the pattern Kern had decided upon that made his songs so unusual and great.

Jerome David Kern was the youngest of nine boys, of whom three survived. His parents, Fanny and Henry Kern, lived rather well, especially in comparison to the other composers included in this thesis. Henry Kern was president of a firm which served the city of New York sanitation department, sprinkling the streets. He also sold real estate. Fanny provided the culture and music for the family since she was a fine pianist. Jerome was born on January 27, 1885, in New York City. Soon after, the Kerns moved to East Seventy-fourth Street. It was here that he began training in the piano with his mother as teacher. She was a strict disciplinarian, but he learned piano effortlessly and soon was always at the piano doing exercises or improvisations.

Although coming from a German-Jewish home, Kern would often go visit the Episcopal church near his home to hear the choir practice. It was at age ten that he saw his first musical show, The Wizard of the Nile, by Victor Herbert. Already he was showing some of his musical genius for upon his return from the theatre, he sat at the piano and played most of the songs from the

show.

When Kern was ten, in 1895, the family moved to Newark, New Jersey, where Henry Kern had purchased a merchandising house. There Kern went to Barringer High School where he was recognized for his musical achievements. Referred to as "the little genius" by the teachers who were impressed with his musical ability, not his scholastic aptitude, he soon was involved in all the musical events of the school. He graduated from high school in 1902 and went on to Normal College in New York where he would prepare to be a music teacher. Concurrently he started attending classes at the New York College of Music. There he received his first in depth training in piano and harmony. While there he wrote his first published song, "At the Casino" presented by the Lyceum Publishing Company in September of 1902.

It is interesting that although Kern was one of the most thoroughly trained musicians whose biographies appear in this thesis, he still composed almost entirely in the same way as the unschooled composers. He used the elementary lead sheet method where just the melody line was written in, filling in with chords underneath. Only at one time did he attempt something more technical. In 1942, three years before he died, he composed a concert piece, "Mark Twain -- A Portrait for Orchestra." As the critics stated, he should have stayed with popular songs.[228]

Kern travelled to Europe in 1903 for a year absorbing as much as he could of the music found there. Also he studied composition and harmony with teachers in Heidelberg. Eventually he settled in London where he was hired by Charles Frohman to con-

tribute musical numbers as fillers for Frohman productions. At a salary of ten dollars per week, it wasn't a marvelous job; however, it provided an extremely important dividend. While working on one of his first songs, "Mr. Chamberlain," he first worked with P. G. Wodehouse who was also just beginning as a journalist - lyricist. Seymour Hicks, who was a popular actor at the time, brought the journalist and the beginning composer together and it was for him that "Mr. Chamberlain" was composed. Hicks sang this song as an interpolation to the show The Beauty and the Bath where it was a success.

Max Dreyfus, who had taken over the directorship of T. B. Harms and Company publishing house, which was the largest in Tin Pan Alley at the time, recognized Kern's talent and signed him as a staff pianist.[229] Dreyfus had noticed Kern while Kern was working for Shapiro-Remick publishing house as a song plugger. It was the same year of Kern's return from England that he wrote four songs for an English musical, Mr. Wix of Wickham, in 1904. Dreyfus commented, "I decided to take him on and to start him off by giving him the toughest job I know, selling music."[230] While plugging songs at various department stores, Kern kept writing new songs which were published by the Harms company. One of these was the first American success, "How'd You Like to Spoon with Me." The lyrics were written by Edward Laska who had been commissioned by a producer for a song for a show. Laska approached Kern who provided a melody he had written while in high school. The producer turned down the song because he didn't like the use of the word "spoon" in the title. Laska and Kern took

the song to the Shuberts who were glad to interpolate it into their musical The Earl and The Girl which opened on November 4, 1905. Wrote Laske:

> The Shuberts were then just starting as producers and had one show on and another in rehearsal. Their office was atop the Lyric Theatre on 42nd Street which had been built for them by the socialite composer, Reginald De Koven.
>
> Sam Shubert, the leading one of the three brothers, came out to see us and up chirped Jerry, "We are proteges of Reginald De Koven and have a song for you to hear." I nearly collapsed at hearing who we were, and Shubert, impressed with our connection, led us to an adjoining room with a piano. Jerry played and I sang. They were enthusiastic and agreed to feature it. . . . The song was an enormous hit and swept the English speaking world."[231]

Very often songs were interpolated into different shows. It was a common practice. Interpolation gave Kern plenty of opportunities to write songs for shows without having the pressure of the entire score placed on him. Between 1905 and 1912 Kern placed more than one hundred songs in shows which had been written by others. More than thirty musicals benefitted from Kern's contributions.[232] Kern himself was to condemn this practice a few years later, especially when songs of no bearing whatever were placed in shows simply for the sales possibility. "Songs must be suited to the action and the mood of the play. My mission is to do something for the future of American music which today has no class whatsoever."[233]

The year 1910 was an important year for Kern because on October 10 he married Eva Leale, a girl he had met in England.

They were married in her home town of Walton on the Thames about twenty miles from London. Mr. and Mrs. Kern returned to his apartment in New York on West Sixty-Eighth Street. They were married for thirty-five years.

Kern, who by all accounts was a humorless man, once commented on the practice of interpolation thusly: "Interpolating a song was such a common practice that a producer could go to the rear of a theatre to congratulate a composer on a show's opening night success and find a whole crowd of songwriters saying thanks."[234] Kern was to have his way in 1912 when he was called upon to write the entire score for a musicale. The Red Petticoat was a terrible failure as were the next two musicals Kern wrote, but 1914 saw his first Broadway success. The Girl from Utah was a show imported from England to which Kern contributed several songs. His most famous and earliest "standard" came from that production. "They Didn't Believe Me" was his first song to sell great numbers of sheet music, more than two million copies. The show opened on Broadway August 24, 1914 with Julia Sanderson in the title role. It was for her that Kern had written "They Didn't Believe Me." The words were written by Herbert Reynolds, and contained several musical surprises which kept interest in the song. It was another song from this show, "You're Here and I'm Here," that awakened George Gershwin to song writing.[235]

From 1915 through 1919 Kern wrote the music for a series of situation comedies about American life. The characters were honeymoon couples instead of royalty, far from the operetta he had earlier favored.[236] Kern was fascinated by American culture

in general. As a highly assimilated German Jew, he pioneered the American school of music, aspiring to write an American operetta.[237] The shows Kern came up with were called "Princess Theatre Shows" derived from the small and intimate theatre where they were produced. The owner of the theatre, Elizabeth Marbury, decided that a new type of musical was needed which would comfortably fit in her small theatre; it would have small sets, lower budgets and a small orchestra. She approached Kern and an English lyricist-librettist, Guy Bolton. As the basis for their first show, they adapted and English musical of Bolton's entitled Nobody Home. The show was well received by the critics and audiences alike, even earning a small profit. The cast was comprised of a chorus line of eight women, the principals, and an orchestra of ten; it was a radical departure from what had been seen earlier in American theatre. The major song in it was "The Magic Melody" which became an enormous hit.

The second of the Princess shows opened in 1915 as well. Guy Bolton again was librettist for the musical Very Good, Eddie. The lyrics for Kern's songs were written by Schuyler Greene. The plot concerned two married couples who plan a trip on the Hudson River Day Line. Somehow they get mixed up, so that one wife is with the other husband, but to keep appearances up, they continue the charade. The reviews were excellent, commenting that this was a "kitchenette production" and a "pleasing parlor entertainment."[238] Some of the songs were "Babes in the Woods," and "Nodding Roses." The show earned a one hundred thousand dollar profit, which allowed for the next show to be produced. In 1917

Kern wrote Oh, Boy! which was even more successful than Very Good, Eddie. It ran 463 performances which was a very long run in those days. Kern's collaborator as a result of Oh, Boy! was P. G. Wodehouse, with whom he had written in England thirteen years before. Wodehouse had been sent to review the Kern show and they were so pleased to see each other again that Kern asked him to join their next venture.

In 1917, Kern wrote five musicals on his own. These included Have a Heart, Love o'Mike, Leave It to Jane, Miss 1917, and the aforementioned Oh, Boy! Except for Love o'Mike, the lyrics were by Wodehouse. With this collection of musicals, the operetta in America had finally fostered the original musical comedy. Oh, Boy! provided one of Kern's most famous songs, in fact it became the title of the film biography of Kern, "Till the Clouds Roll By." A second number was "Nesting Time in Flatbush" which was written as a parody of "When It's Apple Blossom Time in Normandy." The show was an enormous success at the box office.

The next year, 1918, Kern, Wodehouse and Bolton wrote another successful Princess show, this time called Oh, Lady, Lady. So great was the demand for tickets, that a second company was formed at another theatre to run concurrently with the Princess theatre production. Songs which came from that show are "Oh, Lady, Lady," and "Before I Met You." A song that would prove extremely important later on was dorpped from the show and was eventually used in Show Boat; the song "Bill" had been originally set for that show but didn't suit Vivienne Segal's voice. Al-

though there was one more Princess show, it was not written by Kern.

Wodehouse had an unusual relationship with Kern, one of respect and warmth. "Nothing could have been more pleasant than my relationship with Jerry. Not a cross word, as they say. But I am told after Show Boat he became a little difficult and had a good deal to say to his lyricists about their defects. He also changed from the rollicking spirit of the "Princess" days into what you might call The Music Master. I never saw that side of him. To me he has always been the Jerry of Oh, Boy! and Oh, Lady, Lady! and the other dozen shows we did together."[239]

A curious incident took place in 1919 which had great effect on Kern's attitudes toward his music. A ragtime pianist named Johnny Black borrowed a melody from vaudevillian Felix Bernard. Black added some middle-eastern embellishments and presented it to publisher Fred Fisher. Fisher added the story and lyrics. The song became known as "Dardanella." Later in that year, Fisher claimed that "the regal theatre composer" Jerome Kern stole his song "Dardanella" for his song, "Kalua." Kern was furious and brought in several musicians into a court to defend his position. Leopold Stokowski and Victor Herbert both testified that in fact the line of music in question was taken from a nineteenth century classical song so that Fisher could not claim ownership at all. The jury which heard the case awarded one dollar to Fisher for damages.[240] As a result, Kern was very careful how people presented his songs, what kind of arrangement they were given, and in what medium they were playing. When radio

first came into prominence, he was a leading opponent, attempting to keep his songs off the air waves.

It should not be thought that Kern totally ignored the enormous costume musicals of his day. In fact he wrote several of the most gaudy and beautiful of them all. In 1920 the first of these costumed pageants was presented. The show was called Sally and was produced by Florenz Ziegfeld. Naturally with a Ziegfeld production, the costumes and sets were designed by the best people available. For Sally the costumes were prepared by Joseph Urban, the greatest of his day. The star of the show was Marilyn Miller for whom Kern wrote one of his most beautiful melodies, "Look for the Silver Lining." Apparently it was written as a companion piece for his earlier "Till the Clouds Roll By." The lyrics were written by B. G. De Sylva, who wrote with Gershwin and Lew Brown after Kern. The inspiration of the song came not only from the beautiful lyrics, but from Kern's magnificent melody.

Also included in the score for Sally were the songs "Whippoorwill" and "Wild Rose," each of which became very successful. Music critic Alec Wilder wrote that Kern created the first "American Sound" by combining the best that non-American theatre music had to offer, mainly European, with American themes.[241] He also hybridized elements of a musical form that was termed "ragtime" into a syncopated approach to music which was entirely his own, but which carried with it a strong flavor of American Negro music. It is no wonder, then, that he influenced Gershwin as he did.[242]

Within the next seven years, Kern wrote nine more shows,

all relatively successful. In 1923 came Stepping Stones which starred Fred Stone, his wife Allene, and their daughter, Dorothy. From that score came the songs "Once in a Blue Moon " and "Raggedy Ann." The next very successful show Kern composed was in 1925, Sunny, which also starred Marilyn Miller who had been such a hit in the earlier show Sally. For her Kern wrote a most difficult song to set lyrics. The song started out with a single note which had to be held for nine beats, a very long time. Obviously one couldn't have several words sung on one note like that, so lyricist Oscar Hammerstein had a problem. He solved it by using the word "who" which had sufficient interest to be used five times in the refrain. Kern said later that this was Hammerstein's greatest lyric.[243] The next year, in 1926, Kern wrote Criss Cross which was a follow-up musical for the Stone family.

Sadly for Kern the accomplishments of stagecraft had not caught up with the ability and style of his music. In general, the books in which his songs were placed were so poor, that they cannot be revived today, except as obviously historical curiousities. In 1976, Kern's musical Very Good, Eddie was revived for a short run, but although the songs were excellent, the book was painfully dated.

Jerome Kern had become the most successful and highly thought of composer on Broadway by 1927. He had enormous wealth, a mansion in Bronxville, New York, where he lived with his wife and daughter, Betty, who had been born in 1918. He owned two automobiles including a Rolls Royce, a speed boat and a houseboat on which he would travel to Florida. His major luxury, however,

was his collection of rare books. In fact there were no collections to equal his, owned by private collectors. He owned first editions of Tennyson and Shelley, Shakespeare and Samuel Johnson, copies autographed by Kipling, etc. When he purchased the collection it cost him about $750,000. In 1928, having some premonition of the times to come, he auctioned it for the then largest sum ever recorded, $2,200,000. He collected gold, stamps, coins, silver goblets, virtually anything of value. Yet with his enormous wealth he was one of the cheapest men on Broadway. He rarely if ever left a tip at a restaurant, tried whenever possible to force his often less-pecunious friends into paying for meals, etc.

He was also a jokester, enjoying playing tricks on other people. He enjoyed jokes and games, but only if he was the winner. His greatest enjoyment came from showing up his friends if they made a mistake, such as in games and puzzles. It was Kern who invented the game "Guggenheim," a game of word association, which became the rage in the 1920's. Yet Kern was not able to admit that he, too, made mistakes. Indeed, he was a very difficult man. Perhaps what is most confusing about Kern was the method in which he worked. Although very organized when it came to some things, such as betting on horse races or collecting, his work habits were quite slovenly. He slept when he felt like it, composed during the middle of the night, more often than not calling his collaborator at three in the morning after he had written something. He never had to leave his piano because he had a desk built in for writing down his music.

When Kern wrote a song, the music always came first. Once he decided that he liked a tune, there was no way for his lyricist to change a single note. The words had to fit exactly as Kern had written them. Often when he was writing for a movie or musical he would write far more songs than were necessary, so that at rehearsal he could choose which ones he liked the best. Needless to say, the rejected song was kept for a future project.

In 1927, Kern realized his dream of writing a truly American musical with songs integrated into the score so that they would be inseparable. The setting was the South; not Dixie and Mammy, but the real South. Earlier in that year, Kern had read Edna Ferber's novel Show Boat. Although quite unusual by that day's standards, Kern realized the potential it had to be a musical. The story was rich in the kind of Americana Kern so appreciated. The characters included a riverboat gambler named Gaylord Ravenal and Magnolia Hawks, the daughter of the showboat owner. Also there was the sub-plot of the marriage of a black girl to a half white man; her name was Julie, the star of the show boat. Kern realized that there was no real place for dancing girls and choruses except in the show-within-a-show sequences on the river boat itself. The difficulties were in getting Edna Ferber to agree. She had to be convinced that her novel was suitable for a musical production. Then Kern convinced Oscar Hammerstein II to write the text and lyrics. Finally, to produce the musical, Kern approached Florenz Ziegfeld. That took a certain amount of risk, for Ziegfeld was recognized as equally strong willed as Kern. However, Kern realized that Ziegfeld was more interested

in a class production which made money, than the artistic aspects of the production.

Today we view the show as melodramatic and even gauche; then it was seen as realistically historical. Kern attempted to write music which evoked the period, the eighteen nineties, going so far as to use Charles K. Harris' masterpiece, "After the Ball" to lend more credence.[244] Hammerstein and Kern met or spoke every day to keep abreast of what each was doing. They decided that each aspect of the show must fit together, so that there would be no seams obvious to the audience. As an example, the lyricist-librettist Hammerstein said to Kern that he desired a song which reflected the influence which the Mississippi River had on the black laborers. Hammerstein said he wanted "a song of resignation with a protest implied, sung by a character who is a rugged and untutored philosopher." Kern understood what was needed and wrote a song steeped in Negro spiritual music, the classic "Ol' Man River."

Other songs in Kern's masterpiece included "Why Do I Love You," "Bill" with words by P. G. Wodehouse, "You Are Love," "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" and "Make Believe." Kern never wrote better, and with his inspiration, Hammerstein wrote lyrics such as he had never done. His lyrics always forced the audience to keep the story in mind so closely were they tied to the show. This was an important contribution to the history of the Broadway musical.

Clearly Show Boat had many aspects which were direct ties back to the operetta, it could have been no other way. Hammerstein had previous to this show written the operettas Rose Marie and The Desert Song with Sigmund Romberg, and Kern had been greatly in-

fluenced by the operetta while training in Europe. Add to the fact that the show was a period piece; to have been other than an American operetta would have been a surprise. Finally with Ziegfeld as the producer, the costumes and sets would have had to be grand indeed. What is interesting is the various ways Kern was influenced by the composers around him.. The opening song had clear similarity to Victor Herbert songs, others were reminiscent of Romberg and Friml, finally "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" sounded much like the influence of the new composer to Broadway, George Gershwin. Regardless, it was a masterful score, the critics agreed. Labelled as an "American Masterpiece" or "a triumph," the show ran for two years and earned more than fifty thousand dollars per week gross. The national tour lasted for a year and three film versions were made of the show. Even the concert hall enjoyed Kern's music when Kern arranged a symphonic version at the request of Arthur Rodzinski and the Cleveland Orchestra. The 1946 revival on Broadway ran over one year and earned two million dollars.

Kern never advanced technically from Show Boat. It was his most innovative score. Although he had discovered the need to tailor the songs to fit the story, he never was totally convinced. His next show, Sweet Adeline, written in 1929, was a return to the old fashioned musical before Show Boat. That is not to say that he didn't continue to write magnificent songs for his shows, he did. In 1931 he wrote the score to the musical The Cat and the Fiddle which was described as a "musical love story." The story dealt with the love affair of a European composer of

opera falling in love with an American girl who is "crazy about" jazz. Songs from that show included "The Night Was Made for Love," "Poor Pierrot" and what became a best selling song, "She Didn't Say Yes." It ran for about a year.

Music in the Air written in 1932 was called a "musical adventure." It had all the aspects of an operetta, being set in a Bavarian village, with a cast that included the school teacher, the actor, the prima donna, etc. But somehow Kern kept away from making it totally operetta with believable characters and plot. The critic, Brooks Atkinson, wrote in his review, "At last, musical drama has been emancipated."[245] Songs in this show were largely of the German beer hall variety, but two classics came from the show, "I've Told Every Little Star" and "The Song Is You."

Although Kern wrote several more musicals, he had only one success. In 1933 the musical Roberta opened. A musical comedy-fashion show instead of a musical play, it still included several famous songs. The most famous song, and one reason why the show continued to run was "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes." It consistently stopped the show when it was sung in the second act. It has become a classic. The cast of Roberta included Bob Hope, Sydney Greenstreet and George Murphy. Other classic songs from the score were "The Touch of Your Hands" and "Yesterdays."

His last musical, sadly, was his greatest diaster. Entitled Very Warm for May it did not run more than two months. The reviews were dismal, and the show would have been totally forgotten had it not included one of Kern's most beautiful songs, "All the Things You Are." It became one of his six most successful songs, selling

several million copies of sheet music and records. With that song and show Kern's Broadway career came to an end. He had written more than ninety musicals, more than five hundred songs of which sixty had become classics. With this success, he went to Hollywood where he repeated his success in the movies.

First of all, he adapted his own musicals for the screen. These included Show Boat and Sally in 1929, Sunny in 1930, The Cat and the Fiddle in 1933 and finally Music in the Air in 1934. It was after these that he began writing original scores for the films. When he moved there he built himself an enormous mansion in Beverly Hills, determined to stay in California for the rest of his life. His first movie musical was I Dream Too Much and his last was Centennial Summer which opened after his death. During those years he wrote many classic songs including "The Way You Look Tonight" (1936), "A Fine Romance" (1936), "Dearly Beloved" (1942), "Long Ago and Far Away" (1942) and "All through the Day" (1946).

One of his most famous songs for the screen had an interesting story. In June of 1940, when the Germans came marching into Paris, Oscar Hammerstein was so moved that he wrote a poem describing his feelings. He tried several composers to set the words to music, finally settling on his old partner, Kern. Kern wrote the melody in only one day. It was presented by Kate Smith on her radio program and became an enormous success. In 1941 it was interpolated into the otherwise totally Gershwin movie musical, Lady, Be Good, and went on to win the Academy Award for best song. In 1945, he decided to return to New York where he would

co-produce a revival of Show Boat. For this production he wrote a new song, destined to be his last, called "No One but Me." He was also invited by the production team of Rodgers and Hammerstein to write a musical comedy based on the life of Annie Oakley.[246]

He did not live to see that revival, or to complete the score for Rodgers and Hammerstein. At noon on November 5, 1945, he collapsed of a cerebral hemorrhage from which he never recovered. He died two days later, with Oscar Hammerstein at his side. Irving Berlin, who had come to visit him, was the first person to be told of his death.

It was Hammerstein's task to deliver the eulogy at the funeral. He said, "We all know in our hearts that these few minutes we devote to him are small drops in the ocean of our affections. Our real tribute will be paid over many years of remembering. . . . We will remember a jaunty, happy man whose sixty years were crowded with success and fun and love. Let us thank whatever God we believe in, that we shared some part of the good, bright life Jerry led on this earth." The New York Herald said it differently, "Genius is surely not too extravagant a word for him."[247]

Kern was many things, but he was not a kind man. Very few people knew him well or liked him. He was an opinionated man who spared no criticism of his friends. One of his contemporaries remarked about Kern and his fellow song writers, "I think in those days, certainly Jerome Kern disliked all of them and they all disliked Kern." Kern went on to condemn the work of his former partner, Oscar Hammerstein II, when he wrote Oklahoma! with Richard Rodgers. Kern categorized the songs as "simply conde-

scending."[248]

When he had finished writing Roberta, Kern and Oscar Hammerstein began writing their next show. To be taken from Donn Byrne's book Messer Marco Polo, which was a small story of the adventurer's love for Golden Bells, a Chinese girl with whom he had philosophical discussions, Kern and Hammerstein met to discuss how to begin. Hammerstein said to Jerome Kern, "Here is a story laid in China about an Italian and told by an Irishman. What kind of music are you going to write? To which Kern responded, "It'll be good Jewish music."[249] That is one of the few references Kern made to being Jewish. The assimilation his parents desired certainly was achieved.

Without question, Kern provided the impetus for the advancement in musical theatre which followed him. Reference has already been made to the influence he had on Gershwin and Richard Rodgers; there is little question that we owe our interpretation of modern musical theatre to Jerome David Kern.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: IRVING BERLIN

It would be impossible to discuss the American popular music industry or the American popular song itself without Irving Berlin. He is the twentieth century equivalent to Stephen Foster, a comparison Berlin himself enjoyed making.[250] Berlin, as one critic commented years after he had gained wealth and fortune, was a "poor Jew who won fame and fortune triumphing not through education or skill, but through his knowledge of the common heart.[251]

Legend has it that after Berlin became rich and famous, he had built a "pianistic contrivance" that would provide stock harmonies and modulations derived from the Massenet-Grieg method of fifty years ago, then would fit them into the traditional thirty-two bar tune at the touch of a lever! Although the story is apocryphal, it is true that Berlin had an uncanny knowledge of the interests and tastes of the common man. Perhaps he understood public tastes so well because he grew up as a common man. Born in Temun, Siberia, Russia, on May 11, 1888, he was the youngest of eight children. His father, Moses, was a shochet and chazan[252] in their village, leaving the care of the children to his wife, Leah. Moses Baline (Baline was the original family name) left Temun in 1893 to come to America in search of work. Irving Berlin in later years was quick to point out that although they all had to leave as a result of the anti-Jewish pogroms during the reign of Czar Alexander III,[253] they were not political prisoners.[254] It was, however, one of these pogroms, when Israel (Irving's real name) was four years old, that provided the impetus

to leave Temun. While preparing to leave, the entire family was forced to flee to the woods and hide under blankets until the Cossacks had gone. When they arrived in America they took their few possessions and lived in an apartment in a dingy basement on Monroe Street, the Lower East Side of New York. As Berlin described the family upon its arrival, "we only spoke Yiddish and were conspicuous for our 'jew clothes.'"[255] A few weeks later, the family moved out of Monroe Street and found a more commodious apartment in Cherry Street. Moses found work as a kosher butcher supervisor as well as teaching Hebrew and choir music in a small synagogue near their home. Four of the Baline children went to work in sweatshops to increase the family income. As a result of this lifestyle, Israel was well versed in the lifestyle and milieu found on the Lower East Side;[256] when he could afford it, he often went to the Yiddish theatre.[257]

When he was old enough, Israel too went to work to contribute to the finances of the family. Their financial problems were compounded when Moses Baline died in 1896. Israel sold newspapers and delivered telegrams to help support the family and also began a life-long interest in singing.[258] It was one inheritance from his father the chazan, that Israel had a very musical ear with the ability to recall quickly melodies he had heard. Where his father had enjoyed chazzanut, Israel learned the sentimental ballads of the 1890's. At fourteen, Israel ran away earning his living expenses as a singing waiter in saloons and bars gathering whatever money the patrons would throw at him. In his youth he had been a singer in the synagogue choir and had always

professed an interest in being a singing waiter, much to the horror of his mother. "Music," Baline claimed, "was in my blood."[259] His mother was typical of the immigrants of the day; she did not understand any language except Yiddish, she kept a kosher home and although the family could ill afford one, they always had a kosher cook.

His singing took him to various places in New York. Callahan's in Chinatown and Chatham on Doyer Street were favorite haunts.[260] With only two years of formal schooling, Baline became a song plugger, working at one time for Harry von Tilzer. One of the acts to which he had been assigned by von Tilzer was "The Three Keatons" one of whom became the film star, Buster. In 1906 Baline was hired as a singing waiter at Pelham's Cafe on Pell Street. Not only was he to wait tables entertaining the patrons while he served them, he also had to write parodies of popular songs and then sing them. When the cafe closed he then had to clean up. All of this was for the munificent sum of one dollar per day. The experience needed for such a job he had received as a singer-waiter for "Nigger" Mike Salter, a Russian Jew with a very swarthy complexion where Baline worked from 8 o'clock P.M. until 6 o'clock A.M. when he was sixteen.[261]

The story is told that one night Prince Louis Battenberg and his party attended the cafe where Baline was singing and was so impressed with the young performer's talent that he gave him a five dollar tip, which was the equivalent of a week's wages. Baline turned the tip down, earning him his first newspaper publicity from another future great, Herbert Bayard Swope, then

a struggling journalist.[262]

Pelham's Cafe was situated near Callahan's Cafe. Two of the employees of Callahan's had written a song entitled "My Mariuccia Takes a Steamboat" which was sung at the cafe in 1906 and later published. Pelham's management decided that they too needed a song so they told Baline to write his own. The saloon pianist Nick Nicholson wrote the music. The first song written by Israel Baline was "Marie from Sunny Italy" which was published by Joseph Stern and Company in 1907. It earned Baline thirty-seven cents in royalties, but it gave him more than that because due to a printer's error, his name was changed from Israel Baline to Israel Berlin. He decided to make the final change and became Irving Berlin. "Marie from Sunny Italy" reflected several aspects of Berlin's personality, first it was a parody of the "Mariuccia" song, but more importantly it illustrated one world which Irving Berlin knew well, the life of the immigrant. In many ways, Berlin felt he too had no real home for he was to write songs of all ethnic homelands: Italy, Spain, Cuba, even Russia.[263]

A year later, in 1908, Berlin wrote the first song for which he wrote both music and lyrics. Having left Pelham's cafe, he set out on his own to another cafe and was hired by a vaudevillian there to write a topical song for the man's act. Berlin wrote a song about an Olympic runner who had been in the news of the day by the name of Dorando. Berlin began by writing a poem which the vaudevillian rejected. Berlin's next effort was to find a publisher; he did in Ted Snyder who had just opened his own publishing house. Twenty five dollars was offered to Berlin

if he could write the music as well, so Berlin dictated a tune to an arranger who worked for Snyder. This was the first time Berlin wrote the music to a song and it pointed up a failing Berlin was to bemoan for the rest of his creative life -- his inability to write down his music. He always required the services of a musical stenographer in order to get his inspirations on paper.[264] With the song "Dorando," a partnership was established between Snyder and Berlin. First he was hired as a staff lyricist and upon proving very successful was made a junior partner. Two of the songs Berlin wrote with Snyder went into a musical revue Up and Down Broadway, in which they appeared as performers. These songs were "Sweet Italian Love Song" and "That Beautiful Rag." Another greatly successful song written by Berlin, but with the lyrics of Edgar Leslie, was "Sadie Salome, Go Home."[265] Felix Mendelssohn provided the melody to Berlin's "That Mesmerizing Mendelssohn Tune" which has been mentioned earlier; in this song Berlin "rag timed" Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." "Sadie Salome" was the first of a number of Yiddish type songs. It echoed the coon songs which were so popular in those days and parodied the song "Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home." The story concerned itself with a Jewish girl doing things that only gentiles were supposed to do, like getting involved with a "shegetz" boyfriend. Set in the form of an operatic aria, it helped make Fanny Brice a star when she debuted the song at a benefit. She commented that she had never expected to do a song in Yiddish dialect, but that the reaction from the audience was so positive she continued doing the songs for many years.[266] Fanny Brice

presented another similar Berlin song in the Follies of 1910 when she sang "Goodbye Becky Cohen." She permanently set her reputation as the primary interpreter of Yiddish songs with that show. Berlin became adept at this type of song. Some of his others included "Yiddle on Your Fiddle Play Some Ragtime" (1909), which was a song poking fun at a Jew for playing a black man singing about love for "mine choc'late baby,"[267] "Yiddishe Eyes," "Becky Do the Bombashay" (1910),[268] and finally "My Yiddishe Nightingale."[269] Even in these Jewishly flavored songs there was a strong black theme for they were conscious parodies of the coon songs mentioned earlier. Other songs from 1910 included "Call Me Up Some Rainy Afternoon," "Stop, Stop You're Breaking My Heart," "Kiss Me, My Honey, Kiss Me," and "Next to Your Mother, Who Do You Love?" all with words or music by Ted Snyder.[270]

Berlin became an expert at pastiche songs, which were a mixture of all ethnic and cultural songs combined into one style, all-American in nature. Berlin built on the styles and songs of his predecessors, combining old and new. He merged songs such as ballads and Negro comedy numbers into new songs peculiarly Berlin.[271] He got his lyrics by listening to others talk, attempting to hear current catch phrases which would be suitable for song lyrics. He used to sit around to hear others play piano, or sit around a cafe table near a talkative bunch of people and suddenly would write down something that they had said. His versatility was such that people claimed he actually kept a "colored boy" prisoner in his office to help him turn out song hits.[272]

Already by 1910 Berlin had become interested in syncopation.

He wrote "syncopation is the soul of every American. Ragtime is the best heart raiser and worry banisher I know. . . ."[273] As such he was stimulated to write a song in 1910 based on Harry von Tilzer's song "Alexander, Don't You Love Your Baby No More" with a syncopated beat to it. The song he wrote he called "Alexander and His Clarinet." Because he was not pleased with the result, he put the song away and didn't bring it out until 1911 when he was invited to join the Friar's Club and to perform in their show, the Frolics. For this show he wanted to introduce one of his own songs and prepared the re-worked Alexander song now called "Alexander's Ragtime Band." For some reason he did not present it at that event, Berlin himself could not recall why, and instead attempted to sell it to various pluggers. It was not until Emma Carus, the star coon performer presented it, that the song became the smash hit song. Sophie Tucker, George M. Cohan's wife, Ethel Levey, and many others began using the song until it became the greatest hit of the day selling more than one million copies of sheet music the first three months after publication.

What is interesting to note is that there is only one tiny dash of syncopation in the entire song. In fact "ragtime" by that day was anything that was up to date and peppy.[274] Actually, "Alexander's Ragtime Band" was an excellent slow march written in pseudo-Negro dialect. Although the verse contained a couple examples of syncopation, the chorus was totally devoid. On the words "just the" and "ragtime" in the reference to Stephen Foster's "Swanee River" can be found the syncopated rhythms. Otherwise, it is "straight as Sousa."[275] It is a song that is more about

ragtime than actually containing ragtime. Berlin admitted that "You know, I never did find out what ragtime was" yet he wrote the most famous ragtime song ever composed. In 1925 Berlin admitted that his 1911 composition "Alexander's Ragtime Band" sounded like a funeral march! Regardless, he wrote in an article for the New York Dramatic Mirror, "I have one dream. . . I shall write an opera completely in ragtime. I have not yet fully developed my story, but it will, of course, be laid in the South . . . . The opera will be following out my idea that beautiful thoughts can best be expressed by syncopation. It alone can catch the sorrows, the pathos of humanity."[276] He never did write that opera, but he achieved something of equal importance. Never before had the ballad been replaced as the most popular song style, that is, until Irving Berlin's ragtime songs.

Berlin soon was recognized as the major song writer of his day. In 1911 his song "Everybody's Doin It" helped make the turkey trot the dance craze, and his songs "That Mysterious Rag" and "The Ragtime Jockey" were introduced by Berlin himself in the Broadway revue The Passing Show of 1912. In 1913 he went to England where he was presented as the "ragtime king" at the Hippodrome Theatre. For that show he wrote "The International Rag." Berlin commanded a thousand dollar per week fee for that appearance.[277]

Irving Berlin's first complete score for a Broadway musical was Watch Your Step which opened in 1914. Mainly a ragtime score, there were others which began the Berlin tradition of beautiful ballads. One of the former, "The Syncopated Walk"

which he wrote for the dancing stars of the show, Irene and Vernon Castle, became an enormous hit. A review read "Berlin is a young master of syncopation." A song which was written in a style that was to be a Berlin trademark was "Play a Simple Melody" which combined two different lyrics and two different melodies together to create a very musical and interesting duet. What is interesting to remember is that Berlin had no musical training and simply had to "hear" the songs in his head until he could have a transcriber write them down. His only piano skills were playing on the black notes, the key of F sharp. That is why he required a special piano to be built so that with the turn of a lever, it could play in any key he desired while he continued to play only the black keys.[278]

The first ballad Berlin wrote of any moderate success was for the black vaudevillian, Bert Williams. Entitled "Woodman, Woodman, Spare That Tree" it was a modern treatment of the Henry Russell song from seventy years earlier. Introduced in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1911, it was one reason why Williams continued to be a Follies star for many years. But there were other songs from that period as well. In 1912 Berlin wrote "When the Midnight Choo Choo Leaves for Alabam" and "Do It Again."[279]

One would think that the year Berlin married would be a great time of productivity. It indeed was, but not from the joy he felt. On February 3, 1913, Berlin married Dorothy Goetz, the sister of the composer and producer E. Ray Goetz. After spending their honeymoon in Cuba, they returned to New York where Mrs. Berlin set up a home on Riverside Drive. Two weeks later, on

July 17, 1913, she died of typhoid fever.[280] His grief was enormous and he attempted to deal with it in the best way he knew, by writing a song. "When I Lost You" was the first great ballad Berlin wrote. The lyric expressed the feeling that "I lost the sunshine and the flowers when I lost you." Berlin wrote other autobiographical ballads later on in his career, especially during the time he fell in love with Ellin Mackay, the daughter of Clarence Mackay who was president of Postal Telegraph.

Berlin widened the scope of his activities in the years after Dorothy's death. In 1915 he wrote a song called "The Pullman Porters on Parade" with Maurice Abrahams writing the music. Berlin was not very proud of this work, so he wrote it under the pseudonym Ren G. May, a mix of the word "Germany."[281] The next year saw an enormous Berlin hit "This Is the Life" which poked fun at farmers and rubes coming to the big city. "Farmer Brown comes to town, took in the sites and said, 'I love the cows and chickens, but this is the life. No more picking berries, me for cocktail cherries."[282] His success had already convinced his publishers that they had to do something to keep him in the firm, so "Snyder and Waterson" became "Snyder, Berlin and Waterson." This was to last for seven years, until in 1919 when Berlin opened his own firm.

Although Berlin was never known for his humility, he was rarely a braggart. In 1915, though, he tried to put his contributions to music in perspective. "Now just one boast: I believe that such songs of mine as 'Alexander's Ragtime Band,' 'That Mysterious Rag,' 'Ragtime Violin,' 'I Want to Be in Dixie,' and

'Take a Little Tip from Father' started the ragtime mania in America."[283] He recognized the debt he owed to those who had come before him, yet Berlin knew that the public wanted new songs which sounded familiar. He wrote in "Green Book Magazine" in 1916, "There's no such thing as a new melody. There has been an outstanding offer in Vienna, holding a large prize, to anyone who can write eight bars of original music. The offer has been up for more than twenty-five years. Thousands of compositions have been submitted, but all have been traced back to some other melody. Our work is to connect old phrases in a new way so that they will sound like a new tune. Did you know that the public when it hears a new song anticipates the next passage? The writers who do not give them something they are expecting are those who are successful."[285]

Berlin was drafted into the Army, and wrote his first successful show, Yip Yip Yaphank which was to aid in the raising of $35,000 for a service center at Camp Upton, in New York. Berlin himself was in the show, singing "Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning." After the limited engagement at the camp, the show opened on Broadway July 26, 1918 where it earned $135,000 profit. Berlin wrote other songs for the war effort including "The Devil Has Bought Up Coal"[286] and "Let's All Be Americans Now" a request to all immigrants that they put away remembrances of their old countries and be true blue Americans. Berlin himself was anxious to prove himself a good American, too. His name, Berlin, appeared to him to be an embarrassment, so he tried to be more American than the Americans. One of the songs he wrote for Yip Yip Ya-

phank was "God Bless America" which he decided was unnecessary for a show composed of soldiers. Intended as the finale for the second act, he felt that the soldiers had already expressed their love for the country without having to sing about it. It was put away and was later used in another context. At a rally for charity, Berlin was scheduled to follow his idol, George M. Cohan, the man who had called Berlin "that little Jew boy." When Cohan was on stage singing his own composition, "Over There," Cohan forgot the words. It was Irving Berlin who prompted him from the audience. How all-American can one get?

After the Great War ended, Berlin was commissioned to write the songs for the Ziegfeld Follies of 1919. Three songs from this show became enormous hits for Berlin. First was "Mandy" which had been taken from Yip Yip Yaphank, and "You'd Be Surprised" which later was used by Eddie Cantor. The most successful of the three was "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody" which from that year onward became the Follies theme song. Berlin was so successful, that he was earning $2,000 per week as a vaudeville headliner. The year 1919 had more significance for Berlin than simply the songs he wrote, for it was in that year that he broke off from Snyder and Waterson and opened his own publishing house, Irving Berlin, Inc.

When Berlin opened his own company, he brought with him a commodity of enormous value, his own songs. To celebrate the opening of the company, "Irving Berlin weeks" were held all over the country. At the same time, Berlin became a theatre owner. Together with Sam H. Harris and Joseph Schenk, Berlin opened the Music Box Theatre which began with a Berlin musical written es-

pecially for it. The Music Box Revue became a three year tradition, and produced several of Berlin's most successful hit songs. "Say It With Music," "What'll I Do," "Pack Up Your Sins" were among these hits. One merely has to look at a list of the song sales of that year to see how extremely well Berlin and his company were doing:[287]

TITLE	DURATION OF SALE	SHEET MUSIC	PIANO ROLLS	PHONOGRAPH RECORDINGS
You'd Be Surprised	50 weeks	783,982	145,505	888,790
Say It With Music	75 weeks	374,408	102,127	1,239,050
Nobody Knows	70 weeks	1,143,690	62,204	843,082
All By Myself	75 weeks	1,053,493	161,650	1,225,083

In 1924 Berlin fell in love with the daughter of a wealthy gentile industrialist, Clarence Mackay, president of Postal Telegraph. In the months of their secret courtship, when her father attempted to dissuade Ellin from seeing the Jewish song writer, Berlin wrote five of his most moving autobiographical ballads which described his feelings. They included "All Alone," "Always," "All By Myself," "Remember," and "What'll I Do." They were married in a secret ceremony in New York City Hall on January 4, 1926. It is an interesting newspaper account that during their courtship on one of the few occasions when Berlin faced Mackay, the father-in-law-to-be attempted to impress Berlin with his family's lineage. "We traced our family back to the Exodus," said Berlin. It took the total loss of Mackay's fortune in the 1929 stock market crask for the two to be reconciled.

By 1929, Berlin suffered a dry spell. He was convinced that he was through musically, he had not written a hit song for

three years. During that time, Ellin became pregnant and delivered a boy, much to Irving's delight. This joy was turned to despair when the little baby died of a heart defect; Ellin's friends wrote that this death was a punishment from God for her marriage to a Jewish boy. Adding more misery, the Depression wiped out the more than five million dollars he had accumulated during the years, leaving him with very little except the ownership of his songs.

Fortune smiled more brightly, though, in 1932, when Rudy Vallee took two Berlin songs which had always been looked on with disfavor by Berlin, and recorded them. "Say It Isn't So" and "How Deep Is the Ocean" became enormous hits for RCA and the Berlin Publishing Company. He also became involved in another Broadway musical entitled Face the Music in 1932. It dealt with the Depression and the effects of depression on America. A similar theme was found in the 1933 show As Thousands Cheer. Presented in the format of a newspaper, it had individual sections such as news, sports, and society. The show grossed about $1,200,000. The most successful songs included "We're Having a Heat Wave" and "Easter Parade." "Easter Parade" originally had been called "Smile and Show Your Dimple" (you'll find it very simple. . . .). Berlin recognized that it was terrible and put the song away, only coming back to it with a new lyric. It later became the title for a Fred Astaire-Judy Garland movie of 1948 which included many Berlin hits.

Irving Berlin next scored a series of triumphs on the motion picture screen. The first was Top Hat with Fred Astaire and

Ginger Rogers. Three years later a film compendium of Berlin songs was gathered for the movie Alexander's Ragtime Band which starred Alice Faye and Tyrone Power. For Top Hat Berlin wrote the song "Dancing Cheek to Cheek" the royalties from which earned him $250,000. He followed this success with another old melody he had put away which he revitalized with a new lyric. The song became "God Bless America" and was written after a trip to Europe when the rise of Fascism and Nazism was so clear. He realized all the more how much he owed to the country of his immigration.

Following the return, Kate Smith requested a song for a patriotic broadcast she was doing. He recalled the melody which was to have been used in Yip Yip Yaphank, fitted it with new lyrics and made her promise that whatever profit was made would be given to the scouting movement of America. She agreed and made "God Bless America" an instant national success. There were moves to have it made the national anthem replacing "The Star Spangled Banner" and it was used at both national political conventions in 1940. There were grumblings by those who did not know, that Berlin was making profit for a patriotic song, when in fact the Boy and Girl Scouts of America have earned nearly one million dollars from that song.[288]

There were several songs Berlin wrote to boost the war effort. His greatest success came in the creation of an all-service musical to raise money for the troops during World War II. This Is the Army was written at Camp Upton, where he had been stationed during World War I while writing Yip Yip Yaphank. He chose Camp Upton because he was familiar with the surroundings and because

he could have first hand knowledge of what the men of that war were thinking. It opened on Broadway on July 4, 1942, with an all serviceman cast including Berlin himself singing "Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning," which had come from the World War I show. It toured all over the world for the troups, and earned about $10,000,000 for the Army Relief fund, with $350,000 going to the British relief fund when it played London. Berlin received no money for this effort, but was awarded the Medal of Merit by General George C. Marshall. When he went out on the stage to sings his "Oh How I Hate" song, he was accompanied by a chorus of soldiers dressed as he was in World War I battle fatigues. Six of the chorus had sung it with him the first time in 1918! When a stagehand heard Berlin singing the song in his thin quavery voice, he said, "If the composer of that song could hear the way that guy sings it, he'd turn over in his grave."[289] Another war song was "Any Bonds Today."

In 1940 Berlin wrote the most popular movie of his career. Entitled Holiday Inn, it was the story of a hotel run by Bing Crosby where people came up to enjoy various holidays. His most successful song, and one of the most successful songs ever written came from this film. "White Christmas" sold over twenty-five million records of Bing Crosby's version alone. There have been more than three hundred versions of it with new ones recorded each holiday season. More than five million copies of sheet music have been sold, more than one million instrumental arrangements have been made. Since Berlin owned thirty percent of the film, he made more than one and a half million dollars on this

film alone. It is ironic that the two most popular songs about Christian holidays should have been written by a Jew from Russia. Perhaps that is the story of Tin Pan Alley.

Irving Berlin was to have one more enormous hit on Broadway immediately after the war ended. Produced by Rodgers and Hammerstein, Berlin was approached by them to write the score to a musical about the sharpshooter Annie Oakley. Part of the score had been written by Jerome Kern, but he had died before completing the task. Berlin was asked to start over and write his own. He locked himself in a hotel room and wrote five songs over that weekend. When he played them for Rodgers and Hammerstein, there was a stunned silence which Berlin misinterpreted as disapproval. In fact, they were amazed. All five songs remained in the show as he had originally written them.[290] No show enjoyed the length of run that Annie Get Your Gun did (over one thousand performances) no show had more hit songs, no show sold more records, no show has been revived so often, in fact not one other Berlin effort earned him as much money.[291] These songs included "They Say It's Wonderful," "Doin' What Comes Naturally," "The Girl That I Marry," and most of all, the song that became the theme song of the entertainment business, "There's No Business Like Show Business." Berlin even improved on the show when it was revived in 1966. He added another hit song entitled "Old Fashioned Wedding" to be sung by the star, Ethel Merman.[292] There were other musicals after Annie Get Your Gun, including Miss Liberty in 1949, with a story about the woman who posed for the Statue of Liberty. Songs such as "Let's Take an Old Fashioned Walk" and "Give Me Your Tired, Your

Poor" were the highlights of a rather forgettable musical. Berlin feared that he was finished when the terrible reviews came out for that show. Yet a year later, he had another hit. Based on the life of Perle Mesta, socialite and party giver who was appointed to be ambassador to Luxembourg, Berlin came up with several good songs for the star, Ethel Merman. These included "You're Just in Love," "It's a Lovely Day Today," "I Like Ike" and "The Hostess with the Mostess' on the Ball."

The last Berlin musical, written in 1960, was entitled Mr. President. Intended to be about a president who retires from office, it was really a fictionalized story about John F. Kennedy and his family, then just elected to office. The reviews were so dreadful that it did not run very long. Fortunately the advance sale of tickets based on who had written it and its stars kept the show going for a respectable run, but by Berlin standards, it was a flop.

After that musical, Berlin went into virtual retirement. A major exception was the eightieth birthday celebration given him on the Ed Sullivan television show. It was arranged to have the greatest collection of stars ever for that celebration. The guests included President Lyndon Johnson who concluded his speech with a paraphrase of Berlin's own most famous song, "God Bless Berlin." Even today, well past ninety years old, Berlin tightly controls his publishing house. It is the most carefully run of all the music companies with virtually every infringement on his copyrights prosecuted to the fullest. The immigrant mentality does not easily fade away.

Through all the years, Berlin has considered himself a Jew. When his daughter married out of the faith, he required that a rabbi co-officiate as an assertion of his Jewishness.[293] He has been honored over the years by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Y.M.H.A. as "outstanding American of the Jewish faith," he has made enormous donations to Jewish relief organizations and the U.J.A., and finally, he has been a generous supporter of Israel. His tribute "Israel" was written when the new state was proclaimed.

Berlin has been rather self-effacing when it came to his talent. "It's a long way from Ellis Island," he said. As far as his music is concerned, he had a strong opinion about popular songs: "Popular songs will never be missed, but Chopin and Liszt will live on. However a rose lives and dies in the very same way."[294]

A contemporary critic summed up the music of Irving Berlin in this way: "Irving Berlin has been criticized by his competitors, maligned by his inferiors, snubbed by those who consider themselves musically superior. All of them would gladly pay a fortune for his unerring grasp of popular taste and his unique ability to satisfy it. He remains the most successful song writer of all time."[295]

Jerome Kern said it more simply. "Irving Berlin has no place in American music. He IS American music."

CHAPTER TWELVE: THE GERSHWINS

"True music must repeat the thought and aspirations of the people and the time. My people are Americans. My time is today. No one expected me to compose music, I just did. What I have done is what was in me; the combination of New York, where I was born, and the rising, exhilarating rhythm of it, with centuries of hereditary feeling back of me. They ask me what I am trying to do, and I can only say I am trying to express what is in me. Some people have the ability to put their feelings into words or music. There are thousands who have the same feeling and are mute. Those of us who can must speak for those who can not -- but we must be honest about it."[296] George and Ira Gershwin certainly were honest about their work, they wrote from their hearts. With their aid the American musical theatre benefitted, so did the opera, concert hall and the dance.

George Gershwin had a mission, he once said, a mission to write great music for the theatre and the orchestra hall with a very small gap in between. That is what he did. Originally born with the name Jacob Gershovitz, he was the great grandson of a rabbi and the grandson of a mechanic. His father, Morris, had been in the shoe manufacturing business before coming to America from St. Petersburg, Russia. George's mother, Rose Brushkin had also come from Russia.[297] Morris was free to travel because his father had been granted the freedom by Czar Alexander II for twenty five years of service to the Army. It

was for that reason that they could live in St. Petersburg. Morris, however, did not relish the thought of serving in the army, so when his approaching draft day was close, he left for America.

Upon his arrival, he searched for his maternal uncle's tailor shop where he gained employment. On July 21, 1895, Morris and Rose were married. By that time Morris had changed the family name to Gershvin and had become involved in several of the more than seventeen jobs he would hold before 1916! Israel Gershwin, whose name became Ira, was born on December 6, 1896; Jacob, whose name would be George, was born on September 26, 1898; Arthur was born on March 14, 1900, and the last child, Frances, was born on December 6, 1906.[298] Although they were constantly in financial problems, the family was never without a maid![299] Their religion was important to them but they did not actively practice it. Only Ira was bar mitzvah, with a grand luncheon served for two hundred guests. At that time he was called Izzy and thought that his real name was Isadore. Only when he went for a passport did he learn that it was Israel.[300]

George was far more interested in sports than in music or religion, although his family instilled in him a respect for his tradition and the ways of the Old World. In fact, when Gershwin was approached by Isaac Goldberg who was writing the then definitive biography of George, Gershwin stressed his religious beliefs and their influence.[301] As the son of plain Russian Jews, Gershwin was always fascinated by the folk tunes

of Europe and the synagogue. He often incorporated both into his music. The mention of sports in this paragraph is an interesting story. It was during a baseball game in the yard of the school that George (whose nickname was Cheesecake because of the family's bakery) was impressed by the music of Dvořák being played by his friend, Maxie Rosenzweig, on the violin. Rosenzweig later shortened his name to become Max Rosen, the violin virtuoso. It was Maxie's influence that brought the young George to classical music. It was also Maxie who told George that he really had no future as a musician-composer after George played him a song he had recently composed![302] Secondly, it was George's interest in sports that eventually contributed to his untimely death. The doctors concluded that when George was hit with a bat during one of those games, that he developed a brain tumor which eventually killed him.

Ira was to be the recipient of a piano when the Gershwin family purchased it. He had already begun piano lessons with an aunt, but he soon quit, giving up when he saw how well George played, without lessons. George had a friend who lived down the street on whose piano he played. "No sooner had the upright been lifted through the window than George sat down and played a popular tune of the day. I was particularly impressed by his left hand."[303]

George began his training with a neighborhood piano teacher and soon progressed to a Hungarian teacher who was a dismal failure. Apparently George learned most from going to concerts and learning technique there. Eventually he received solid mu-

sical training from the noted pianist, Charles Hambitzer.[304] He was the first great musical influence in Gershwin's life and recognized that Gershwin was indeed a musical prodigy. During his lessons with Hambitzer, he was constantly harassing his teacher with the significance American popular music could have in the hands of a creative composer. Hambitzer refused to allow the young pianist to play the popular music he desired, having him instead learn the musical skills required to play the masters. Gershwin never stopped expressing his gratitude for what Hambitzer had done for him. Hambitzer realized that he had taught George all he could and passed him on to a teacher of music theory and harmony. Edward Kilenyi recognized Gershwin's search for musical knowledge and also saw that this was no common musician. Both Kilenyi and Hambitzer had been champions of modern music of the day, including the works of Arnold Schoenberg. They shared their wide interests with George. Although George's first song, "Since I Found You" with words by Leonard Praskin, was a run-of-the-mill ballad that could be heard everywhere in 1913, his second showed more of his teacher's influence. It was called "Ragging the Traumerei," and was a ragtime version of a classical piece. Hambitzer soon died, which allowed George to concentrate on the popular music he so enjoyed. It is interesting to think that had the teacher lived longer, George might have become a concert pianist instead of a popular composer.

Gershwin was initially excited by the music of Irving Berlin, especially "Alexander's Ragtime Band." More than Berlin

though, he found his model in the work of Jerome Kern.[305] The desire to play that kind of music directed him to quit school and go to the Catskill mountains to be a resort pianist. In May, 1914, he became the youngest song plugger in Tin Pan Alley, working for the Jerome H. Remick Company. His salary of fifteen dollars a week was considered enormous by George, especially for doing what he wanted to do all the time. He played all day, travelled to nearby cities to accompany the song pluggers and was sent at night to vaudeville houses to report which acts were using Remick songs.

When he was sixteen, he was found one afternoon in his cubicle at Remick's practicing Bach's Well Tempered Clavier. When asked if he was studying to be a great pianist, George responded, "No, I'm studying to be a great popular composer."[306] Unfortunately, his job at Remick's did not allow much room for growth. When he submitted one of his own songs to the company for publication, he was told that he had been hired as a pianist, not a composer. In spite of this, he got his first song published on May 15, 1916, by Harry von Tilzer. The song was entitled "When You Want 'Em, You Can't Get 'Em; When You Got 'Em, You Don't Want 'Em."[307] The words were written by his friend, Murray Roth, and for his effort George earned five dollars. While at Remick's, he wrote other melodies which would be published later. His next collaborator became a very important person in his life, but that was to be a few years later. At that time, Irving Caesar and George joined to write "When the Army Disbands" copyrighted on October 21, 1916. Finally Remick con-

sented to publish one of Gershwin's songs, and "Rialto Ripples" was presented. This was the first ragtime melody George had attempted. It was directly due to Sophie Tucker that Gershwin's song had been accepted by von Tilzer. The lyricist, Roth, was a shrewder businessman, it seemed, when he accepted fifteen dollars for his efforts. Gershwin received his five dollars as an advance on the royalties but there were none! George had found another money making venture, though, for he became one of the most successful piano-roll musicians in New York. He would travel to New Jersey and cut ten piano rolls a day, which could earn him as much as fifty dollars. He continued doing this well into the nineteen-twenties when he certainly didn't need the money.

Sigmund Romberg allowed Gershwin to help him by using a Gershwin melody for his Passing Show of 1916. Romberg served as collaborator and Harold Atteridge set a lyric to it. It was called "Making of the Girl" and earned George a total of seven dollars. He couldn't complain, for it was his first song on Broadway. As a result, though, Gershwin decided to leave Remick for greener pastures. He first went to Irving Berlin.

Gershwin went to Berlin to interview for the job of secretary-arranger. As a try-out piece, he brought with him a song written by Berlin but arranged by Gershwin. Said Berlin, "That arrangement is one of my proudest possessions. I'll never forget his playing. My song sounded altogether new and different." He informed Gershwin that the job was his, for one hundred dollars per week, "but I hope you don't take it. You're

much too talented to be an arranger for anybody. If you worked for me you might start writing the way I do, and your own original style would be cramped. You are meant for bigger things." Gershwin, although he had no job that would pay nearly as well, turned down Berlin's job.[308]

Gershwin had impressed more people than just Berlin. After rejecting the job with Berlin, he went to T. B. Harms publishers where he met with Max Dreyfus. Dreyfus gave Gershwin a most unusual job; at thirty five dollars per week, all Gershwin had to do was to compose. He had no set hours, didn't have to be in at any time, all he had to do was produce. As a result, Dreyfus made a good friend, and made enormous profits, for Gershwin remained with Dreyfus for most of his creative life.

The first song he wrote for Dreyfus was "Some Wonderful Sort of Someone." It had several musical innovations from the songs of the day and did not become a great hit. The next couple of songs, however, each gained in popularity. "Something about Love" and "I Was So Young, You Were So Beautiful" became successful, although their popularity was dwarfed by Gershwin's next two songs.

As Gershwin's compositions improved, so did his scope of interest. Dreyfus involved him in other means of making contacts as well as money. In October of 1917, George was hired as rehearsal pianist at the Century Theatre for a show called Miss 1917, which would open on November 5. He was paid thirty-five dollars per week, but was more than compensated because he gained the privilege of playing his idol, Jerome Kern's music.

Each evening, after playing hour upon hour of the same songs, he would stay and improvise. Kern heard him one time and became so excited that he rushed home to get his wife so she could hear the young Gershwin play. One way he kept himself from being totally bored with the repetition of songs was to change slightly each time he played the song. This kept the chorus on its toes and George became a favorite with them. He also made several valuable contacts other than Kern; these included P. G. Wodehouse, Victor Herbert and Lew Fields. Also he met Vivienne Segal who was willing to debut two songs written by Gershwin and Irving Caesar. They were "There's More to a Kiss than the X-X-X" and "You Just You." Remick published the latter of the two.

Max Dreyfus made it possible for Gershwin to write his first score for the Broadway stage. The show was a revue called Half Past Eight which opened and closed out of town. However, his next show which opened on May 16, 1919, was more successful. Entitled La, La, Lucille, it included a Gershwin standard hit, "Nobody But You." The show ran a respectable one hundred performances.

Irving Caesar and George got together to respond to a request to write a "hindustan" which was the dance rage of 1919, only with an Americanized setting.[309] "I (Caesar) said to George that we ought to write a one step. That evening we had dinner at Dinty More's, discussed the song, and returned to his house. There was a poker game going on. In about fifteen minutes we turned out "Swanee," verse and chorus. . . . We fin-

ished it right then and there, and old man Gershwin lost not a moment in fetching a comb and tissue paper and accompanying George while I sang it over and over again at the insistence of the winning poker players."[310] It was incorporated by Ned Wayburn into a show he was preparing when the Capitol Theatre became a movie theatre. The show opened on October 24, 1919. In that production the song was danced by sixty girls on a darkened stage. Each girl had electric lights in her shoes, but the song did not make a hit. Three months later, Al Jolson heard Gershwin play "Swanee" at a party. That same week Jolson used the song at one of his Sunday afternoon concerts at the Winter Garden Theatre where it was very well received. Because of the audience reaction, Jolson interpolated it into the show in which he was starring, Sinbad, with music by Sigmund Romberg. The song became a huge success selling more than two million records and one million copies of sheet music in a year. It is ironic to realize that Gershwin's first hit was his greatest hit, he never had a bigger selling one.

Some years later, George and Irving Caesar took a trip to the South and saw a glimpse of the river they had helped make famous. They were amazed at the muddy river they found. Irving Caesar commented, "I was shocked, but I am a craftsman like a carpenter who puts in a good job whether it be carving a door for a palace or a whorehouse."[311] Gershwin and Caesar became important men on Tin Pan Alley simply on the basis of this one song.

At the peak of the "Swanee" music sales, George Gershwin

travelled to Detroit to see George White who was producing a revue to rival Ziefgeld's Follies. Called The Scandals, George desired to write for them. With Gershwin's name so prominent in the music business, White needed little convincing. Between 1920 and 1924 Gershwin produced the scored to five editions of the show, writing more than forty songs. Two of these songs became great popular favorites, "Stairway to Paradise" from the 1922 show and "Somebody Loves Me" from the 1924 production.[312] Generally, in fact ninety percent of the time, the music for a Gershwin song was written before the words. Although Gershwin was musical indeed, he was not particularly literary - a fact which plagued him throughout his career on Broadway. His shows had marvelous songs set into very poor libretti. He also was not adept at sounding out music to fit pre-written words hence the necessity for the music to be composed first.[313]

Even with all his success, he was not satisfied. Gershwin recognized that he would not "grow" unless he tried some new avenues of music. He first enrolled in two music courses at Columbia University, one in nineteenth century romantic music and one in orchestration. Whereas in his youth he had been closer in temperament to Berlin than his idol Kern, now he moved from the popular style to an American classical style.[314] To augment his orchestral scoring methods, he hired different musicians to teach him their instruments. Then, in 1923, he became a student of Rubin Goldmark, an expert in harmony. Four years earlier, George had attempted his first classical piece, a lullaby for four strings. It had an essential "blues"

quality to it which led him into the writing of his first "opera" entitled Blue Monday. The opera which had as its theme the blacks of Harlem, was presented only one time in the Scandals of 1922. After the opening performance, George White removed the piece as being too serious and depressing for the show. It was revived several times under a new name, 135th Street. Although never a success, it was an important milestone for Gershwin.

An important result of this operatic attempt was the notice George received in the classical music world. In 1922 he was reviewed favorably by several well-known classical musicians, including Beryl Rubinstein, who was professor at the Cleveland Institute of Music. On November 1, 1923, Eva Gautier, the famous concert artist, presented a recital where she included an entire section of Gershwin music. George was her accompanist, and as the concert ended, she brought him out for a solo bow, an honor unheard of in classical music fields. George's piano skills were equally unheard of; he loved to "ad lib" at the piano, creating endless variations on his own songs and compositions, as well as those of others. At parties he was often wont to play whatever song he was working on at the time, so that George S. Kaufman once wrote "So many of George's new songs had been heard at parties that by the time the show opened, it seemed like a revival!" Kaufman was not the only person to recognize Gershwin's musical ability. Gershwin played the piano so beautifully that the composer Maurice Ravel asked to hear Gershwin play piano as his birthday present!

It was a request George was happy to fill.[315]

Paul Whiteman also heard Blue Monday and the "king of jazz" approached Gershwin to write a formal concert piece. It was Whiteman who had been conducting the pit orchestra for the one performance of Blue Monday, and he desired a longer piece that would be suitable for the symphony hall. For a concert in Aeolian Hall dedicated to American music when he needed the climax piece, he turned to Gershwin. Needless to say, Gershwin desired the same sort of thing, to bring popular music some respectability, but he did not promise Whiteman anything as he feared he wasn't ready. Gershwin's hand was forced when he read in the New York Herald Tribune that he was "at work writing a symphony." Within a few week's time he had written the Rhapsody in Blue, scored for two pianos. The orchestrations were done at that time by Ferde Grofe, and the piece was premiered on February 12, 1924. Although the rest of the concert was rather dull and repetitious, Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue electrified the audience. They responded with a standing ovation. Gershwin two years later provided his own orchestration, which became the standard one used for symphony orchestra. His Rhapsody has become the most famous, most frequently performed and most profitable piece of serious music ever written by an American.[316]

Gershwin's success was enormous. He had made money, but more important, he had earned recognition. He had always desired to be a serious musician and composer; with Rhapsody he was both. In future years he was to write several great clas-

sical compositions including "Piano Concerto in F" (1925), "Three Preludes for Piano" (1926), An American in Paris (1928), Second Rhapsody for orchestra (1931), The Cuban Overture (1932), Variations on I Got Rhythm for piano and orchestra (1931) and finally his masterwork, Porgy and Bess (1935). It is no wonder that these compositions have been enough to place Gershwin at the top of the list of American composers, serious as well as popular.[317]

The next musical George wrote after his 1919 effort was Lady, Be Good written in 1924. It was George's first collaboration with his brother, Ira, who wrote all the lyrics. They had worked together at various times, but Lady, Be Good signalled their permanent alliance. They wrote together for the rest of George's life. The earlier collaborations which Ira had with George were somewhat anonymous. While George's career was booming, Ira used the pseudonym "Arthur Francis" so as not to trade on the Gershwin name or to allow for cries of nepotism. The "Arthur Francis" was derived from the names of the two younger Gershwin siblings. However, from Lady, Be Good on, it was Ira Gershwin who was credited with the lyrics. Ira wrote with George for thirteen years; his influence was enormous. Ira's lyrics were innovative, fresh, clever, and most important, singable. He knew his brother so well that he found it possible to match George's subtle harmonies and rhythm with equally subtle and colorful lyrics. It is no wonder that he was called the William S. Gilbert of America.[318] Ira often led the way toward new directions for George, providing lyrics which moved

the action of a show forward, and allowed George's concept of theatre to shine through. It was a perfect relationship.

Fred and Adele Astaire made the first of several appearances in Gershwin musicals with Lady, Be Good. Their dancing skills were highlighted by a brilliant Gershwin score including such songs as "Lady, Be Good," "Fascinating Rhythm," "So Am I," and "The Man I Love." Although "The Man I Love" was to become the greatest success in the show, it was dropped during tryouts in Philadelphia because the producer thought it slowed down the action of the play too much. Nevertheless, it was second to "Swanee" in the total music sales and record pressings. Some critics have said that "The Man I Love" is the finest popular song ever written.[319]

Gershwin then produced the score to two shows which opened in London to moderate success, Primrose and Tell Me More. The two brothers began writing another show for the American theatre because neither of the English shows were brought over. The next Gershwin brothers production was somewhat of an English import, for it starred Gertrude Lawrence, star of the English stage, in her first American production. The musical was called Oh, Kay! The Astaires were featured in the next Gershwin production entitled Funny Face. Oh, Kay! included the Gershwin songs "Someone to Watch Over Me" and "Clap Yo' Hands." However there were two interpolations for Ira suddenly was taken to the hospital for the removal of his appendix. Howard Dietz finished the lyrics with George.

The year 1930 saw the debut of one theatrical institution

and the conclusion of another. The 1920's had ended, and with Girl Crazy, so did the "twenties musicals." No more would Gershwin write the silly plots he had used in earlier years; now they would speak with a certain social significance. The debut was that of Ethel Merman, who before the show had been Ethel Zimmerman, a clerk-typist. George and Ira gave her some of the best music they had ever written including "I've Got Rhythm," "Sam and Delilah," and "Boy! What Love Has Done to Me." Also in the show were "But Not for Me" and "Embraceable You." The show ran for 272 performances and made Merman the reigning queen of the American musical comedy.

But George and Ira decided that musical comedies were becoming rather stale so they wrote two political satires with songs. The first, in 1927, was Strike Up the Band with the libretto by George S. Kaufman. The story dealt with a plot to drive America into a war with Switzerland so that tariffs would be lowered, all paid for by a Swiss cheese manufacturer (only if the history books would name the war after him!). Even with some clever and lovely songs, the show closed out of town because it was deemed too caustic for Broadway. The Gershwins and Kaufman rewrote the show and presented it in 1929 when it received favorable notices and a moderate run. The new plot had the same character as in the earlier version, but here he was a chocolate maker angry about the chocolate tariffs. As the hero of the story, he gets the girl, becomes a commander of the United States forces (in his dreams), but loses everything when the news leaks out that he has used Grade B milk in

his chocolate. Other than the title song, no songs became overly popular, but the Gershwins wrote parodies of army marching songs, patriotic songs, even an American version of a Gilbert and Sullivan type patter song.

The next year, though, the same team came up with a theme far easier for the critics and audiences to accept, the humorous nature of the American political system. As 1931 was the year before an election, it was the perfect opportunity to satirize the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court. In Strike Up the Band that is what they tried. In Of Thee I Sing that is what they accomplished. The songs from that score which became popular were numerous; the most important ones were "Love is Sweeping the Country," "Wintergreen for President" which parodied political rally songs, and the title song, "Of Thee I Sing" which showed Ira Gershwin's wit through the use of the word "baby" reminding the audience that this was, after all, a Tin Pan Alley love song! The critical reception for Of Thee I Sing was extraordinary. It was praised as "a landmark in American satirical musical comedy." It was the first musical to win a Pulitzer prize as the best play of the season.

Gershwin's greatest achievement for the stage was also his last. The opera Porgy and Bess had been derived from a novel and play written by DuBose and Dorothy Heyward. They served as co-authors on the opera version as well. Gershwin had desired to write an opera for a long time. Originally the story was to have been "The Dybbuk" by Sholom Anski. For some reason,

he changed his mind and chose the Porgy story instead. Porgy and Bess did not contain the typical "darky" songs of Tin Pan Alley, instead it was Gershwin's attempt to write genuine black music. He had spent several months in South Carolina among the gullah blacks to learn their music.[320] He was even influenced by Negro spirituals. "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" became a source for Gershwin's masterpiece, "Summertime."[321]

Perhaps he chose Porgy because he could identify with the characters in the novel. It was a parable of alienation and oppression as well as the inviolability of an innocent spirit in a corrupt world. Although Gershwin was not suffering like the Negroes of his day, he still was an American Jew who knew about spiritual isolation; he was a poor boy who had made good.[322] The entire project, however, was almost cancelled before it began when Heyward wired Gershwin to tell him that Al Jolson had contacted Heyward's agent requesting the musical rights to the play in which Jolson intended to star. Jolson had already contacted Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein to write the songs for the project. Fortunately, Kern and Hammerstein eventually turned down Jolson's offer and Gershwin was given the exclusive rights to Heyward's play, "Porgy." The opera opened in Boston on September 30, 1935 and in New York three weeks later.

It was a failure at the box office and, as usual, with the critics. The opera critics reviewed it saying that Porgy and Bess was too much like musical comedy. The Broadway reviewers condemned it for being too operatic. Gershwin was thrilled, critics or no. He recognized that he had reached the mixture

of popular and classical music for which he had sought. George Gershwin also knew that the future appreciation of Porgy and Bess would show his confidence was warranted. He could never have guessed the critical acclaim it would receive in the years after his death. Porgy and Bess is considered the greatest opera ever composed by an American.[323]

Ira Gershwin's contributions to Porgy and Bess were equally great, although it was George's music which received the attention. The other great lyricist of the 1920's and '30's, Lorenz Hart, wrote the following compliment to Ira after Porgy and Bess: "I loath songwriters who have small intellectual equipment and even less courage. It is a pleasure to live at a time when light amusement is at last losing its brutally cretin aspect and such delicacies as your lyrics prove that songs can be both popular and intelligent."[324]

Following the conclusion of Porgy and Bess, George and Ira, with Ira's wife Lee, moved to California where they wrote for the movies. In 1935 they wrote the score for a movie at RKO called "Damsel in Distress" starring Fred Astaire. Astaire was the dominant force in Hollywood musicals of the day, and demanded that Gershwin write his next movie. Astaire's intercession was important because producers feared that the Gershwins had become too "high brow" after Porgy and Bess to write songs for the common folk. In their first movie, the brothers proved that they could. George Gershwin lived to complete only two more movie scores, but the songs he wrote for Shall We Dance and The Goldwyn Follies were among his finest. These included: "A Fog-

gy Day," "They Can't Take That Away from Me," "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," "Love Walked Right In," and "Our Love Is Here to Stay."

During the spring of 1937, George had been in terrible pain and had suffered from deep depressions. For several weeks he was sent to a psychiatrist to treat his supposedly psychosomatic illness. On July 9, he collapsed and was rushed to the hospital where the real problem was isolated. Gershwin had a cystic tumor on the right temporal lobe of the brain. Upon operating, it was discovered that the tumor was in a part of the brain that could not be reached. The doctors realized that if George were to live, he would be blind and disabled. Mercifully, on July 11, 1937, George Gershwin died.[325]

Ira continued to write; the list of composers with whom he collaborated is an amazing one: Jerome Kern, Kurt Weill, Arthur Schwartz, Harold Arlen, and Harry Warren. His songs included "The Man That Got Away," "Long Ago and Far Away," and "My Ship." Still, he never forged the relationship with another composer that he had created with his brother. Ira wrote a book entitled Lyrics on Several Occasions in 1959 which was a collection of his songs and comments about them. He and his wife of fifty-five years live in California, on the property next to George's former home where Ira continues to collect great art and race horses. At the present, I am told, he is in the process of writing a definitive biography-autobiography of the Gershwin brothers as well as publishing some as yet unknown George Gershwin music which had not been completed at George's death.

George's funeral was at Temple Emmanuel, where the eulogy was written by Oscar Hammerstein. It was delivered by Edward G. Robinson.[326] Perhaps, though, a better remembrance would be that year after year, the Gershwins' music is heard more and more. We are realizing now that, as their song said, "their music is here to stay."

CONCLUSION

It can safely be said that without the Jewish contribution to popular music in America, there would not be the music we enjoy today. From the earliest arrival of Jews in any number to these shores, Jews have played an essential role in the development of the popular song. Songs are more than entertainment; they tell the history, the life style, the mores and the interests of those about whom they are written, for whom they are written, and by whom they are sung.

In the beginning of popular music in America, sentimentality was the essence of the song. People lived difficult lives with few comforts: the comradery provided by standing around the piano singing together gave some solace. John Howard Payne, grandson of a Jew, and Henry Russell represented the Jewish contribution in the early and middle nineteenth century. Songs played important roles in the educative and political processes in the days before mass communication. Surely William Henry Harrison owed his election to the composers and lyricists who wrote his campaign songs. Even more than that, though, major social issues were addressed. Slavery, abolition, prohibition, suffrage, all were the subjects about which popular songs were written.

However with the opening of America to transportation and wider communication, the popular song took on a different task, that of entertaining the people. It is here that the Jewish contribution really begins. When burlesque and vaudeville be-

came popular, it was in large part Jews who wrote the songs. David Braham wrote the songs for the first great vaudeville team, Harrigan and Hart. Weber and Fields, both Jews, continued this tradition. More than these teams, though, vaudeville fostered the beginnings of most of the great American composers in popular music. Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Irving Caesar, and Charles K. Harris all began writing for and being influenced by vaudeville.

For a song to become widely known and accepted, there had to be a way of introducing it to the people. In the area of music publishing as well the Jews dominated. M. Witmark and Sons, Charles K. Harris Inc., Joseph W. Stern and Company, Shapiro and Bernstein, Von Tilzer and Company, Leo Feist, Inc., T. B. Harms, Irving Berlin Inc. together became what was known as Tin Pan Alley. Tin Pan Alley was a musical factory, a place where songs were composed, or more correctly, were manufactured. The great businessmen-artists of Tin Pan Alley shared two things: their desire for fame-and-fortune and their religious background.

The first song to sell a million copies of sheet music was written by a Jew, Charles K. Harris' "After the Ball." The most prolific writer in Tin Pan Alley was Jewish, Harry von Tilzer, who claimed to have written eight thousand songs, several thousand of which were published. The composer who sold the most copies of his songs and, indeed had the most successful popular song in American musical history was Jewish, Irving Berlin. Very soon the songs these men wrote became almost traditional. What would summer be without Albert von Tilzer's "Take Me Out

to the Ball Game" (he had never been to one!). How could we face the coming of autumn and the new school year without Gus Edward's "School Days." What would happen at winter holiday time without Irving Berlin's "White Christmas" or at Easter without "Easter Parade"? Indeed these songs are now "Americana," not popular songs.

The men whose biographies are found in detail each represented a certain aspect of the music industry from 1840-1920. Henry Russell was the first great song writer of Jewish birth in America. Charles Kassel Harris wrote the most popular song of the nineteenth century and then began the popular music industry. Monroe Rosenfeld coined the phrase by which that industry was to be known, around the world, Tin Pan Alley. Harry and Albert von Tilzer typified the kind of men who wrote on Tin Pan Alley. They gave us more standards than any composers in the first fifty years of the music industry. Jerome Kern clearly changed the face of the musical theatre. His wit and sophistication are second to none. It was Kern who helped the popular song to mature. Irving Berlin is the quintessential American-Jewish songwriter. An immigrant who quickly acclimated, Berlin became as all-American as his song, "God Bless America." Jerome Kern said of him, "Irving Berlin has no place in American music. He is American music." Lastly there are George and Ira Gershwin. More than any other songwriting team, they contributed to every genre of American music, popular and classical.

As far as individual biographies are concerned, clearly more have been left out than have been included. In order to

decide who would appear and who would not an arbitrary date of 1920 was set as a demarcation line. That meant that such brilliant composers and lyricists as Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart, Oscar Hammerstein, and Harold Arlen were left out. It is certainly only an indication of shortage of time, not shortage of talent.

The Jewish composers and lyricists of today's Broadway and entertainment industries owe their careers to those who preceeded them. Each succeeding generation of song writers has paved the way for those who will follow. It is unlikely that Alan J. Lerner and Frederick Loewe, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, Stephen Schwartz, John Kander and Fred Ebb, Jerry Herman or Marvin Hamlisch as well as the many other active composers could be writing what they are writing without the people included in this thesis. To them we owe a tremendous debt whether we are singers or listeners for they were the Jews on Tin Pan Alley.*

*At the completion of the text of this thesis, Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus brought to my attention the existence of an earlier lyricist than Henry Russell. Jonas B. Phillips was born in 1805 in Philadelphia. He was the son of Benjamin J. Phillips and Abigail Seixas, both members of distinguished and long-time American Jewish families. Benjamin J. Phillips was the seventh generation of his family to live in America.

A playwright and lawyer, Phillips had written several plays by the middle 1830's. During these same years and into the 1840's, he wrote several popular songs.[327] These included "Light May the Boat Row" (1836), "The Hunter's Horn," "My Old Wife"(1840), and "The New Year's Come," published in the New York Mirror in 1841.[328] Phillips died in 1869.

Undoubtedly, with the traditional Jewish interest in music and poetry, it will be only a matter of time before an even earlier composer or lyricist will be found in early America.

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LORENZ HART

RICHARD RODGERS
and
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Addition to Rabbinic thesis manuscript
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THE JEWS ON TIN PAN ALLEY
Referee Dr. Jacob R. Marcus

Lorenz Hart

There is no lyricist who more carefully studied and appreciated the works of William S. Gilbert than did Lorenz Milton Hart. Lorenz Hart, or Larry as he was called by virtually everyone, is considered the great lyricist of the theatre, as Ira Gershwin dominated the screen. Hart worked primarily with one composer, Richard Rodgers, and together they revolutionized the American musical theatre. Upon Hart's retirement and the dissolution of their partnership, Rodgers went into the second of his great partnerships, with Oscar Hammerstein II. With Hart's death, the American musical comedy closed one of its finest chapters. From that time on, a new genre, the musical play was to gain primacy. However that story is forty-eight years in the future.

Lorenz Hart was the second son of Frieda Isenberg Hart and Max Hart. Max had come from Germany where his name was Hertz and upon his arrival in America he americanized the family name to Hart. They were married on November 6, 1886, about one year after Frieda had come to the country from Hamburg. Together they moved to their first apartment on Allen Street in the Lower East Side where Max entered into the first of his many businesses. The house was always filled; it is no wonder when Max had nine siblings and Frieda had eight, all living in the same neighborhood! For several years they were childless and the fear was great that Frieda could never have any children. Then in 1891 came their son Jimmy. Tragically, because of exposure during a house fire, Jimmy caught pneumonia while still in infancy and died. Naturally the parents were grief stricken and they moved out of the house at the first opportunity.

The new Hart home was uptown in a brownstone between Second and Third Avenue on East 106th Street. It was here that Lorenz Milton Hart was born on May 2, 1895. The father, Max, was into real estate, railroads, businesses, anything at which he could make (and ultimately lose) money. His methods were often times shady, with several close calls involving the law. It is no surprise that Larry learned to live with excitement and somewhat colorful friends! Max also became a local power in politics, doing precinct work for the party befriending the party lawyers and judges. It was in honor of the then Vice President, Theodore Roosevelt, and one of the Tammany powers, the mayor of New York, Richard Van Wyck,(1) that Max and Frieda's second child was named Theodore Van Wyck Hart, born September 25, 1897.(2)

Max was involved with many famous people of his day including William Hammerstein, son of opera impresario Oscar Hammerstein, (and father of Oscar Hammerstein II), with whom Max lost money. He apparently enjoyed his partnership with Polly Adler, one of New York's most infamous madams!(3) The relationship with Tammany ended fairly quickly with the disgrace of his former favorite, Richard Van Wyck. In apparent consistency with previous New York City administrations, such as Boss Tweed's, only a few years earlier, Van Wyck was soon found guilty of improprieties and Theodore Van Wyck Hart's middle name was never used again.

With growing prosperity, the Harts soon moved to 59 West 119th Street in Harlem where they joined many Jews, mainly Reform. There was a Temple on their block, and it was there, at Mt. Zion Temple that Larry and Teddy were Bar Mitzvahed. The rabbi, Rabbi Tintner, also officiated at the bar mitzvah of

Milton Berlinger, later Milton Berle, who lived a few blocks away.

Max Hart was a very entertaining man who loved to give big parties, smokers and other social events. Known for his generosity and interest in the arts, he was also famous for his crude tongue and flamboyant manner. One of the Hart neighbors was the world famous chazan, Cantor Yosele Rosenblatt. During one summer heat spell the famous singer was vocalizing in the backyard shared by the Rosenblatts and Harts when Max annoyed at the music [illegible] poured a bucket of water on the cantor's head. However outrageous Max was, Frieda, Larry's mother was proper. It was a result of her tutelage that Hart was taught German, given an unending love for the classics in both music and literature, and provided with the encouragement for cultural activities. Max Hart claimed that the German poet Heinrich Heine was a family member, but the relationship couldn't be proved. Regardless, Heine was Hart's favorite poet.(4)

The Harts had always been interested in theatre ever since the days in Germany when Frieda had auditioned for a play. Because of her very short stature the director suggested that she return when she grew up, but unfortunately she never did become any taller. Both Frieda and Max were unusually short, a trait which was passed on to both sons. Unfortunately for Larry, although his body was small with short limbs and small features, his head was of normal size which gave his body a very dwarflike appearance. This size problem haunted him his entire life.

At age thirteen Hart was sent to the Weingart Institute for summer camp. In the Catskills, this was a precursor of modern

camps and was populated by the sons of wealthy German Jewish families. Among his camp mates were the Bonwit sons, of Bonwit Teller fame, Oscar Hammerstein II, two Selznick sons, Herbert Sondheim (the father of Stephen Sondheim) and a few years later, Richard Rodgers.[5] Being several years younger than Hart, Rodgers did not arrive until Hart had left, but the camp certainly deserved the title as a training ground for future stars of the entertainment world.

After two summers there he went to Camp Paradox in the Adirondacks where his camp friends included Herbert Fields, the son of Lew Fields, the vaudeville star and theatre producer, and Eugene Zukor, whose father was Adolph, the movie producer and founder of Paramount Pictures. After five years there both Harts went to Brant Lake Camp where Larry's counselor was Arthur Schwartz, who became the composer with the team of Schwartz and Dietz, writing such shows as The Band Wagon. Within a few years, Hart became a counselor at the camp, given responsibility for the dramatics program there. He worked unceasingly creating several productions each summer with music by Mickey Thomashevsky, from The Yiddish Theatre Family. At the same time Larry had enrolled in Columbia College. Although not terribly impressed with the level of theatre education he was receiving, he was given the chance to write for the undergraduate show, called the Varsity Show. In the 1915 Varsity show, for which Hart contributed and performed in several sketches, the lead actor was Oscar Hammerstein II. Another classmate of Hammerstein's, Mortimer Rodgers, brought his little brother to see the show. It was little Richard Rodgers' first introduction to Oscar Hammer-

stein, he didn't meet Lorenz Hart.

Hart's ability with lyrics and dialogue became well known when communicated by his friends from summer camp to their theatre-connected parents. One man who chose to pursue Hart was Billy Rose. Rose, who was equally diminutive in stature as was Hart, but to whom it did not create any problems, would come up to the camp and spend much time with Hart, concluding each visit with a gift of money. Rose was the composer of several great hits of the day, it was only natural that he should desire some Hart lyrics to gowith the music.

Hart then embarked on a career as a translator of European operettas, mainly German and Viennese productions, which were being transplanted onto the American stage. Between 1920 and 1925 Hart used his fluency in German to translate Jean Gilbert's "The Lady in Ermine" into English as well as changing the setting from Europe to America. Although the script was excellent, the songs created by Hart and a friend were not used. Instead,the Shuberts who owned the piece gave it to Sigmund Romberg who returned the setting to Europe and wrote songs appropriate to the setting, creating a great hit for himself. The next venture for Hart was to translate Ferenc Molnar's "Liliom" into English. He received $200 for his efforts, but the credit and royalties for the very successful play were given to Benjamin "Barney" Glazer.[6] It is interesting to note that this play was eventually used by Hart's future collaborator, Richard Rodgers, and Oscar Hammerstein II as the story for their hugely successful musical, Carousel.

A sports club, the Akron club, which was dedicated to the athletic pursuits of its members was in need of uniforms and

decided that the easiest way to earn money was to put on an amateur show. Among the members of the club were Mortimer Rodgers and Phil Leavitt. It was Mortimer Rodgers' younger brother who wrote the music to the first show; Dick Rodgers created the score while various people wrote the lyrics and sketches for the production. However when the second show was in production, the need for a real lyricist was felt. Phil Leavitt, the son of a paint company owner, remembered his friend Larry Hart whom he had met at Columbia. Leavitt accompanied the young Richard Rodgers to meet Hart.

This important meeting was on a Sunday afternoon, late in 1918; Rodgers was a sixteen-year-old filled with trepidations at meeting a more sophisticated man seven years his senior. What Rodgers saw was even more disconcerting for Hart greeted the two men in a bathrobe and formal trousers, unshaven and unkempt. For Rodgers, already a nattily dressed young man, this was a bad start. Fortunately, after the obligatory conversation and small talk, the subject turned to songs and theatre. In these areas Rodgers and Hart had much in common and Leavitt succeeded in establishing a firm relationship between the two men. For Rodgers it was an education when Hart informed him of the various technical terms and skills necessary in writing good lyrics, including rhyme schemes, interior and feminine rhymes, etc.

By the conclusion of the afternoon, Rodgers and Hart had joined forces in the creation of songs. If Hart had a personal creed dealing with music it was "Don't have a formula and don't repeat it." Rodgers' attitude was somewhat different. As he wrote in "Theatre Arts Monthly" later on, "In one afternoon I had acquired a career, a partner, a best friend, and a source of

permanent irritation."

Their first creative efforts were for the benefit of the Akron club, but their real goal was Broadway. In this endeavor one of Larry's camp buddies proved helpful. Phil Leavitt, who had introduced them was also good friends with Dorothy and Herb Fields, the children of actor and producer Lew Fields. It was as a favor to Leavitt that Herb invited Hart and Rodgers to the Fields home so that Lew could hear some of their songs. The song which Hart had intended him to buy was entitled "Venus". It fell flat. However Fields had a good ear for talent and requested that he hear other Rodgers and Hart efforts. When they played for him "Any Old Place With You" he immediately purchased it and interpolated it into his Broadway show, A Lonely Romeo in which Fields was both producing and starring. It was their first Broadway song and it was a popular hit. Sung by Eve Lynn and Alan Hale, it premiered on August 26, 1919.

The first Rodgers and Hart score was not one for Broadway, however. It was an amateur show written for Columbia College with the name Fly With Me. The libretto of Fly With Me had been written by Milton Kroop and dealt with Bolshevism. Another libretto, written by Hart and Rodgers had been rejected. It is amusing to note that one of those on the committee which rejected the first Rodgers and Hart effort was Oscar Hammerstein II. When Fly With Me premiered on March 24, 1920, there were thirteen Rodgers and Hart songs, all of which were later published. A major facet of the show's appeal was the "Pony Ballet" in which the men in the cast were dressed up as women involved in fairly involved choreography. Although trained carefully, their large

feet and frequently hairy chests made the dance altogether humorous. And were that not funny enough, when they began to sing, their voices were baritones instead of sopranos. This tradition is carried on in many theatrical ventures, the most notable being Harvard's "Hasty Pudding Theatricals."

Among Hart's classmates who worked with him on the show were Howard Dietz, Morry Ryskind, and Herman Mankiewicz. The choreographer for the show was Herbert Fields. Needless to say, it was a distinguished group of future entertainment greats.

Fields continued his association with Hart and Rodgers to such a degree that they decided to write their own scripts under the name Herbert Richard Lorenz. Their first effort, to be called Winkle Town was never produced. Even Herbert's father, Lew, refused to produce it. One can only guess at what other producers would have said when approached by the threesome when they were asked why the playwright's own father wouldn't produce the script. Instead Lew Fields purchased several new Rodgers and Hart songs for his show Poor Little Ritz Girl. They joined the production in Boston but were forced to go to summer camp before the "doctoring" of the play commenced. Fields had made enormous revisions to the script and songs between the tour and the Broadway opening. The entire libretto had been dropped, seven of the songs had been replaced by those written by Sigmund Romberg and Alex Gerber, in short it was an entirely different show than the one they had written. As producer, Fields was well within the agreement they had made; as newcomers to the theatre Rodgers and Hart had no recourse but to accept it without complaint. The show opened on July 28, 1920 to mixed notices; generally

poor for the Romberg songs, generally favorable for the Rodgers and Hart material.

The three took the failure of Winkel Town and Poor Little Ritz Girl in stride and began plans for a new production entitled The Jazz King. It also had a fitful start and would not be presented for quite a while. Instead, they decided to purchase the rights to the Mark Twain masterpiece A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. When little came of that, they put the idea aside and chose to re-work The Jazz King. It took them more than three years to finish the script to The Jazz King. Those were very difficult years for Hart as well as for his collaborator. Between 1922 and 1925 each looked into different avenues for income. Hart chose to become a producer; he approached one of his Columbia friends with the plan to present one of the friends plays, but it too proved difficult. The play was called The First Fifty Years by Henry Myers, who would go on to write movie scripts and theatrical revues. The first move by Myers was to submit it to the actress Margaret Wycherly, who decided to make a few changes. What resulted bore little or no resemblance to the original script, and plans for her involvement were scuttled. When Larry's father agreed to provide seed money, and several other investors were found, a director and cast were hired and the play went into production. While in previews, the show received favorable notices and went into New York with great anticipation of success. They were not as lucky when they opened in New York. The show closed.

Unfortunately for Hart and Rodgers, there were no new

opportunities for them so Hart decided to stage another Henry Myers effort. The play was entitled The Blond Beast and is historically important primarily in the way the play auditioned for potential backers. The two neophyte producers decided to mount a full production of the play with only one performance. At that performance they would invite all the Broadway producers and big shots. They figured that potential backers and producers could more easily recognize the value of the script by seeing a production of it instead of just reading it. Again events interferred for as the curtain rose on the play, word went through the audience of producers and backers that there would be an actors' strike. That is indeed what occurred. The result was the founding and acceptance of Actor's Equity.

With yet another failure, Hart returned to Herbert Fields and Richard Rodgers to attempt to find backers for The Jazz King. With great effort they convinced Lew Fields, if only because he recognized the starring role would be perfect for him. The story dealt with a Tin Pan Alley composer's efforts to be accepted as a song writer. When it opened on Broadway the title became "The Melody Man". Within the plot of the show, there were two Rodgers and Hart songs, both written as parodies of the worst Tin Pan Alley could offer. "I'd like to Poison Ivy" is an example of how well they succeeded in writing really terrible songs! The play itself was judged as truly terrible as well. Said George Jean Nathan "the plot is not only enough to ruin the play, it is enough--and I feel I may say it without fear of contradiction--to ruin even Hamlet."[8] The show ran fifty five

performances.

Bad luck obviously did not follow Hart for all his days; the year 1925 was the turning point. A group of the bit-part-young actors in the Theatre Guild used to meet together to write the sketches, songs and lyrics for a revue they wanted to present in order to raise money for tapestries to adorn the Theatre Guild's new theatre. A friend of Richard Rodgers approached him with the idea which was received in a very tepid manner. However upon hearing some of these young people's plans for the show, it did not take any more convincing for the pair to realize that this was the break they wanted. More than just the opportunity of being presented on Broadway this was the chance to be working for the Theatre Guild. It was a break that they could not pass up.

Within a very short time, about two weeks, Hart and Rodgers put together six new songs; from their old musical failure Winkle Town they took another, their first great hit "Manhattan". On May 17, 1925 the show opened; called The Garrick Gaieties, named after the theatre in which it was produced, the show was scheduled to run two performances, a matinee and an evening. The critical and public approval was so great that the Theatre Guild decided to add four more performances all of which were immediately sold out. On June 8 the Guild scheduled a regular Broadway run which finally ended over two hundred performances later. As a result, Hart was earning the first regular paycheck he had ever received, about fifty dollars per week. Rodgers received his fifty plus eighty-three more for his conducting duties. Perhaps

more importantly, the two song writers made a very valuable contact; Max Dreyfus of Harms music company agreed to publish their songs. He continued to do so for the almost twenty years Rodgers and Hart wrote together.

By the end of 1925 there was another Rodgers and Hart musical, the historical epic about the American Revolution entitled Dearest Enemy. The musical dealt with the attempts by Mrs. Robert Murray to keep British soldiers at her house in New York so George Washington could retreat from the city. The sophistication of both music and lyrics impressed the critics and audiences alike.

The year 1926 also saw two Rodgers and Hart musical successes. The first was Peggy Ann, about a small town girl dreaming of living in the big city. Various aspects of this show were unique; the story had a rather surrealistic feel to it with dream sequences and reality mixed together, there was no grand chorus opening as was the fashion in shows at the time, and the ending was a very dramatic dance number in place of the more usual huge production number. Later in the year came the second hit show, this one based on the Mark Twain book A Connecticut Yankee. Having already acquired the rights to the show several years earlier, Hart decided that he wanted to do the show at that time. Unfortunately having become so successful, and the original permission having lapsed, they were forced to spend considerable money in procuring the rights again. The plot was really quite ingenius and clever. The hero of the show gets hit on the head by a champagne bottle and awakes thinking he is in

Camelot. The rest of the show deals with trying to place his morals and modern twentieth century attitudes upon the people of merrie olde England. The most famous song from that score actually did not come from that show at all. Entitled "My Heart Stood Still" it had been lifted from an English Rodgers and Hart revue called One Dam Thing After Another. Apparently the two song writers were in a Paris taxicab viewing the sights with two women when a taxicab nearly slammed into them. One of the girls said "my heart stood still." Hart remarked calmly that "that would make a terrific song title". In order to use the song from the English show, they had to buy it from the producer which they did for $5,000. Placed in Connecticut Yankee both it and the show became instant smash successes in America.

With the success the team had, the inevitable question came up as to which came first, the music or the lyrics. Although for others it might have been a half and half situation, Lorenz Hart's genius lay in setting words to music he had already heard.[9] Hart provided an insight into his method of setting a lyric when he described writing one of his songs "Here in My Arms"; "I take the most distinctive melodic phrase in the tune and work on that. What I choose is not necessarily the theme or the first line, but the phrase which stand out." He then continued to say that he chose the longest or most important musical notes on which to place his dominant lyric, the rhyming or stand out lyric for the song.

Between 1927's A Connecticut Yankee and 1931, Hart wrote the lyrics to seven musical productions both in New York and London. None was enormously successful, although each show had

a stand out song by which it is remembered today. Present Arms in 1928 featured the song "You Took Advantage of Me" which was sung by a young future movie director named Busby Berkeley and Joyce Barbour. Chee Chee, was a rather peculiar play about the seduction of a beautiful girl by the son of the grand Eunuch. With the dominant theme being castration, one can guess the popular appeal. It is even reported that at the end of one performance a lady commented "what is a eunuch anyway?" However the song "Moon of My Delight" did come from it. One of the most memorable lyrics Hart wrote was found in his show Spring is Here which ran on Broadway for only 104 performances. The song found there is "With a Song in My Heart". The same year the team wrote Heads Up! which also lasted a rather short time, about 140 performances. From that score we remember the song "A Ship Without a Sail". The next year, 1930, Hart wrote the lyrics to Rodger's music for a show written by and starring Ed Wynn. Simple Simon was about the dream of one "Simon Eyyes" (grandson of Harmon Eyyes!) and was a rather contrived mixture of fairy tales and mythology. The other star in the show was Ruth Etting who introduced one of the most dramatic and for 1930 risque songs seen on Broadway. Entitled "Ten Cents a Dance," the song dealt with the story of a dance hall "hostess" in Depression times.

The last Hart lyric for a Broadway show before he left New York was for America's Sweetheart which was intended as a parody of Hollywood and the crazy life style found in the movies. Hart found the material easy to write because he and Rodgers had just made a short journey to Hollywood to write the songs for a

movie entitled "The Hot Heiress". It was a disaster as was their trip, no the lyrics for America's Sweetheart came easily. The songs were the only acceptable part of this poor musical and oddly enough, even after their first negative experience, Hart and Rodgers returned to Hollywood for the next four years.

Although in general the songs they produced for the films are not up to the level of those they did for the stage, there were several outstanding songs. For the film "Love Me Tonight" which starred Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette McDonald they wrote "Lover" and "Mimi", which became a Chevalier theme song. Other movies which included Rodgers and Hart songs were "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum" which starred Al Jolson, George M. Cohan's "The Phantom President" and "Manhattan Melody". Hollywood, however was not the answer for Rodgers and Hart. They recognized that Broadway was the place for them to be.

The theatre they had left was not the one to which they would return. Already the works of Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Kaufman and their friend Morrie Ryskind had changed things, no more would operetta or musical comedies be the rage; from then on the book and plot became more important; they would have to write musical plays. It is ironic, then, that the first show Hart wrote upon the return to New York would be the song writer-producer Billy Rose's Jumbo which was really a glorified circus-burlesque-vaudeville show. Both Hart and Rodgers recognized, however that they had to prove again their value to the New York producers, and so they accepted the assignment. In fact they wrote some magnificent songs, including "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World" and "My Romance".

After concluding this show, Hart went into his last and greatest period of creativity. He and Rodgers wrote nine musicals, of which seven deserved recognition. Each one provided some new twist and development to the history of the musical, each one had marvelous songs. The first of the seven musicals of this period, On Your Toes played for 315 performances. Starring Ray Bolger, David Morris, Monty Woolley and Luella Gear, it had been intended as a vehicle for Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Instead, Bolger and Doris Carson played the roles. The unique song in the piece was really a ballet sequence, considered one of the finest pieces of music Rodgers ever wrote. During the piece the entire plot of the show is resolved, making it the first musical to end in such a serious manner. The most famous song from the score was "There's a Small Hotel" which was dropped from Jumbo and found a permanent place in this show. The show opened April 11, 1936.

Babes in Arms suffered from a rather banal script but included several fresh variations. Firstly, almost the entire cast was made up of teen agers. Secondly there were five of the team's most wonderful songs. These were "The Lady is a Tramp", "Johnny One Note", "My Funny Valentine", "Where or When" and "I Wish I Were in Love Again". Running 289 performances, the production opened on April 14,1937. Only five months later,the next Hart effort premiered. The musical I'd Rather Be Right" received more publicity than any Rodgers and Hart show. The show's star George M. Cohan, came out of retirement in order to poke fun at the President of the United States,Franklin D. Roose-

velt. With the libretto written by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, the show was filled with strident and rather satirical comments on current events and politics of the day, including a string of endorsements of FDR for a third term.

With their next show, Rodgers and Hart finally achieved one of Hart's fondest dreams; ever since he had been called "Shakespeare" as a child, he had wanted to write a Shakespeare musical. In The Boys From Syracuse he did it. Also he wrote a leading role perfect for his younger brother Teddy. The entire year of 1938 was a banner one for the team; they wrote two musicals: I Married An Angel and The Boys From Syracuse and Rodgers and Hart had been featured in a "New Yorker" profile. Their most signal honor, however, was the cover story they received in Time magazine. Referred to as "the U.S. Gilbert and Sullivan", they were very pleased. The success of Boys from Syracuse was also pleasing. Such songs as "This Can't Be Love", "Sing For Your Supper" and "Falling In Love With Love" were written for this show. It was choreographed by George Balanchine and had settings by Jo Mielziner, the son of a former Hebrew Union College professor and acting president.

With the onset of the 1940's came the breaking up of the Rodgers and Hart team. Hart was becoming an alcoholic, running with in a crowd of reprobates, spending his money with little or no memory of where it was going, and yet he was still to write two of his best shows. The first was Pal Joey with the libretto from the original book by John O'Hara. The story dealt with a small time hoofer-night club performer who earned the major part of his money as a gigolo around the wealthy women of Chicago.

The stars included Gene Kelly and Vivienne Segal, with whom, some say, Hart was in love. The songs in Pal Joey were among the cleverest Hart had ever written; among others "I Could Write a Book", "Zip", "Bewitched Bothered and Bewildered". The reviews for the show were less than laudatory mainly questioning how a musical could be made based around such a low despicable character. It was a brilliant effort and a fine show. Its merits, underrated in 1940, were recognized in its subsequent Broadway revivals, the latest being in the middle 1970's.

By the latter part of 1940, there were growing and irreparable strains in the relationship between Rodgers and Hart. Richard Rodgers suggested that Hart be committed to a psychiatric clinic with Hart's consent or not but nothing was done. Hart's drinking increased, his depression deepened, the crowd with whom he travelled became more and more low class. Within a few weeks of this time there was a definite physical deterioration caused from the drinking and carousing. The Hart family was very worried but there was little that could be done, for Hart did not want to help himself.

The last show Hart wrote with Rodgers was By Jupiter which premiered in New York on June 2, 1942. During the preparation of the score and lyrics Hart was hospitalized for his alcoholism and life style; upon release from the hospital he was very difficult to pin down in order to complete work. Rodgers was forced to contribute lyrics by himself. The relationship between Rodgers and Hart had always been difficult; the men were so totally different; by the time of By Jupiter they had reached a crisis

stage. Fortunately By Jupiter enjoyed one of the longest runs they had achieved, 427 performances. Although the cast was a very strong one including Ray Bolger, Constance Moore, Benay Venuta and as a replacement Nanette Fabray, they were not given a really strong score and no songs were great public hits.

Rodgers had hoped that with a new show possibility, they could keep the partnership going. The new show would be a revival of A Connecticut Yankee with several new songs by the team. Hart kept his interest for a while writing one of his finest lyrics for "To Keep My Love Alive" but on opening night in Philadelphia he did not attend, being on a drinking binge. When the show opened in New York, Hart was not allowed in the theatre because of Rodger's fears of what he might do. After the show he was nowhere to be found. Two days later he was located in a hospital suffering from pneumonia. Lorenz Hart died a few days later, on November 22, 1943.

One might say that he died of drinking, of unending nights and parties; that would be largely true. More than that though, Hart died creatively. Rodgers and the Theatre Guild had approached him with a play to be musicalized entitled "Green Grow the Lilacs" but Hart decided that he would rather go to Mexico instead. Hart suggested that Rodgers find another lyricist with whom to work and Rodgers did, Oscar Hammerstein II. The show they were to write was Oklahoma! Hart attended the opening night of Oklahoma! and recognized the achievement his partner had made without him; afterward he went to the opening night party at Sardi's and told Rodgers "This thing of yours will run longer than Blossom Time," Blossom Time being one of Sigmund

Romberg's most successful operettas.

In April of that same year, 1943, Hart's mother Frieda with whom he had been living all these years, died. She was buried at a small Jewish cemetery on Long Island interred next to her husband who had died eighteen years earlier. Lorenz Hart was buried next to her six months later.[10]

Richard Rodgers may have written the best summation of Lorenz Hart- the lyricist when he wrote in the preface to the Rodgers and Hart Songbook "his lyrics knew that love was not especially devised for boy and girl idiots of fourteen."[11] Had Lorenz Hart known he would be remembered for the intelligence and wit of his lyrics, he would have been happy.

Lorenz Hart Notes

1. Hart, Thou Swell Thou Witty, p. 13.
2. Marx and Clayton, p. 14.
3. Ibid., p. 15.
4. Sanders, p. 209.
5. Hart, p. 15.
6. Whitcomb, Tin Pan Alley, p. 249.
7. Marx and Clayton, p. 39.
8. Ibid., p. 65.
9. Goldberg, p. 230.
10. Hart, p. 171.
11. Rodgers and Hart Songbook, 1951.

Rodgers and Hammerstein

It is only fitting and proper to conclude this book on the Jewish contribution to American popular music with the biographies of the most famous, successful and beloved team in American musical history. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein have come to be the essence of what makes Broadway great; they wrote more hit shows than any other person or team, their productions ran for more performances than any other songwriters, they trod more new ground and made a greater contribution to the American musical theatre and popular music industry than any before them or after them.

Naturally they did not suddenly spring full bloom from nowhere; it took the creative work of many men and women before them to lay the groundwork for the innovations which Rodgers and Hammerstein introducted. Both men had brilliantly creative careers before they joined forces in 1942 working with the respective leaders in the music and lyric fields. Therefore the stories of both Rodgers and Hammerstein must be told before their career together will be understood. Oscar Hammerstein was several years older than Rodgers so it is logical to begin with him.

Oscar Greeley Clendenning Hammerstein was the eldest son of William and Alice Hammerstein. He was born on July 12, 1895. Oscar had a younger brother, Reggie, who was born nineteen months later. William Hammerstein, on the surface a fine example of the genteel German-American-Jewish tradition, was in fact one of the most important theatrical managers in the United States. As director of his father's vaudeville theatre, Hammerstein's

Victoria, William commanded a large salary and even more respect.[1] More important in the theatrical world was William's father and Oscar's grandfather-namesake, Oscar Hammerstein I. Born in Stettin, Germany, Oscar was the son of Abraham and Bertha Hammerstein. Abraham was a broker on the local stock exchange when Oscar was enrolled in a music academy. Although Oscar was better than mediocre on the violin, he disliked practicing so much that it became clear he was not going to be a musician by profession. What he really enjoyed was opera and it became a consuming passion. Very soon after entering the conservatory his mother died; Oscar I was grief stricken, especially having to face his very stern father without the comfort of his mother. In 1865, after skipping a music lesson, he arrived home only to be beaten by his father. For Oscar that was the last straw and he left home for good. By selling his violin he collected the money necessary for passage to Hamburg and Dover. From there he worked on a ship in order to earn the money for a trans-Atlantic passage.

Oscar Hammerstein I was a very inventive man. In his very first job, that of a cigar maker, he invented the first cigar wooden mold which could guarantee the uniformity of the hand made cigars. Later he sold the invention for $6,000. Next he created a machine which became the basis for the vacuum cleaner that used air suction to strip the tobacco leaves from the stem. More important for him personally, he fell in love with and married Rose Blau. After they were married, Oscar Hammerstein placed all his money into theatres and real estate. First he built more than a score of apartment buildings and fifty private

homes. With the profits he built his first theatre, the Harlem Opera House. Later called the Apollo theatre, it eventually became the premier night spot in Harlem. Soon after giving birth to her four sons, Harry, Arthur, William and Abraham, Rose died. Her loss threatened to destroy Oscar and it was a very long time before he could cope with her death. As a result, he seemed to have an almost maniacal desire to succeed and succeed he did.

Although these theatrical efforts often lost money, Hammerstein was optimistic: "Someday I will show them how to run grand opera with new singing stars, new costumes and new theatres." That is what he accomplished. As his fortunes rose and fell, Oscar continued to build theatres moving farther and farther downtown. His masterpiece was built between 42nd and 44th streets at a place then called Longacre Square, now known as Times Square. Called the Olympia, he would present burlesque, opera and operetta. The three theatres contained therein could hold six thousand people. But the most innovative facet of this new venture was the building of a roof garden on the building and a restaurant. It was an immediate success, although soon the novelty wore off. Three years later, in 1898, Hammerstein had again spread himself too thin and the New York Life Insurance company brought proceedings to take over the theatre. Not only would this have ruined Oscar, but his two sons William and Arthur as well for they were underlings at the theatre. Very quickly he recouped his losses staved off the creditors, and opened two more theatres, this time opera houses.

The larger of the two was in Manhattan and the other was in Philadelphia. He did so well with these that the Metropolitan opera felt forced to buy him out for more than one million dollars. What they didn't know was that he was on the verge of bankruptcy. When asked if there was a lot of money in opera, Oscar I replied, "Yes, mine!"[2]

Apparently Hammerstein saved most of his energies for the opera, for he was a terrible father and husband. He preferred staying at the opera house rather than come home and his children never recalled any affection from him at all. Oscar I also had no time for his grandchildren; Oscar II rarely saw the old man, and when he did it would be for silent meetings in the theatre lobby.

Whatever other energy Oscar I had was turned to writing and producing. By 1904 Oscar Hammerstein I had written several operettas including When You Said Yes, Bridgetta, and Leap Year in Midnight all published by Charles K. Harris. The great song writer-publisher commented at the time "We all thought he was dreaming, but as usual nearly all his dreams came true."[3] Oscar's son William, (Oscar II's father) did not share his father's love of the theatre. For William it was an occupation and the way to keep his family fed. Yet through the years he built up an incredible list of rather common vaudeville acts which were turned into starring features for the Victoria theatre. Sadly, William shared his father's unaffectionate nature and rarely expressed his feelings either. As had been true for his grandfather, Oscar II's mother provided the love and affection he needed. She had a great love of the theatre instilled in her by her Presbyterian parents who had enjoyed theatre in Glasgow.[4]

William did not bring much of his Jewish background to the marriage, so the children were not brought up Jewishly at all, were baptised Episcopalian and practiced no religion.

Before Oscar II was six the family had moved three times. When he was born they lived on 135th Street, and at age six they moved again, to 87th and Central Park West. Each time they moved closer to grandfather Oscar's theatres. When Oscar's little brother was born, Oscar was forced to move downstairs in their building to the apartment of his maternal grandparents, the Nimmos. For three years he ate his meals upstairs, but in the morning before his walks, he would have breakfast with his grandfather, a milkshake laced with whisky!

Oscar developed a strong interest in the theatre after being an actor in a public school play. Following his dramatic premier he demanded that his father take him to the Victoria to see the shows there. William was adamant that his sons not go into the theatre, but the wishes of Oscar were eventually fulfilled. At that Saturday matinee in his eighth year Oscar met his famous grandfather for the first time.

Among the acts which played at Hammerstein's Victoria were the biggest stars in New York. Weber and Fields, Fanny Brice, Al Jolson, Harry Houdini and Buster Keaton all had very profitable runs at the Victoria. William had no humanitarian regard for his acts apparently; he once booked a contest to make "Sober Sue" laugh and many of New York's best comedians tried and failed. Along with the comedians came enormous audiences. What they all didn't know was that "Sue" had paralyzed facial muscles and couldn't smile if she wanted to![5]

In 1910 Oscar's mother died at the very young age of thirty five. She had been the brightest spot in the family and her loss was immeasurable to Oscar. That summer he and his brother were enrolled at the Weingart Institute summer camp where he met several young people who were to remain his friends all his life. Among them were David Selznick and his brother, Myron, Lorenz Hart, and Leighton Brill who would serve as Hammerstein's assistant for more than twenty years. Along with his friends, Oscar - then called Ockie, which came from the time when his brother could not pronounce "Oscar" - wrote shows, edited the camp newspaper and played various sports. While the boys were at camp, their father William married his sister-in-law, whose nick name was Mousie. The two parents decided that Oscar should attend Columbia University where he enrolled in 1912. Among his classmates in the English department were Bennett Cerf, Richard Simon and M. Lincoln Schuster of publishing fame, Herb Fields, Lorenz Hart, Herman Mankiewicz, Mortimer Rodgers (Richard's brother) and Milton Berle.

Columbia proved a very exciting place for Oscar; he became involved in fraternities and student shows, becoming very popular in the process. At the end of his first year his father William made him promise that he would not go into theatre, stating that Oscar would make a marvelous lawyer. Following his constant desire to do what he was told, he dutifully promised. While the boys were at summer camp at the Weingart institute, their father William died. The boys naturally rushed home only to read newspaper headlines treating their father as if he were a national

political star or king. Words such as "the Barnum of vaudeville" and other tributes came pouring in. Oscar I was stunned by William's death; so was the theatrical community at large. More than one thousand people attended his funeral at Temple Israel in Harlem. He was buried next to his first wife; after the funeral taps was played over Broadway. His death marked the end of an era.

Soon after his father's death and in spite of his promise not to become involved in theatre, Oscar joined the Columbia University players which yearly produced a variety show written by the students. Oscar became involved in the writing and performing of these shows beginning in 1915. By 1917 he was assigned the task of writing his own varsity show which he did with Herman Mankewicz, who later wrote the screen play for Citizen Kane. After a performance of that very show Hammerstein met his future partner, Richard Rodgers; at the time Rodgers was a fourteen year old boy accompanying his brother, Mortimer to see the show.

Oscar followed the promise he had made to his father by attending Columbia Law School. Beginning law school before he graduated college, Hammerstein finally received his bachelor's degree while in law school. He continued to write for the varsity show where in 1919 he wrote his first two songs with Richard Rodgers. During his law school career he took part time jobs. The first was as a process server or a law firm which paid him five dollars per week. Added to the fifty dollars per week from stocks which his father had left him, he felt he deserved and needed more money. After being rejected when he asked for a raise, he approached his uncle Arthur about working for him.

Arthur Hammerstein had by then established himself as one of Broadway's major producers having presented Victor Herbert's Naughty Marietta and Rudolf Friml's The Firefly, two of the longest running operettas in theatrical history. Yet Arthur recalled his promise to William and was opposed to Oscar entering the theatre world. Oscar was adamant and Arthur finally relented hiring Oscar as an assistant stage manager with a salary of twenty dollars per week. Oscar was so good at it that he was hired by Arthur on a permanent rather than "run of-the-play" contract. Soon afterwards, Oscar became engaged to Myra Finn, a cousin of Dr. William Rodgers, Richard's father, and they were married.

On August 1, 1919 Oscar Hammerstein I died. The next day his funeral was held at Temple Emanu-El attended by the greats and near greats of the theatre and political world. The list of honorary pall bearers read more like a who's who of the theatre including the Schuberts, George M. Cohan, David Belasco, Klaw and Erlanger- the vaudeville owners, etc. The only bow to vaudeville was a song by John McCormack who had come to America under Oscar's invitation. The death received front page coverage in every paper in the country.

Oscar now began a prodigious effort to increase his experience and theatrical contributions. Having begun as an assistant manager for his uncle and being kept on as a permanent manager, he was soon promoted to full manager. Fulfilling one of his Columbia professor's suggestions, he began to write. Oscar's first lyric effort was for a song which was interpolated

into one of his uncle's shows; although primitive by lafer standards, it was a beginning. His theatrical first effort was a failure. Called "The Light", it was a four act play without music and judging by the reviews without much merit. Fortunately it died in New Haven.

Hammerstein was not destroyed by the plays failure. He reported many years later that after the closing of the show he sat on a park bench outside the theatre and began plans for his next production. Entitled Always You with music by Herbert Stothart, it originally was called The Girl From Arkansaw and was produced by Arthur Hammerstein. While still on the road preceding the New York opening, Arthur demanded that large sections be re-written including a part for a comedian he had hired to "save" the show. After much complaining, Oscar did what he was told, and the show, newly titled Always You opened to critical praise and box office failure. Oscar's lyrics were singled out for praise with comments such as "more clever than the average musical". It opened January 5, 1920.

While Always You was being prepared for a road tour, Oscar found out that his uncle was planning a musical called Tickle Me with music again by Stothart. He offered to write the lyrics and libretto to which Arthur agreed. Upon consideration, however, Arthur Hammerstein asked that Otto Harbach join Oscar in the writing tasks. Harbach was more than twenty years older than Oscar, had been an experienced lyricist and librettist and suffered from no ego problems. Harbach was willing to share all the duties as well as billing with the young Hammerstein, including the royalties. Hammerstein claimed in later years that he had been blessed by two things, being born a Hammerstein and work-

ing with Harbach. Harbach taught Hammerstein the necessary methodology for writing lyrics. Secondly he gave Hammerstein a rule by which to work: a play must have component parts which work together. The plot must be interesting, the characters, dialogue, songs, jokes, etc., must all work within the context of the play. It was in important lesson to be taught and Hammerstein followed it the rest of his life. Their show opened at the Selwyn Theatre on August 17, 1920. It did not become a hit, but Tickle Me proved of importance in Oscar's career.

Within the next decade Hammerstein was to work with the greatest composers on Broadway. Along with Stothart, Hammerstein wrote music with Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Vincent Youmans, Sigmund Romberg and Rudolf Friml. The first of these men to join Hammerstein, Harbach and Stothart was a very young Vincent Youmans. In 1923 the four talented men wrote Wildflower which became a giant hit. It played Broadway for more than four hundred performances, over one year. Both the title song, Wildflower" and "Bambalina" proved to be popular favorites. The next hit written by Hammerstein was Rose-Marie with music by Stothart and Rudolf Friml. A rather unusual facet of this show was its plot; for it included a murder. Instead of the huge chorus number at the conclusion of the show, only two people were left on stage. More than that, the program was unique in that it did not include the name of the songs. In their place was an explanatory note stating that the songs were so integral to the plot that they shouldn't be listed as individual songs. However there were several songs which deserve mention; the outstanding hits were "Rose-marie" and "Indian Love Call". The show ran for

sixteen months making it the longest running musical of its day. As a result, Oscar became financially secure.

Oscar's next musical proved to be the most important one he was to write for twenty years. That was not due to its material or even the success which it enjoyed. It was important because he was paired with the incomparable composer Jerome Kern. Kern had been working on Broadway for more than twenty years before he agreed to work with Hammerstein, first as a rehersal pianist and then as composer. Together they wrote the musical Sunny which is remembered mainly for the song "Who". It ran on Broadway more than a year and a half, after opening September 23, 1925.

Oscar's next musical, Song of the Flame is important simply for the fact that it was the only opportunity Oscar had to work with George Gershwin. When the intended composer, Rudolf Friml, dropped out because of contract difficulties, Gershwin was called in. He was busily engaged in writing his own musical, as well as his Concerto in F, but he contributed greatly to the success of the show.

The last of the great composers with whom Oscar was to work during this period was Sigmund Romberg. Their show, The Desert Song was written in 1926 and began a fifteen year, five show collaboration for Hammerstein. "When I Grow Too Old to Dream", "Lover, Come Back To Me," Stouthearted Men" "One Kiss" were four of their popular hits. The shows they wrote included The New Moon, East Wind, May Wine and Sunny River. The Desert Song ran for more than 470 performances after it opened November 30, 1926.

Around the same time in 1926, Hammerstein was called by Jerome Kern with an idea for a new show. Kern was reading the novel Show Boat written by Edna Ferber and thought it would make a tremendous musical. After reading it, Hammerstein agreed and they approached Ferber for the stage rights. Florenz Ziegfeld agreed to produce it and requested that the show open his his new theatre. Hammerstein and Kern immediately began researching the book. Their efforts came to fruition for together they wrote a milestone musical. The songs fit smoothly into the script, the dialogue rang true, the play could exist without the songs which is a test of a libretto even today. More than that, Hammerstein enjoyed a personal milestone when he fell in love with Dorothy Blanchard Jacobson. Eventually Oscar divorced his wife Myra and Dorothy divorced her husband Henry and they were married. It proved to be a most stable and loving marriage.

Show Boat had all the attributes which make up a hit musical. The sets and costumes were magnificent, the songs were brilliant, the script and story were fascinating and precise, even the cast, which had been until that time relatively unknown became big stars. It was a masterpiece. The show opened December 27, 1927 before a glittering first night crowd. When the curtain came down there was a long silence and then utter chaos of cheers and applause shook the theatre. Ziegfield knew that he had a hit, the critics knew that they had a hit, the audiences knew that they had witnessed a very historic theatrical event. Oscar's uncle, Arthur Hammerstein is said to have commented that he had just seen the perfect show and that the breaking of his word to his brother William had been vindicated. The show ran 572 per-

formances and included many marvelous songs including "Ole Man River", "Bill", "Can't Help Lovin Dat Man" and "Make Believe."

Amazingly enough, Hammerstein suffered through the next fifteen years without another great show. None of his musicals ran more than seven weeks, his film contract was bought out by the studio producer for $100,000 just to get rid of him, nothing was going right.

Hammerstein was motivated all through his career to elevate the musical from the 1920 musical comedy style of stiff unnatural characters in impossible situations set in far away places to a more natural, American style. He sought to change things much as Gershwin did, except he lacked some of the intellectuality and irony which tempered what Gershwin wrote.[6] Hammerstein was not a leader; rather he was a craftsman who fine--tuned the styles of the day. He still had a strong feel for romanticism and shmaltz, much like Romberg and Friml. It is perhaps for that reason that he wrote so well with them. However Oscar suffered several very bad years. The world around him had changed, but theatrically Oscar really hadn't. It took a new composer with fresh ideas for Hammerstein to recover his accustomed prominence in theatre circles.

He wasn't sitting around doing nothing though. Hammerstein held on tightly to those beliefs he had been given as a child, including his identification however slight with the Jews. Hammerstein was a leader in the fight against anti-Semitism in America including joining the Hollywood anti-Nazi League in 1936. Jews were not the only ethnic group he championed. Hammerstein was a

strong supporter of civil rights for Blacks and other minorities. His efforts began in Show Boat where the attempt was made to show the Blacks in a favorable light and continued through Hammerstein's authorship of Carmen Jones, a black verson of the Bizet opera. As he wrote in the lyrics to South Pacific several years later, "You have to be taught to hate."

With his family life now going forward, his financial situation assured Oscar's creative drought was terrible for him. He felt unwanted, unnecessary and depressed. It was at this difficult and crucial time that Richard Rodgers came into Oscar Hammerstein II's life again.

When Richard Rodgers died on December 30, 1979, a great chapter of American musical theatre was ended as well. Rodgers had written with two men, primarily, Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II. With each man he wrote entirely different music; with Hart it was bright and brittle, typical "smart" music which fit the period in which they were writing. When he wrote with Hammerstein his melodies were more mellow, reminiscent of the past, of love, of days gone by yet with a freshness that was new and exciting. Rodgers was a complex man amazingly well disciplined and organized who served throughout his career as the stable businessman, always concerned about finances and profits. Perhaps one would have expected an attitude like that from one who had never known wealth, who was an immigrant not versed in money and its use, but that was not Richard Rodgers.

There had been considerable money in the Rodgers family ever since the days of Richard's maternal grandparents. Jacob

Levy came from Poland to New York and soon found work as a laborer in a textile company owned by the Klingenstein Brothers. Levy continued working for that firm until his death, eventually becoming a partner. By 1902, July 28, to be specific, the day Richard Rodgers was born, his grandfather had made a considerable fortune. Soon after arriving in New York, Jacob rented a room from a Lewine family whose daughter Rachel he soon married. She was a gifted and artistic person who played a great role in Richard Rodgers' life. They were married in 1869.

The Levys had three children, two sons and a daughter, Mamie. Although the children were not raised in a religious home, Jacob still required the family to attend synagogue on the major holidays and an occasional Shabbat. Although the sons were well loved, there was no question that Mamie was the star of the family. She received her schooling in public school, but also was given piano lessons. She was a very proud woman who loved culture and things of beauty even more than social activities. Mamie enjoyed opera, piano, all the arts and passed this love on to her son, Richard.

William Abraham Rodgers, Richard's father was the oldest son of seven children and was born in Holden, Missouri. The family was from Alsace-Lorraine, originally with the name of Abrams, but while William was in college they changed the name to Rodgers. In 1876, when he was five years old, the Rodgers family came to New York. By his seventeenth year, William's father had died and he was forced to support the family while at the same time going to school.

William's original desire was to become a cadet at West Point and serve as a career military man; he went so far as to secure a recommendation from a New York congressman, but was not chosen. Instead he attended the College of the City of New York, class of 1889 where one of his classmates was Bernard Baruch.[7] After college he enrolled in Medical school at Bellevue Hospital from which he graduated in 1893. Three years later he met Mamie Levy and in 1896 they were married. The Rodgers family continued to live with the Levys for the twenty-five years left to the parents. As a result, Mamie rarely had an opportunity to run her own home. Virtually all the decisions were made by her mother.

Mamie and William Rodgers had two sons, Mortimer who was born January 13, 1898 and Richard, born almost five years later. They lived quite well in the original Levy home, and summered on Long Island where Dick was born that July. Soon after Richard Rodgers was born, the family sold the Levy house and bought a larger house in New York at 3 West 120th Street. The building was a home-office with the downstairs being Dr. Rodgers clinic. The family lived there for seven years.

During those seven years young Rodgers began piano lessons with his aunt serving as teacher. He hated these lessons, didn't like practicing, and refused to do the exercises required of a good piano technician. Fortunately he had a remarkably good ear and could pick melodies out on the piano just by having heard them once. At the same time he began composing his own songs which received great approval from his parents. Perhaps in an attempt to win favor with his father, Mortimer Rodgers decided

to become a doctor, a desire from which he never swerved.

It was soon after he began his music lessons that Richard Rodgers was introduced to the theatre. At first he frequented the operettas which were prevelant in those days. Later, he was introduced to the "Princess Shows" of Jerome Kern and Guy Bolton. They made an enormous impact on him which he never outgrew. He recognized the intimacy of the shows, the American flavor, and the informality which made these productions great. Although Rodgers was never to write a musical on the scale of the Princess Theatre Shows, he nevertheless appreciated the flair and personal effect a small show can have on the audience.

At age thirteen Richard Rodgers was bar mitzvahed after two years of religious school at Temple Israel on 120th Street and Lennox Avenue. His parents were not very concerned with religious training, but grandfather Levy was, so he was both a bar mitzvah and later a confirmand. Clearly his Jewishness did not play a major role in his life, although when he married Dorothy Feiner, the wedding was performed by the famous rabbi, Stephen S. Wise.

Rodgers' youth was a happy one marked by nothing extraordinary. He spent his summers at camp, first the Weingart Institute in Highmount, New York, later Camp Wigwam in Harrison, Maine. Each place provided him with people who would later serve him well in his musical endeavors; these connections would be with people with whom he would work his entire professional life. After his camp career, he was registered at Townsend Harris Hall, a high school preparatory program for the College of the City of New York, but Rodgers who had little interest in studying, soon dropped out and entered De Witt Clinton High School.

While there he was influenced by his music teacher who recommended that young Rodgers go to Saturday afternoon opera productions. Rodgers would always appreciate serious music, but it was popular music which captivated him. His brother Mortimer provided the opening the young composer needed.

The year was 1917, and a local athletic club which Mortimer had joined decided to raise money for tobacco which would then be sent to the "boys" at the front. The method chosen was a musical revue and Mortimer suggested that Dick would be the perfect person to write the songs. Eventually the fifteen-year-old Richard wrote seven songs for the show, and attempted to have no less than Max Dreyfus, the boss of Harms music, to publish them for him. As a result of the show, more than three thousand dollars was contributed to the tobacco fund. Another amateur show followed, this time with twenty Rodgers songs, and the young Richard Rodgers felt he was on his way.

A friend of Mortimer's Philip Leavit introduced Lorenz Hart to Rodgers on a Sunday afternoon in 1918. They spoke for a while, realized that they had many interests in common and agreed to become collaborators.

Mortimer and his friend Bennet Cerf were horrified to hear that Richard had agreed to work with Hart. They called Hart a no account who was irresponsible and undependable. Young Dick stuck up for his new partner. Rightfully so, for in a three week period they wrote fifteen songs together. It must be recalled that except for the songs of Kern and Bolton, music in the post World War I days was pretty standard fare, with little

creativity or excitement. Rodgers and Hart changed much of that with their new approach to music. Their first published song together which appeared in a Broadway musical score was "Any Old Place With You". Along with creative lyrics, the song had several interesting musical innovations including a reverse of the normal sixteen bar verse, thirty two bar chorus. Rodgers also included some interesting chord progressions which gave new life to the song. Lew Fields interpolated the "Any Old Place With You" into his show A Lonely Romeo which opened on August 26, 1919.

Rodgers' next effort was an amateur show entitled Fly With Me which received very good reviews from the critics including one who wrote "We had not heard of Richard Rodgers before. We have a suspicion we shall hear of him again." The critics could not have guessed more correctly because after viewing the show, Lew Fields bought the score for his new musical Poor Little Ritz Girl. Although Rodgers had expected that the entire score would be his, only seven of his songs were used, the remaining eight being the work of Sigmund Romberg. Regardless, the critics were very favorable and Rodgers was thrilled at his Broadway debut.

Rodgers and Hart tried their hand at a straight play without music, but to no avail and by 1921 Rodgers was very discouraged. He quit the Columbia course he was taking and received permission from his parents to transfer to the Institute of Musical Art which later renamed the Julliard School of Music. He received training in several facets of classical music all of which allowed him to improve his popular music skills. In 1922 Rodgers took a leave of absence from the Institute to travel with Lew Fields' musical Snapshots of 1922 and to write songs for several lyricists. With

that taste of success, Rodgers quit the Institute to try professional music life again. His next effort, coupled with Hart and Herbert Fields was a parody of Tin Pan Alley called "the Melody Man" which was produced by and starred Lew Fields. With mixed reviews, the show folded after fifty-six performances. Rodgers was terribly depressed, but no more so than his father who was torn between his pride in Richard's accomplishments in music and his desire that his son have a stable living which he could count on. At twenty-two, Richard Rodgers had no money, little musical future and no idea what to do. One side effect of these days was a serious case of insomnia which plagued Rodgers for more than a year. It was during this low period that he decided to leave the music business and become a salesman for children's underwear at a salary of fifty dollars per week.

Fortunately fate intervened and Rodgers never tried selling underwear. Instead he was approached by a family friend to participate in the writing of a musical for the Theatre Guild younger performers who intended to raise money for some tapestries for the Guild's new Theatre. Rodgers was won over to the plan, agreed on the condition that Hart be assigned to write the lyrics and the team was on its way. The Garrick Gaieties was intended as a limited run; with its great success it ran for more than a six month period.

Rodgers and Hart wrote for twenty years together, writing almost a dozen musical classics including A Connecticut Yankee in 1926. Simple Simon in 1930, Jumbo in 1934, On Your Toes in 1936. The Boys From Syracuse in 1938, Pal Joey in 1940 and

By Jupiter in 1942. Their list of his songs is enormous, virtually every show had one smash song. But everything good has to end and the Rodgers - Hart partnership was no exception. As has been noted earlier, Hart was slowly drinking himself to death, refusing to show up at rehearsals or working sessions, was suffering more and more blackouts, and soon it became totally impossible for Rodgers to work with him. Sadly this situation was known by many people. Rodgers consulted many of his friends in the business seeking both advice and new partners. He approached Oscar Hammerstein II who himself was suffering through a dry period. Hammerstein advised Rodgers to continue working with Hart until that time when Hart could no longer work. At that time Hammerstein would secretly join in and finish Hart's lyrics for him without receiving any credit or payment. That reassurance did not seem to satisfy the level-headed Rodgers who still wanted a full time partner. It was then that he approached Ira Gershwin who had not worked much since his brother George had died. At a dinner arranged by Louis Dreyfus, son of Harms music publisher Max Dreyfus, Rodgers and Gershwin discussed all the problems Rodgers was having with Hart and what could be done. Apparently the question of Gershwin teaming with Rodgers was never openly discussed, by the two, but the suggestion was there loud and clear. Gershwin turned him down. Rodgers returned to Hammerstein who, with much trepidation agreed, on condition that Hart refused to continue. Rodgers went to Larry Hart, discussed a future project called "Green Grow The Lilacs" which was to be musicalized by the Theatre Guild but Hart refused to go along. Rodgers responded that if Hart didn't want to do it, he would find

another lyricist. When Hart asked if Rodgers had some in mind, Rodgers responded Oscar Hammerstein. Realizing their partnership was over, Hart told Rodgers that he couldn't have picked a better man, and with that, he left the office. He would never work with Rodgers again. The stage was set for the new team of Rodgers and Hammerstein. The times were also right for the new team. The wildness of the roaring twenties was over, the riotous irreverence and satire of the thirties had been replaced by patriotism, a return to the old values on which America had been founded. World War II did much to foster that return, nostalgia for the good old days came sweeping back. It was the perfect setting for Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II.

The new team began with "Green Grow the Lilacs", this was the show that was to blossom forth as Oklahoma! Hammerstein was already familiar with the play as he had wanted the rights to write it with Jerome Kern. Kern felt that there were too many problems with the script from a musical point of view and refused to do it. When Hammerstein was approached by Rodgers he had already been convinced of the merit of the script so after a lunch together, Hammerstein agreed to join Rodgers in an adaptation of the play for a musical. From that day in 1943 to the year 1960, Rodgers and Hammerstein ruled Broadway. They created a new mix of musical comedy with the serious drama. They would revolutionize the theatre.

After deciding to go ahead with the plan, Rodgers and Hammerstein purchased the movie rights from M.G.M. This little investment earned them a fortune and would be the modus operandi in the years ahead. They agreed that the lyrics would be written ahead of the music because the dialogue and lyrics had to flow one from the other. The story of common folk in the Midwest required that there be no chorus girls, production numbers, broad comedy or high powered dance numbers. Instead they would create a kind of folk musical where there would be no technical loose ends or seams showing. Rodgers was convinced that anything could be done as long as it was done properly and with taste.

The very opening of the show proclaimed its unique nature for instead of the huge production number with costumed dancing girls, Oklahoma! opened with a young girl sitting at a butter churn while off stage a man sang the beautiful "Oh, What a Beautiful

Mornin'". The Theatre Guild had a terrible time raising the money needed to present the show, $83,000. After many backers' auditions they found the money.

Finally the composer and lyricist finished the score. Included therein were several hit songs including "People Will Say We're In Love", "Surrey With The Fringe on Top" and of course the title song, "Oklahoma!". When the show premiered in New Haven on tour before the New York opening, the word of mouth was very poor indeed. Billy Rose is said to have commented "No girls, no gags, no chance." When Oklahoma! actually opened on March 31, 1943 the critics and audience went wild. The show went on to enjoy the longest run of any Broadway play up to that time, more than 2,200 performances, or over five years. A touring company was sent out for a year, productions were presented all over the world even for the American troops overseas.

Oklahoma! played another historical part in Broadway theatrical annals for it was the first musical to be completely recorded as an original cast album selling many hundreds of thousands of copies. It also was made into a movie in 1955 and enjoyed great popularity. Oklahoma! earned more than $7,000,000 for its backers; Rodgers and Hammerstein received about one million dollars each; investors received about $50,000 for his initial $1,500. It was just the boost the Guild required. Because of the money they had earned, Rodgers and Hammerstein enlarged their own business holdings entering into the publishing business. The two together began Williamson publishers, so named because each man had a father named William. They also began producing their own and other people's plays, which earned them great profits as well.

The next actual project shared by Rodgers and Hammerstein was the completion of the film musical State Fair for which they wrote the two classic songs "It's a Grand Night For Singing" and "It Might As Well Be Spring". This song won the Academy award for best song in 1944.

How to follow two great hits proved no difficulty for the team. Their next show was Carousel which opened in 1945. Originally based on the play "Liliom" by Ferenc Molnar, the setting for the show had to be changed from the European capital of Budapest, to a New England seacoast town. Instead of the twentieth century, the late nineteenth century was used. There were of course many problems which had to be solved before the show could be presented. How to write a show which would include dream sequences, the murder of the leading man, and heavenly intervention was quite a challenge. Rodgers and Hammerstein were up to it creating a beautiful score with some of their most beautiful songs. "You'll Never Walk Alone", "If I Loved You", "June Is Bustin Out All Over" and the "Carousel Waltz" have become favorites. The show ran 890 performances and has been revived on Broadway several times.

Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote a very unusual and for them unpopular show next. Allegro ran only 315 performances in 1947, a respectable run for many teams but for Rodgers and Hammerstein a failure. The story dealt with a doctor whochose to give up his sound medical practice for money and status. Eventually he returns to his home town and to curing his neighbors as the play ended. Many critics appreciated the creative changes the team used; a Greek chorus, little scenery or costumes, etc. The

composer and lyricist were very proud of the play and two songs have come from it. "A Fellow Needs A Girl" and "The Gentleman is a Dope."

Naturally with such a limited run, there were questions if Rodgers and Hammerstein could still write hits, after all both had run dry in the past. Their next show put any question to rest for South Pacific ran for almost 2,000 performances. Opening in 1949, the show enjoyed the greatest advance sale of tickets in the history of Broadway, over one million dollars. It took in more than $9,000,000 in ticket sales, won the Pulitzer prize, sold several million copies of sheet music and more than one million original cast albums. The Story was adapted from the Tales of the South Pacific by James Michener which had in 1947 earned the Pulitzer prize for literature. South Pacific was a semi-serious musical which introduced the themes of miscegenation and racial tolerance. They were treated carefully, of course, with propriety and simplicity, but at least they were mentioned.[9] The songs were very different in style ranging from the cheerful "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair" (which the star had to do live on stage!) to the haunting "Bali Ha'i". The most popular song from the show, and one heard often today was "Some Enchanted Evening."

The tickets for South Pacific were so hard to get that stories about those who attempted to procure them were widespread. If they were available they were selling at more than $40 per pair, a price which Hammerstein said was outrageous! Rodgers received a letter one day stating that the writer must have tickets for South Pacific for his wedding. When Rodgers responded with the

query when the wedding was to be, the groom-to-be replied "when ever we get the tickets!"[10]

South Pacific proved a testing ground for what would be the next Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. A major attraction of the earlier show had been the local color they had brought to the characters on Bali Ha'i. Bloody Mary and Liat, two Tonkinese women were very colorfully presented in the songs and lyrics. Rodgers and Hammerstein tried the same type of local color in their next show, The King and I. Written in 1951, Rodgers admitted that he couldn't have written a genuine oriental song if he had to. They also feared falling into the trap of writing western ideas of what Siam was like. Instead Rodgers wrote western music with subtle melodic shadings which gave a hint of eastern flavor. Had the Siam setting been the only novelty in this musical it would have been easy indeed to write. The King and I was the first musical ever adapted from a previously popular film, in this case "Anna and the King of Siam", which starred Rex Harrison and Irene Dunne. The great English actress Gertrude Lawrence thought that she would wonderful Anna so she convinced Rodgers and Hammerstein to write the show for her. Her performance was indeed a tour-de-force. The staging by a neophyte Jerome Robbins, the sets by Jo Mielziner, the costumes designed by Irene Sharaff all combined to make a breath taking musical with real oriental ambiance settled on a western love story, The score is one of the most popular and well known in the repertory of Rodgers and Hammerstein. "Hello Young Lovers", "Whistle a Happy Tune" "Getting to Know You" and "I Have Dreamed" are among the jewels in this crowning achievements. The musical ran almost

1250 performances and the film version enjoyed equal popularity.

Lest it be thought that Rodgers and Hammerstein could only write hit shows, they proved that even this team could be fallible. In 1953 they wrote Me and Juliet which was a musical comedy illustrating the backstage events in a successful Broadway musical. In fact no one in the cast would ever know what went on in a hit for this show was dreadful. It ran about 306 performances, a respectable run for anyone but Rodgers or Hammerstein. The next show suffered a similar fate. Entitled Pipe Dream, the show was a version of the John Steinbeck story Sweet Thursday. The plot development was based around the bums and misfits who lived in Cannery row in Monterey, California. The audiences stayed away in droves and this show too closed very quickly.

Before the next show opened Rodgers was stricken with cancer of the jaw which required serious surgery. Hammerstein at almost the same time came down with a serious stomach disorder which required surgery. Fortunately both were successful, and the team returned to work at their regular pace. Their new show, Flower Drum Song, took place in San Francisco's Chinatown and introduced the audience to the traditional Chinese marriage broker, the generation gap between new immigrants and already Americanized second generation Chinese, and assimilation. The score had several beautiful songs including "I Enjoy Being a Girl", "A Hundred Million Miracles" and "Grant Avenue". The production ran more than six hundred performances and was made into a popular movie.

Rodgers was trying new fields during these yesrs. His major

creative effort was for films, especially the mammoth N.B.C. television program series "Victory at Sea" in the 1952-53 television season. Rodgers' score was hailed as an American masterpiece and went a long way toward making the series the award winning effort that it turned out to be. Another television show included Oscar's talents as well. In 1957 Julie Andrews made her television debut as Cinderella in the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical of the same name. It is claimed that more than eighty million people watched that show, making it the biggest audience ever to see a Rodgers and Hammerstein show. Two songs were especially good: "In My Own Little Corner" and "Do I Love You". About eight years later the television show was repeated, this time with a totally new cast. Cinderella enjoyed the same popularity it had the first time around.

It is ironic that the last show written by these two great creative forces in the American musical theatre should have been so much like those shows both had fought to end more than thirty five years earlier. The Sound of Music was set in Austria about the time of the Nazi invasion and told the story of a young would-be nun, Maria Rainer, who becomes governess to the children of the Baron von Trap. The story told of the captain's anti-Nazi activities, the forced escape after a concert performance of the family, and their eventual life in America. The show was as close to operetta as the team had ever written. The critics were divided as to the show's value; the audiences were not. The Sound of Music ran more than 1440 performances, another 1000 on tour and became the most successful movie musical in history up to that time. If that wasn't enough, the original

cast album from the Broadway production as well as the sound track from the film sold more than ten million copies. It proved to be the most financially rewarding of all the Rodgers-Hammerstein works.

Very soon after The Sound of Music opened, Oscar Hammerstein suffered a relapse of pain in his stomach. This time it was diagnosed as malignant and terminal cancer. Hammerstein was not told, only his wife and the Rodgers were aware of his condition. It did not take long for Hammerstein to recognize his situation and he requested only one thing, that he be allowed to die at home. That he was allowed to do on August 23, 1960. His passing was recognized in both New York and London by the turning out of lights in the theatre districts. It seemed an appropriate tribute indeed, one paid many years before to Hammerstein's grandfather, Oscar Hammerstein I.

Richard Rodgers was beyond consolation, yet he continued to work. In 1962 he wrote the music and lyrics to the show No Strings, the story of the love affair between a beautiful black model and a white novelist both living in Paris. As the title of the show suggests, there were no stringed instruments in the orchestra for the show. In fact, Rodgers stationed the orchestra members on the stage itself, sometime having them stroll through the action to provide commentary. The critics were mixed in their comments, but the show ran a respectable 580 performances. Rodgers recognized that he did not like working alone, so he temporarily joined forces with Alan Jay Lerner. They were planning to write a musical about extra-sensory perception, but could not work together. Lerner completed the score with Burton Lane and called

it On A Clear Day You Can See Forever. Rodgers joined with Hammerstein's young protegee, Stephen Sondheim, who by then had written lyrics for West Side Story, Gypsy, and both the words and music for A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. Together he and Rodgers wrote Do I Hear A Waltz taken from the Arthur Larrents play "The Time of the Cuckoo". The show was not good;the relationship was strained; the collaboration fell apart.

In the years that were to follow, Rodgers attempted other musicals including Rex, about Henry the Eighth, the story of Noah and the Ark, and his last, I Remember Mama based on a play he had produced long before. All three were failures, but allowed Rodgers to boast that he had been represented on Broadway for more than sixty years. That is a very formidable achievement.

Richard Rodgers was asked once how he wrote a popular song; he answered that he tried to capture the feeling in any situation rather than capture the public's taste. If the individual song gained popularity, then that, it is no wonder that Rodgers died a very wealthy man. He died just one day short of seeing 1980 and was eulogized by the rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in New York. With the passing of Richard Rodgers', one of the last giants of the musical theatre had died.

1. Sanders, p. 212
2. Nolan, p. 33.
3. Harris, p. 256.
4. Fordin, p. 16.
5. Ibid., p. 23
6. Sanders, p. 212.
7. Ewen, Richard Rodgers, p. 41
8. Ibid., p. 74
9. Kellers, p. 387.
10. Green and Laurie, Show Biz From Vaude to Vid, p. 13.
11. Whitcomb, After the Ball, p. 136.