

KURT WEILL

ALAN JAY LERNER

# LOVE LIFE

A VAUDEVILLE IN TWO PARTS



Orchestra and Chorus of Opera North  
James Holmes

DIGITAL  
**CAPRICCIO**  
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FIRST COMPLETE RECORDING

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Opera North presents

# LOVE LIFE

A Vaudeville in Two Parts

Music and Lyrics by Kurt Weill & Alan Jay Lerner

Book by Alan Jay Lerner

Orchestrations & Arrangements by Kurt Weill

With

Quirijn de Lang, Stephanie Corley, Themba Mvula, Justin Hopkins

Tilly Baker, Joshua da Costa, Lottie Gray, Will Hopkins, Amber Midgley,  
Felicity Moore, Andrew Randall, Louie Stow, Masimba Ushe

Orchestra and Chorus of Opera North

James Holmes, Conductor

Matthew Eberhardt, Director

First Complete Recording

Recorded live at Leeds Grand Theatre, UK, January 2025

Susan and Sam, the never-aging couple at the heart of *Love Life*, reach their lowest moment: their decision to divorce (second sketch of Part Two). (Photo: James Glossop)

## CAST

Sam Cooper  
Susan Cooper  
Johnny, their son  
Elizabeth, their daughter  
Magician & Interlocutor  
Quartette

**Quirijn de Lang**  
**Stephanie Corley**  
**Louie Stow**  
**Tilly Baker**  
**Themba Mvula**  
**Joshua da Costa, Will Hopkins,**  
**Andrew Randall, Masimba Ushe**  
**Felicity Moore, Amber Midgley, Lottie Gray**  
**Justin Hopkins**  
**Holly Saw, Max Westwell**  
**Charlie Drummond**  
**Helen Évora**  
**Tom Smith**  
**Claire Lees**  
**John Savournin**

Three Tots  
Hobo  
Dancers  
Miss Horoscope  
Miss Mysticism  
Mr. Cynic  
Miss Ideal Man  
Sven

## ENSEMBLE:

**Kamil Bien**  
**Gillene Butterfield**  
**Nicholas Butterfield**  
**Joshua da Costa**  
**James Davies**  
**Charlie Drummond**  
**Helen Évora**  
**Amy Freston**  
**Paul Gibson**  
**Simon Grange**  
**Will Hopkins**  
**Laura Kelly**  
**Claire Lees**

**Ross McInroy**  
**Cameron Mitchell**  
**Richard Mosley-Evans**  
**Tim Ochala-Greenough**  
**Claire Pascoe**  
**Jeremy Peaker**  
**Andrew Randall**  
**Campbell Russell**  
**Victoria Sharp**  
**Ivan Sharpe**  
**Katie Sharpe**  
**Tom Smith**  
**Masimba Ushe**

## CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor	<b>James Holmes</b>	Assistant Conductor	<b>Ed Liebrecht</b>
Director	<b>Matthew Eberhardt</b>	Assistant Director	<b>Elaine Tyler-Hall</b>
Choreographer	<b>Will Tuckett</b>	Assistant Choreographer	<b>Daisy West</b>
Set and Costume Designer	<b>Zahra Mansouri</b>	Chorus Master	<b>Anthony Kraus</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>Howard Hudson</b>	Chief Repetiteur	<b>Philip Voldman</b>
Sound Designer	<b>Luke Swaffield</b> <i>for Autograph</i>	Children's Vocal Coach	<b>Nicholas Shaw</b>
Dramaturg	<b>Christine Jane Chibnall</b>	Dialect Coach	<b>Emma Woodvine</b>
		Music Librarian	<b>Victoria Bellis</b>
		Illusionist	<b>Will Houstoun</b>

## ORCHESTRA

First Violins	<b>Katie Stillman</b> (Leader), <b>Tamaki Higashi</b> (Co-Leader), <b>Byron Parish, Tamsin Symons, Brian Reilly, Anthony Banks,</b> <b>Susannah Simmons / Catherine Landen</b>
Second Violins	<b>Katherine New, Oliver Bailly,</b> <b>Helen Greig / Jacqueline Cima, Claire Osborne</b>
Third Violins	<b>Alison Dixon, Tom Greed</b>
Cellos	<b>Jessica Burroughs, Daniel Bull</b>
Bass	<b>Stacey Watton</b>
Flute	<b>Luke O'Toole</b>
Oboe	<b>Richard Hewitt</b>
Reeds	<b>Oliver Casanovas-Nuevo, Andrew Mason, Gillian Blair,</b> <b>Anthony Brown, Rob Buckland, Jim Fieldhouse, Sarah Mas-</b>
<b>ters</b>	
Bassoon	<b>Adam Mackenzie</b>
Trumpets	<b>David Hooper, Emily Ashby, Andy Dallimore</b>
Trombone	<b>Blair Sinclair</b>
Tuba	<b>Brian Kingsley</b>
Timpani / Percussion	<b>Mark Wagstaff</b>
Drum Kit / Percussion	<b>Ben Gray</b>
Guitar / Banjo / Mandolin	<b>Dan Thomas</b>
Piano	<b>Philip Voldman</b>
Accordion	<b>Miloš Milivojević</b>

## COMPACT DISC 1

**Love Life – PART ONE** ..... 74:57

### **Act 1: The Magician**

Sam and Susan Cooper, chosen by the Magician for his most impressive tricks, try to remember a time when their marriage was happy. It was in 1791...

[1] Opening ..... (5:18)

### **Sketch 1: “The Cooper Family” (Mayville, Spring 1791)**

Sam and Susan and their children Johnny and Elizabeth have arrived in Mayville, a small rural community, where Sam opens a furniture store.

[2] Who is Samuel Cooper? ..... (8:19)

[3] Here I'll Stay ..... (4:49)

### **Act 2: Eight Men**

[4] Progress ..... (5:17)

### **Sketch 2: “The Farewell” (Mayville, April 1821)**

Sam decides to shut up shop and go to work in the new furniture factory. Despite his imminent departure, the family goes ahead with their Green-Up party, a celebration of the arrival of spring.

[5] I Remember It Well ..... (3:10)

[6] Green-Up Time ..... (7:38)

[7] I Remember It Well (Reprise) ..... (3:10)

### **Act 3: Quartette**

[8] Economics ..... (5:47)

### **Sketch 3: “The New Baby” (bedroom of the Cooper house, September 1857)**

Sam has left the factory and is about to start a new job with the railroad. Susan tells him she wants another child.

### **Act 4: The Three Tots**

[9] Mother's Getting Nervous ..... (3:47)

### **Sketch 4: “My Kind of Night” (back porch and living room of the Cooper house, 1894)**

Sam is enjoying some rare time home off work, while Susan hosts a women-only meeting. The children are bored.

[10] My Kind of Night & Women's Club Blues .... (13:45)

### **Act 5: Hobo**

[11] Love Song ..... (4:25)

### **Sketch 5: “The Cruise” (main dining room of an ocean liner, 1920s)**

Sam is hustling for business and neglects Susan, who is tempted to find attention elsewhere.

[12] I'm Your Man ..... (10:20)

## COMPACT DISC 2

**Love Life – PART TWO** ..... 61:22

[1] Entr'acte ..... (5:19)

### **Act 1: Madrigal Singers**

[2] Ho, Billy O! ..... (6:36)

### **Sketch 1: “Radio Night” (living room of the Coopers' New York apartment, 1948)**

Sam is working at a bank, Susan in a store. The family quarrels over the radio. Sam and Susan retire to their separate bedrooms.

[3] Susan's Dream ..... (5:09)

### **Sketch 2: “Farewell Again” (bedroom of the Coopers' apartment)**

Sam and Susan have decided to divorce.

[4] I Remember It Well (Reprise) ..... (1:36)

[5] Is It Him or Is It Me? ..... (5:12)

### **Act 3: The Divorce Ballet**

[6] The Divorce Ballet ..... (6:38)

### **Sketch 3: “A Hotel Room”**

Sam “revels” in his freedom.

[7] This Is the Life ..... (6:37)

### **Act 4: “The Illusion Minstrel Show”**

Susan and Sam are no happier apart than they were together. A Con Man presents the Illusion Minstrel Show. The Interlocutor introduces Miss Horoscope, Miss Mysticism, Mr. Cynic and Miss Ideal Man, who suggest different ways for the couple to escape their troubles. Sam and Susan choose to face reality and try to reach each other again.

They walk a tightrope as the curtain falls.

[8] The Minstrel Show ..... (11:35)

[9] Mr. Right & Finale ..... (10:37)

[10] Bows ..... (2:01)

## ADDITIONAL TRACKS

**(cut from the original production)**

### **Included in Part One, Sketch 5**

As Sam neglects her during the cruise, Susan considers overtures from another man.

[11] You Understand Me So ..... (3:03)

### **Part Two, Act 2**

Sam discusses his impending divorce with Freebish, a lawyer, among a group of men boasting about their sexual and athletic prowess. Their physical inadequacies become comically evident at the hands of Sven the masseur.

[12] The Locker Room ..... (9:40)



## Love Life on Broadway, the Original 1948 Production

By Joel Galand

Kurt Weill and Alan Jay Lerner were worried. The 7 October 1948 New York premiere of *Love Life: A Vaudeville* was imminent. Tryouts in New Haven and Boston had received mixed reviews, and the authors were concerned that their daring new offering would bewilder an audience expecting a typical “musical comedy” or “musical play.” Attempting to mitigate potential confusion, they published a skit in the October 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the *New York Times* that presented them clarifying their show to a prospective ticket buyer. A shorter explanation appeared as a prefatory note in the *Love Life* program: “The sketches, which start in 1791 and come up to the present day, are presented in the physical style of the various periods. The four main characters, Susan and Sam Cooper, and their children, Johnny and Elizabeth, who present the story, do not change in appearance as time moves on. The vaudeville acts which come between each sketch are presented before a vaudeville drop and are styled and costumed in a set vaudeville pattern.”

These precautions were not entirely successful. As opening-night critic George Freedley of the *Morning Telegraph* put it, the evening was “tough going for the average audience.” The press overall was divided: four of the ten New York dailies published largely negative reviews, including the two most influential ones, the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*. Even sympathetic critics deemed the show “experimental,” “cerebral,” even “bitter.”

Although the Forty-Sixth Street Theater reaped advance sales of \$350,000, dwindling audiences after the first eleven weeks forced the show to close on 14 May 1949 after 252 performances, despite voluntary cuts in royalties. After recouping only 26% of its \$200,000 capitalization, *Love Life* effectively disappeared. An original cast album was never made because the “Petrillo Ban” prevented

union musicians from making recordings that year, while a concurrent ASCAP embargo of national radio networks limited air play. No piano-vocal score or script was published, although eight numbers were individually issued in sheet-music format. Neither Weill nor Lerner would live to see another production.

Those very qualities that once may have made *Love Life* seem overly intellectual also account for the prominence it has since acquired in American musical theater history. Its designer, Boris Aronson, who would create sets for *Cabaret* (1966), and most of the Sondheim-Prince shows of the 1970s, suggested that “There were enough ideas in *Love Life* for twenty musicals. ... In many ways, this show was the forerunner of today’s so-called ‘concept’ musical.” *Love Life*, which Weill described as “an entirely new form of theater,” indeed anticipated those later shows (whose creators had nearly all seen it), especially in its stark juxtaposition of commentary numbers and book scenes. Until recently, however, the absence of a published score, script, and recording has made it difficult for individuals to evaluate the landmark show.

Invoking the moribund vaudeville genre amidst the post-*Oklahoma!* heyday of the “integrated” musical was an astonishing gambit. Interviewed shortly before the Boston opening, Lerner explained that by “vaudeville,” he meant “an assortment of acts, sketches, and songs strung together” (i.e., an American form of variety show that flourished in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries). Vaudeville’s disparate acts included popular songs, operatic numbers, dance routines, acrobats, magic shows, ventriloquists, comedians, and even movies, among myriad possibilities. Weill and Lerner paid tribute to one of vaudeville’s historical antecedents when they ended *Love Life* with a minstrel show (while expunging some of its offensive aspects, such as performance in blackface).

Vaudeville acts were normally unrelated to each other (vaudevillians contributed individual, well-honed “turns”). But in *Love*

*Life*, Weill and Lerner enlisted acts and plot scenes alike in support of a central concept – a “study” (as Weill called it) of American marriage and family in the aftermath of the industrial revolution. Their 157-year genealogy of marriage unfolds in a series of sketches about the Coopers presented in a fairly realistic style, except for the not unprecedented tactic of presenting the same ageless characters in different eras, as in Thornton Wilder’s *The Skin of our Teeth*, to which several first-night reviewers of *Love Life* compared it (prompted, perhaps, by Elia Kazan’s having directed both). In *Love Life*, the vaudeville acts interrupt the narrative flow, presenting songs that anticipate the ensuing sketch’s socioeconomic context. Weill composed them as pastiches of popular styles. For example, Lerner wanted “Progress” performed “with all the song-selling belief of an old-time soft shoe,” and Weill obliged with a male octet, the basses providing idiomatic patter between the tenors’ melodic phrases. “Economics” channels the style of contemporaneous African-American male quartets (John Chapman of the *Daily News* compared it to the Delta Rhythm Boys’ recording of “Dry Bones” released the preceding year).

The tidy opposition between “sketches” and “acts,” or between reality and illusion, breaks down in the framing magic and minstrel shows, which abandon any semblance of naturalistic theater. In these acts, the Coopers enter the vaudeville world, whose denizens no longer offer mere commentary but actively spur Sam and Susan toward self-awareness. At the outset, the Magician saws Susan in half and suspends Sam in the air – metaphors for their inability to cope simultaneously with “love” and “life.” A flashback follows, comprising a series of historical episodes chronicling their progressive estrangement across successive socio-economic circumstances. Like Tom at the beginning of Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie*, the Magician turns back time, revealing “truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion.” The Coopers rejoin the vaudevillians in the finale. A passage from Weill’s research notes on minstrel shows asserts that such

A rare photo of Weill and Lerner together, working on a song for *Love Life* in 1947-48.



finales “should be pure hokum, shamelessly playing upon the popularity of some current idea.” Indeed, the Interlocutor offers Sam and Susan antidotes to reality drawn from popular culture, such as astrology and Hollywood films (“the compensation mechanisms of disoriented Americans,” as drama critic John Gassner observed). The couple rejects them, risking a final “big trick” of obvious metaphorical import: the curtain falls on Sam and Susan precariously balanced on a tightrope as they reach for one another, their children (and the audience) anxiously looking on.

It was in spring 1947 that Lerner, whose first major hit *Brigadoon* had been playing on Broadway for more than a year, arrived at the

notion of what he described as a “cavalcade of American marriage,” “taking one family, beginning with the start of the Industrial Revolution and showing what happened to them in a satirical way.” Lerner pitched his idea not to his usual collaborator, Fritz Loewe, from whom he was temporarily estranged, but to Weill, following up on advice from Maurice Abravanel, who had conducted Weill’s previous five shows on Broadway as well as Lerner and Loewe’s *The Day before Spring* (1945). Cheryl Crawford, producer of both *Brigadoon* and Weill’s *One Touch of Venus*, had arranged their first meeting that April and then went on to produce their joint venture.

The vaudeville angle came later, after Weill’s June return from a trip to Europe and

Palestine. According to Lerner, “Kurt Weill and I discussed the basic story idea first. We knew what we wanted to say. And then we talked – and talked and talked – for about two months before we figured out the form our story ought to take. ... Finally, after discussing hundreds of notions, the idea of doing the show as a vaudeville found its way to our misty heads.” Interviewed during the Boston tryout, Lerner identified three functions for such vaudeville interludes. First, they promoted continuity of a sort, leading “from one scene to the other, preparing the audience for what is coming.” Second, these acts, were performed “in one” (i.e., the forestage area in front of a drop curtain) and thus could cover scene changes for the sketches. Third, and most crucially, vaudeville’s flexible structure encouraged formal experimentation away from the “integrated” musical play that had fast become the norm: “we felt that one way to move ahead in the matter of form was to reach back to an older form – and give it new direction.”

The number and contents of the alternating sketches and acts remained variable well into the production process; Lerner and Weill experimented relentlessly during the show’s long genesis. Weill’s first completed draft, Sam and Susan’s duet “Here I’ll Stay,” is dated 23 August 1947. The final vocal number composed was “Love Song,” in mid-September 1948 during the Boston try-out. Although added at the last minute to replace a ventriloquist act (the ventriloquist having left the show), Weill and Lerner came to regard it as the show’s “theme song”: their last major revision entailed rewriting the final portion of the Minstrel Show to incorporate a climactic reprise of “Love Song.”

Only after seven months of work did the team deposit for copyright a complete (but provisional) typescript entitled *A Dish for the Gods*. What is striking about that copyright script is how much Susan dominates the show and how unpleasant her marriage is from the start; the entire time-traveling exercise proves futile. The previous fall, the *Times* had described the show as “the history of a woman,” and that is exactly what that

initial script reflects. Astonishingly, Sam had no solo, singing only in duets (“Here I’ll Stay,” “I Remember It Well”). But by May 1948 the *Times* announced that the title *A Dish for the Gods* would be “thrown to the dogs” and that the authors were preparing a revised script in which the husband “has assumed increased importance.” The next day, playwright Maxwell Anderson noted in his diary that Weill and Lerner “have found an end for their musical – the man + wife approach each other on a tight-rope.” Indeed, a new typescript, completed by June 1948, offers a more appealing couple, ends their story on a note of guarded optimism, and expands Sam’s role – he now has an entrance number (“Who is Samuel Cooper?”) and participates in the suffragette scene (“My Kind of Night”).

Casting the show was a prolonged process. Perhaps because they had starred in Weill’s two greatest commercial successes to date (*Lady in the Dark* and *One Touch of Venus*, respectively), Gertrude Lawrence and Mary Martin were the first approached to play Susan. Negotiations with Lawrence broke down because she refused to perform during the summer – at the time, Cheryl Crawford was anticipating a Spring 1948 opening. The team fared no better with Mary Martin. According to Crawford, “Susan’s Dream” was the only song she liked, even though it was not intended for Susan to sing. Finally, in June 1948 Nanette Fabray, who was playing the lead in *High Button Shoes*, arranged to leave that show, having been offered a 25% salary increase to play Susan. She would go on to win the only Tony Award that *Love Life* garnered.

On 22 May, the *Times* announced Kazan’s hiring: “His new commitment...will entail some postponement of Arthur Miller’s new play” (*Death of a Salesman*). Kazan was at the peak of his career and would soon have three shows running simultaneously on Broadway – *A Streetcar Named Desire* (opened in December 1947), *Love Life*, and *Death of a Salesman* (February 1949). It is still unclear why he was engaged, given everyone’s reservations about his handling of



The stars of the original production, Ray Middleton (Sam) and Nanette Fabray (Susan) recall (quite differently) when he presented the first piece of furniture he made for her in Sketch 2. They both claim "I Remember It Well."

*One Touch of Venus* (Kazan himself thought he had been little more than an overpaid stage manager for that show). Choreographer Michael Kidd (who signed on 24 June, fresh from his Broadway debut with *Finian's Rainbow*) wished that Kazan had remained on the sidelines (as would have been customary) when it came to the music: "He tried very hard to stage some of the musical numbers, and I think ... where it was a realistic number, he did beautifully. Where it was a highly stylized number like the *Minstrel Show*, he was not really in his element."

By early July 1948, the show had a revised script, a mostly orchestrated score (by Weill himself), creative and production teams, financing, a leading lady, and an ensemble for which more than seven hundred singers, dancers, magicians, and trapeze artists had auditioned. But it still lacked a leading man! Not until 19 July, exactly three weeks before rehearsals would begin, did Juilliard-trained operatic baritone Ray Middleton, who had created the role of Washington Irving in Weill's *Knickerbocker Holiday*, agree to leave *Annie Get Your Gun* for *Love Life* (despite a counteroffer from producers Rodgers and Hammerstein). "I want an aria," Middleton soon demanded. In fact, he received two new numbers, "I'm Your Man" to end Act I and the aria-like "This Is the Life." The 1948 production ultimately used forty-seven onstage performers, of which fourteen formed the dancing ensemble (including two principal dancers for the *Divorce Ballet*) and seventeen comprised the singing ensemble. Ten performers were special hires for some of the vaudeville acts, including a quartet of well-known African-American singers for "Economics" and the celebrated trapeze artist Elly Ardely for "Mother's Getting Nervous."

Weill's score is remarkable for its stylistic diversity. In addition to idioms already cited, *Love Life* incorporates madrigal, circus music, clog waltz, fandango, foxtrot, boogie-woogie, jitterbug, barbershop quartet, blues, and torch songs. The music in the early Mayville sketches would have sounded at home in contemporaneous operettas or "musical

plays." To the several binary oppositions around which *Love Life* is structured but which the show also complicates and undermines – illusion/reality, love/life, and book musical/vaudeville – we can add the opposition of high and low stylistic registers. At one extreme are modernist passages, scarcely tonal in any traditional sense, such as the fugue for string quartet that underscores the end of the first scene, when Sam and Susan are up in the air and sawed in half and analyzing how they got there. Sam's "This Is the Life," though ostensibly in E-flat major, defies conventional harmonic analysis. At the other end of the stylistic spectrum are apparently trivial passages like Mr. Cynic's "Takin' No Chances on Nothin'." This parody of cowboy songs is delivered by a man whose self-reliance is nothing more than misanthropy born of what Susan identifies as "sour grapes."

Despite a stylistic heterogeneity arguably more pronounced than in any of Weill's other Broadway shows, *Love Life* somehow hangs together musically. One way Weill achieves this is by using certain recurring pitch collections as what might be called "motto chords." The show's final sonority is the five-note pentatonic collection; the same collection opens the orchestral introduction to the Magician's act (following the slow prelude) and each of the first three sketch numbers ("Samuel Cooper," "Here I'll Stay," and "I Remember It Well"). The score's penultimate sonority is another motto chord: a whole-tone harmony that can appear locally as a "French" augmented-sixth chord but, again, Weill uses it in a variety of contexts. A third recurring sonority can be interpreted either as the "Tristan chord" or as a half-diminished seventh. In an early iteration, it sets the crucial word *here* at the vocal climax of "Here I'll Stay," when Sam and Susan affirm their commitment to the "love" and "reality" sides of the love/life and reality/illusion dualisms thematized throughout the show.

Weill uses the refrain from "Here I'll Stay" as a *Leitmotiv*, perhaps never more effectively than at the end of the *Cruise* sketch as the coda to Act I, when Sam abandons Susan to

drink with his new business buddies. Against the continued orchestral airing of the "I'm Your Man" motive, the melody of "Here I'll Stay" plaintively emerges in the solo trumpet. The admixture of irony and pathos makes it one of the most touching moments in Weill's *oeuvre*. This orchestral postlude was an afterthought, one of numerous retouches to his orchestration that Weill made in Boston. Apart from certain "utility" numbers, the composer orchestrated all of his Broadway shows himself, even when composing new material in tryouts. The orchestral palette of the *Love Life* score is far above the Broadway norms that one could have heard simultaneously in shows like *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, or *South Pacific*, all of which had been turned over to professional orchestrators.

Lerner summarized the underlying theme of some tepid opening night reviews: "The variety of styles seemed more like breaches of style." For example, Harold C. Schonberg of the *Musical Courier* complained that *Love Life* was a "pastiche" lacking opera's "emotional synthesis and unity." Such critics missed the point, namely that *Love Life* was neither a "Broadway opera" nor an "integrated" musical play (quite its antithesis, in fact). Theater critic John Gassner of *Forum* was the only one who hit the nail on the head while assessing the show from the perspective of Weill's career. He interpreted it as an "epic drama ... pregnant with possibilities for intelligent non-realistic theatre," better equipped to address contemporary problems than more conventionally unified realistic dramas.

Apart from the show's experimental structure, there were broader, cultural issues at stake in its reception. Audiences may resist a work because it suggests uncomfortable truths, and *Love Life* certainly challenged traditional values by elaborating the idea that the American Dream, dependent as it was on free enterprise for its fulfillment, contained the seeds of its own dissolution. In one sense, *Love Life* was very much of its time: already five years earlier, the economist Joseph Schumpeter had cited the decline of the

family as a touchstone example of capitalism's "creative destruction." But as musical theater, it was, to cite Aronson again, "two decades ahead of its time." *Love Life* gestures towards a post-Sondheim context where the death of the American dream became virtually an *idée fixe* in the concept musical. Indeed, Sondheim found *Love Life* "useful for his own work," as he once admitted.

*Love Life* may continue to raise hackles for contemporary audiences, however, insofar as it appears to elevate the nuclear, patriarchal family to the status of an ideal type while implying that the feminist insistence on the right to work and vote stemmed from sexual repression and neurosis. Nonetheless, present-day society is not yet done with the problems the show raises. Bridging the gulf between "love" and "life" remains a paramount challenge for most couples and their families, and working women are still more likely than men to feel "sawn in half" trying to balance their dual roles as breadwinner and homemaker. The metaphorical tightrope that the Coopers negotiate as the final curtain descends speaks to us today, much as it did to the members of the original audiences. Many of them had surely fallen off tightropes of their own, and the shock of recognition may account for some of the resistance to *Love Life* in its day. The enthusiastic audience and critical response to the three staged concert performances of *Love Life* in Leeds in January 2025 suggests that perhaps the day of this landmark musical may still lie ahead in similarly talented and imaginative hands.

Joel Galand is Professor of Music at Florida International University. He serves on the Editorial Board of the Kurt Weill Edition and prepared the critical editions of both *Love Life* and *The Firebrand of Florence*.



"Economics" in 1948: The Quartette channels the close harmony style of several popular African-American singing groups in the 1940s. Pictured are John Diggs, Joseph James, William Veasey, and James Young.

## Opera North's *Love Life*

Kim H. Kowalke

Opera North is the only company in the world to have mounted *Love Life* twice!

In fact, no other theater or opera company has presented more productions of Kurt Weill's stage works – nine in the past four decades. All but one of them (*Threepenny Opera* in the 1980s) took stage during the thirty-year tenure (1994-2023) of Richard Mantle as General Director. The first under his leadership was the European premiere of *Love Life* in 1996, following on the heels of *Show Boat*, the company's initial foray into American musical theater. In successive seasons from 2003 through 2006, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, *One Touch of Venus*, and the UK premiere of *Arms and the Cow* (*Der Kuhhandel*) fell in line, all conducted by James Holmes, Opera North's Head of Music from 1996 until 2008. A decade later as a busy freelancer throughout Europe specializing in not only Weill but classic American musical theater, Holmes was recognized with the Kurt Weill Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award, only the seventh recipient in its 28-year history.

Holmes returned to Opera North in 2020 to conduct a *Street Scene*, staged by Matthew Eberhardt, which garnered enthusiastic audience and critical response. Although its regional tour was cut short by COVID, it was broadcast on BBC's Radio 3. I attended the premiere and, during a subsequent lunch, Mantle and I brainstormed about the possibility of "bookending" his lengthy career at Opera North with a new production of *Love Life*, which might also serve as a fitting Weill-focused valedictory for Holmes and the company's remarkable and even longer-serving director of planning, Christine Jane Chibnall. We discussed the possibility of another BBC broadcast and a world premiere recording – maybe even a package double release on CD, paired with Opera North's *Street Scene*.

COVID-19 restrictions and budgetary uncertainties quickly complicated and delayed planning for this ambitious project. During the "blackout" of theaters, Holmes led the company in the British premiere of a new 15-player version of Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins*, brilliantly staged by *Street Scene*'s choreographer Gary Clarke, filmed without an audience, and then streamed globally in November 2020. After the company's regular programming resumed, Mantle, Chibnall, and I continued to dream of the *Love Life* project, initially as a fully-staged companion piece to *The Flying Dutchman* in the 2023–4 season. That sort of juxtaposition had become a trademark of the company, regularly producing standard operatic repertory and musical theater side-by-side, while building a versatile ensemble that could handle both idiomatically. After a dozen successes with musicals, there were no worries about populating the huge cast of *Love Life* almost entirely from within the company.

Plans for a regular-season, touring production of *Love Life* did not outlast (now Sir) Richard's retirement as General Director in 2023. His successor, Laura Canning, though constrained by budgetary cuts and shifting priorities, managed to safeguard the project by scheduling three staged concert performances in Leeds for January 2025. Convincing a hesitant Radio 3 to broadcast the event, Canning thereby also enabled a world-premiere cast recording to be captured "live" under almost ideal conditions.

Heeding the proverb that "necessity is the mother of invention," the production team, headed by the duo responsible for Opera North's *Street Scene*, imagined a staging of the work inspired by a "quasi-Brechtian" approach. The 36-player orchestra would perform onstage throughout; minimalist set, property, and costume designs would enable vaudeville acts and book sketches to dovetail without gap; mechanics of production would be not only visible, but function metaphorically as indicators of the "progress" of industrialization. Such an approach would emphasize streamlined storytelling and

showcase the deep resources of the Opera North chorus and orchestra.

Because *Love Life* was originally conceived as a star vehicle for the roles of Sam and Susan Cooper, that casting presented a challenge. But veterans Quirijn de Lang and Stephanie Corley, both well-known alumni from previous Opera North productions (playing leading roles opposite one another in *Kiss Me, Kate* and *A Little Night Music*), proved more than capable of surmounting the wide-ranging vocal and acting demands of Sam and Susan. With few exceptions (including the two dancers in the "Divorce Ballet," three members of the Quartette, and the five children in the cast), the remainder of the forty-five cast members would be drawn from the company, including the "Progress" octet, the sixteen virtuosic madrigalists for "Ho, Billy O!" and even the "Women's Club Blues" bump-and-grinders.

With a world premiere recording in mind, the creative team decided to perform the show "complete," including all orchestrated numbers cut prior to the New York opening in 1948. "Susan's Dream" was reinstated but moved to Act II. "The Locker Room" and "You Understand Me So" were not included in the concert performances, but are appended to this recording as a "coda." Because the score was performed from the award-winning critical edition by Joel Galand (published in 2023 in the Kurt Weill Edition), the only musical cuts were those taken in the original production or in certain dance sequences dependent on choreographic dictates. Book scenes were neither updated nor adapted, only judiciously tightened. Weill's masterful orchestration was executed without compromise, honoring Weill's original request for fifteen string players (6-4-2-2-1, with 12 violins but no violas). The production also fulfilled Lerner and Weill's thwarted intention in 1948 to cast the magician and the con-man/interlocutor with the same performer, herein played by the charismatic Themba Mvula.

In my capacity as president of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music (since 1981), it has been my privilege to attend both of Opera North's

"Love Lives," as well as several of its other Weill productions in between. Most of them were supported by Foundation subsidies, but none more decisively than the recent *Love Life*: a maximal grant for the performances and broadcast, "collaborative initiative" support as co-producer of the recording, sponsorship of Holmes's assistant conductor as a Weill/Rudel Conducting Fellow, and Weill-Lenya Artist Justin Hopkins's appearance as the Hobo singing "Love Song." Many of the nearly unanimous rave reviews noted that this spare, sleek concert staging actually made this landmark work seem more "today" than merely "ahead of its time."

One of my goals since accepting Lotte Lenya's request that I succeed her as president has been to see *Love Life* fully published, brilliantly performed, and recorded in toto. Now that it has been, I am reminded of Weill-collaborator Ira Gershwin's memorable hook from "I Got Rhythm": "who could ask for anything more?" Well, perhaps future productions as imaginative and compelling as the one recorded here.

**On the following two pages, four key members of the creative team of Opera North's production discuss in more detail the challenges and rewards of mounting *Love Life* in the format of a "staged concert." How did they manage to differentiate the world of the never-aging / ever-changing Cooper Family from that of the vaudeville commentary numbers? And with a 36-piece orchestra on stage throughout, how did they accommodate elaborate dance numbers and expansive finales including virtually all of the cast? Short Answer: Brilliantly!**



Sam rocks on the porch singing "My Kind of Night" while inside his house Susan leads "The Women's Club Blues."

**Matthew Eberhardt**, director: When we were preparing this production for Opera North, it quickly became apparent that using a 'concert staging' approach would not only help us capture a technically great sound for the complete recording, but allow us to lean into the defining features of Weill and Lerner's concept in surprising ways. We couldn't have costumed the multiple time periods that Sam and Susan find themselves in, so we created a timeless, sketch-like aesthetic, where locations and period were suggested through black rehearsal clothes and selective props. When Sam and Susan arrive in Mayville it could be 1791, but it could also be a couple arriving in a new village in 2025. Once the time travelling device is accepted, the audience can focus on the effect of the historical context on the central relationship, rather than what the house might have looked like, or the changes in fashion. In contrast, we wanted our vaudevillians to feel historically authentic; unique performers with genuine personal perspectives on life in turn-of-the-century America, with detailed, colorful costumes.

**Zahra Mansouri**, set and costume designer: We made a very firm decision that the fully-realized, fully-costumed world is that of the vaudeville acts. But even in the sketches (with the ensemble in all-black rehearsal attire), it's a very theatrical world. Theatrical in the sense that the mechanics of stagecraft, of risers, decks, and lighting rigs, are deliberately exposed (it feels, dare I say it, Brechtian). Above the orchestra, a more abstract picture gradually takes shape. Assembling different constellations of metal scaffolding from which stage lights are usually hung hints at the march of progress, while simultaneously paying homage to theater itself. The way the truss sculpture subdivides and complicates the space above the stage echoes the divisions that develop between Sam and Susan, the increasing inability of this couple to connect with each other.

**Christine Jane Chibnall**, director of planning & dramaturg: Since 1996, Jim Holmes has been my key collaborator in Opera North's continuing journey into musical theater – a relationship that endured even after he stepped down as Head of Music. Without him, we could never have mounted repertory ranging from *Sweeney Todd*, *One Touch of Venus*, and *A Little Night Music* to the likes of Shostakovich's *Cheryomushki*, and *Carousel*. His knowledge, expertise, the amount of preparatory work he puts in – marking up every orchestral part, the detailed coaching of singers – everything he does is absolutely extraordinary. His participation was essential to our plans to perform and then release live recordings of both *Love Life* and *Street Scene*.

**James Holmes**, conductor: Weill gives full vent to his considerable powers of musical storytelling across the show's vast variety of musical styles, not least in his kaleidoscopic orchestrations. The last song he composed for the show, its "theme song, the true "Love Song" in the score, is given to a vaudevillian, a tramp, a trope for dispossessed characters that populated vaudeville and a number of Weill's stage works. Wandering through America, the Hobo has seen the changes wrought by heavy industry and high finance and met those disillusioned by their empty promises. The song is both a warning and a reminder that, in Philip Larkin's timeless phrase, "what will survive of us is love" – yet no one is listening. Three quarters of a century later, his song still goes too often unheard. And perhaps that is why *Love Life* – in 1948, ahead of its time in how it told its story – is firmly of our time in what it tells.



Sam and Susan in the "Minstrel Show" at the moment they decide to risk the "big trick," ascending to the tight rope to try to get back together again. (Photo: James Glossop)

Dutch-Indonesian baritone **Quirijn de Lang** (Sam Cooper) has established himself as a versatile and compelling performer across both opera and musical theatre. With a repertoire of over 75 roles, he has appeared with major companies including Deutsche Oper Berlin, La Monnaie, English National Opera, Opera North, and the summer festivals of Garsington and Grange Park. His operatic work ranges from the Mozart baritone canon to contemporary repertoire, with notable performances as Oppenheimer in John Adams' *Doctor Atomic* (Dutch Opera of the Year – winning production in 2023) and Sam in Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*, which continues to reach audiences through its televised recording. In musical theatre, he has earned acclaim for his portrayals of Fred Graham in Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate* (UK tour and West End); Fredrik Egerman in Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, and Randy Curtis in Weill's *Lady in the Dark*. He originated the role of Jan Six in *Rembrandt, the Musical*, performing over 200 shows, and in 2025 performed the leading role of Sam Cooper in this first complete recording of *Love Life*. His wide vocal range and ability to fully inhabit diverse characters make him a sought-after singing actor on both the operatic and musical theatre stage.

**Stephanie Corley** (Susan Cooper) studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the National Opera Studio. Opera includes: title role *Madama Butterfly* (Mid Wales Opera); Musetta *La bohème* (Nederlandse Reisopera); Freia *Das Rheingold*, Woglinde/Third Norn *Götterdämmerung* (Teatro Massimo, Palermo); title role *Ines de Castro*, Tina *Flight*, Musetta, Mabel *The Pirates of Penzance* (Scottish Opera); Countess *Le nozze di Figaro*, Donna Elvira *Don Giovanni*, First Lady *Die Zauberflöte* (Longborough Festival Opera); Desdemona *Otello*, Gayle *The Ice Break*, Emma *Khovanshchina* (Birmingham Opera Company); Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Antonia *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (Diva Opera); Ines *Il trovatore* (Holland Park); title role *Simplicius Simplicissimus* (Independent Opera); Micaëla *Carmen* (Blackheath Halls); Ginevra *Ariadante* (Cambridge Handel Opera Group); Arminia *La finta giardiniera* (Buxton Festival); Pamina *Die*

*Zauberflöte*, Marzeline *Fidelio* (Glyndebourne Festival whilst covering). Concert highlights include: Verdi's *Requiem* with Carlo Rizzi; *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* (Lugano Radio Orchestra, Switzerland); Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* (Snape Maltings); Britten's *Les Illuminations* (Adrian Boult Hall, Birmingham); Mahler Symphony No. 4 (St. James's, Piccadilly); BBC Radio 3 *In Tune* session featuring her solo recital, St. John's Smith Square. For Opera North: Hanna Glawari *The Merry Widow*, Kristina *The Makropulos Case*, Lilli Vanessi/Kate *Kiss Me, Kate*, title role *Katya Kabanova*, Desiree Armfeldt *A Little Night Music*, Susan *Love Life*.

**Themba Mvula** (Magician / Interlocutor) was born in Zambia and completed his training at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where he won the Gordon Clinton English Song Prize. Recent engagements include: Dom *Link in my Bio* (Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg and Britten Pears Arts); Anthony *Blaze of Glory!* (Welsh National Opera); and *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions* (Manchester International Festival, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and Bregenz Festival, touring to the Netherlands, Germany and New York). In 2020 he sang Frazier *Porgy and Bess* (Theater an der Wien), having worked as soloist and member of the Olivier Award-winning ensemble at English National Opera. Other engagements include: Schaunard *La bohème* (English Touring Opera); Dancaire *Carmen* (Opera Holland Park); Assan *The Consul* (WNO); Millworker *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (Birmingham Opera Company); Belcore *The Elixir of Love* (King's Head Theatre); and Guglielmo *Così fan tutte* (Ensemble Orquesta). He has also created roles in contemporary works, including the title role in Robert Fokkens and Mkhululi Mabija's *Bhekizwe*, and he starred as Vithobai in Louis Mander and Stephen Fry's *The Life to Come* (Surrey Opera). For Opera North: Papageno *The Magic Flute* (Lite), Count *The Marriage of Figaro* (Whistle Stop Opera), Marullo *Rigoletto*, Magician / Interlocutor *Love Life*.

**Justin Hopkins** (Hobo) is an American bass-baritone. Current and most recent projects include: Publio *La clemenza di Tito* (Wiener

Festwochen, Grand Théâtre de Genève); Antron McCray in Anthony Davis' *The Central Park Five* (Detroit Opera); Carl Ekdahl in the world premiere of Mikael Karlsson's *Fanny and Alexander* (La Monnaie); Bernstein's *Songfest* (Copenhagen Philharmonic); Zuniga *Carmen* (Austin Lyric Opera); Narumov *Pique Dame*, Grail Knight *Parsifal*, and a new production based on Verdi's *Nostalgie e Rivoluzione* (La Monnaie), a collaboration with choreographer Jermaine Spivey; Colline *La bohème* (Opera Ballet Vlaanderen); Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* (Los Angeles Master Chorale at Walt Disney Hall). Past appearances include Theater St Gallen, Glimmerglass Festival, Opera Philadelphia, and the Verbier Festival. In concert he has appeared with the Enescu Festival, Boston Pops, Philly POPS, Grand Rapids Symphony Pops, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, America Symphony Orchestra, Bard Music Festival, Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra and BBC Concert Orchestra in venues including Carnegie Hall, Symphony Hall Boston and Queen Elizabeth Hall London. He has worked with conductors Charles Dutoit, Valery Gergiev, Keith Lockhart, Leon Botstein, Alejo Pérez, Anthony Barrese, Paul Daniel, Paul McCreesh, Paolo Carignani and Jerome Shannon. For Opera North: Hobo *Love Life*, Sarastro *The Magic Flute*.

**James Holmes** (Conductor) straddles the worlds of opera and musicals in a wide-ranging career. A former ENO staff conductor and Opera North's Head of Music from 1996-2008, he has become well-known in recent years for 'classic' musical theatre, including: *Carousel* (National Theatre); *Pacific Overtures*, *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, *Street Scene* (ENO); *Sweeney Todd*, *One Touch of Venus*, *Arms and the Cow*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *Paradise Moscow*, *Carousel*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Street Scene*, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, *Love Life* (Opera North); *Into the Woods* (West Yorkshire Playhouse/Opera North); *A Little Night Music* (Leeds Playhouse/Opera North); *The King and I* (Châtelet, Paris); *One Touch of Venus* (Dessau); *Street Scene* (Berlin); *Into the Woods*, *Magical Night* (ROH2); *Pat Kirkwood is Angry* (Royal Exchange Theatre/Tour); *Sweeney Todd*, *Kiss Me, Kate* (WNO); *Wonderful Town*, *Lady in the*

*Dark*, *Into the Woods* (Vienna Volksoper); *The Silver Lake* (ETO). Recordings include: *Pacific Overtures* (Grammy nomination); *One Touch of Venus*, *Street Scene* (DVD); and as pianist/arranger, *Mercy and Grand – The Tom Waits Project*. He has conducted as wide a range of Kurt Weill's work as anyone in the world, is Trustee of the Kurt Weill Foundation, New York, and is currently preparing the Critical Edition of Weill's orchestral music. In 2018 he became only the seventh ever recipient of the Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award for his services to the composer.

**Matthew Eberhardt's** (Stage Director) directing credits for Opera North include: Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*, Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*, Weill's *Street Scene* and *Love Life*; concert stagings of *Fidelio* (live streamed from Leeds Town Hall) and *Billy Budd* (Aldeburgh Festival); and Opera North Education's *Big Sing: Wonderland Restored*. Recent directing credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Die Fledermaus* (both Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama); *Cendrillon* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* (both Royal Birmingham Conservatoire); *Three Decembers/The Medium* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). He was associate director on Will Todd's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Opera Holland Park and Linbury Theatre). His work as revival director with Opera North includes *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and as assistant director *Rigoletto*, *Aida*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Carousel* and *La traviata*.

As well as choreographing for and performing as a member of The Royal Ballet for over 25 years, **Will Tuckett** (Choreographer) is an award-winning, internationally-renowned director and choreographer across both the subsidised and commercial sectors, with work touring Europe, the USA, Canada, Japan and China. He has worked in theatre, opera, musical theatre and film, including work for The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada, New National Ballet of Japan, National Ballet of China, The Royal Opera, Opera North, Welsh National Opera, Bregenz Festival, Garsington Opera, Grange Park Opera, Sadler's Wells,

Barbican, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Shakespeare's Globe, Almeida Theatre, Sage Gateshead, Whitechapel Gallery, Tate Modern, The National Gallery, the BBC, Channel 4 and Sky Arts. He works extensively in Japan with shows at PARCO Theatre, New National Theatre, Akasaka ACT, Metropolitan East and KAAT Theatre Yokohama. He was made the first ROH2 Creative Associate for the Royal Opera House (2006), responsible for devising and delivering innovative work for new and family audiences, and he was the Clore Dance Fellow in 2008 which involved a placement with Tipping Point, the climate change charity.

**Zahra Mansouri** (Set and Costume Designer) is British-born and of Algerian, Polish, and Scottish descent. She graduated in Theatre Design for Performance at Central Saint Martins. She has been nominated twice for the Off-West End Awards and for ten years was the associate designer at Fourth Monkey, during which time she created 75 shows. She has a background in competitive Ballroom and Latin Dancing, whilst also developing skills in designing and making competitive dancewear, training with leading dance couture houses Chrisanne and Dance Sport International. She now prides herself on creating work that is informed by her knowledge of movement and understanding of people inhabiting space. Most recent/current design projects include: *L'Étoile* (Opera Zuid); *The Secret of the Black Spider*, *Susanna* (Opera North); *The Elixir of Love* (English National Opera); *La sonnambula* (Buxton Festival); *Semele* (Blackheath Halls); *Dead Man Walking* (Oldenburgisches Staatstheater). Recent associate work with Leslie Travers includes: *Peter Grimes* (Theater Magdeburg, Theater Basel); *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* (Greek National Opera). Other recent theatre: *Whodunnit* series; *On The Ropes* and *When It Happens To You* (Park Theatre); *Ready Set StartUP* (Amazon Reality series); *Humbug! Immersive Christmas Dive-bar Experience* (Truman Brewery); a gaming feature film *The Night Book* (Good Gate Media); *Typical* (Soho Theatre on Demand); *3 Women* and *Late Company* (Trafalgar Studio 2).

**Anthony Kraus** (Chorus Master) studied at

Bristol University, Guildhall School of Music and Drama (winning the Ricordi Conducting Prize), and the National Opera Studio. He has worked throughout the UK and Europe as a conductor, chorus master and vocal coach, including The Grange Festival, Garsington Opera, Glyndebourne, English Touring Opera, Almeida Opera, Bampton Classical Opera, Opéra national du Rhin (Strasbourg) and the Rossini Festival (Pesaro). He has also worked at the Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music (*Hansel and Gretel*), Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (*The Enchanted Pig*, *Hansel and Gretel*), and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (*Dido and Aeneas*, *Trouble in Tahiti*); West Green Opera (*Gigi*, *High Society*). In 2000 he joined English National Opera, and in 2003 was appointed Chorus Master at Opera North. He subsequently served as Acting Head of Music and Assistant Head of Music until 2018, and has conducted several productions for the Company, including, most recently, *Ruddigore*. He is Music Director of the British Philharmonic Concert Orchestra, and Music Director of the Sinfonia of Leeds.

Described as playing with 'panache and authority' by *The Strad*, Canadian violinist **Katie Stillman** enjoys a multifaceted career as a chamber musician, soloist and Leader of the Orchestra of Opera North. In recent seasons she has directed the Academy of St Martin-in-the Fields, Manchester Camerata and Northern Chamber Orchestra, as well as being guest leader with Opera North for several productions. She is first violinist of the Villiers Quartet, one of the leading string quartets in the UK, known for its Late Beethoven cycle and for championing music by British composers. Recent recordings include quartets by Ethel Smyth and Delius on the Naxos label. She has performed recitals throughout the UK at venues including the Purcell Room, Bridgewater Hall and Wigmore Hall. Winning the Grand Prize at the Canadian Music Competition in Montreal at the age of 16, she studied in the UK at the Royal Northern College of Music where she was awarded the John Manduell Prize for outstanding achievement. Katie plays a 1741 Nicolo Gagliano violin.



Justin Hopkins as Hobo, singing "Love Song" as Act 5 of Part I. "But nobody listens to my song..." (Photo: James Glossop)

# LOVE LIFE

[Editor's Note: The following text presents only the dialogue and lyrics that are heard on the recording. It is not a complete libretto. Any omitted dialogue is briefly summarized in brackets.]

## Compact Disc 1

### PART ONE

#### Act 1: The Magician

Scene: Stage is set for a magician to perform. Red plush bench, stage right, with levitation apparatus on it draped with green cloth. Magician's "Sawing a Woman in Half" box stage left.

#### [1] "The Magician"

##### MAGICIAN

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. As you see, I am a magician.

The reason I'm here is that in any vaudeville show – even one like this – if there is a magician on the bill, he comes first. He comes first, that is, unless he is a great magician. Unfortunately, I am not a great magician – But I'm good.

My wife thinks I'm the world's greatest magician. But that's because she has seen no other. I've asked her not to. Now for the second part of my act, I am joined by my two wonderful assistants and our two willing victims! I mean, volunteers.

(SAM enters. MAGICIAN motions for SAM to lie down on levitation apparatus.)

Don't be afraid. I'll do nothing to you that you have not already done to yourself.

(SUSAN enters. He motions for her to get in the "Sawing in Half Box.")

We are taking unusual precautions this

evening, on account of the accident that occurred last Tuesday.

(Proceeds to saw box – and SUSAN – in half. SAM rises into the air. MAGICIAN Exits. SUSAN is left locked in her half of box, and SAM is left on the levitation)

##### SAM

Susan!

##### SUSAN

Yes, Sam.

##### SAM

Can you see me? I'm suspended in the air.

##### SUSAN

At least you're in one piece. Look at me.

##### SAM

You're really sawed in half, aren't you?

##### SUSAN

Cleanly.

##### SAM

It must be very uncomfortable for you.

##### SUSAN

I'm almost used to it by now.

##### SAM

Used to it?

##### SUSAN

After all, this is what I really am, isn't it? Split in two and severed in the middle? I'm half homemaker, half breadwinner, half mother, half provider; I'm over there a woman and up here a man.

##### SAM

Where does that leave me?

##### SUSAN

Right where you are, in mid-air. I suppose I should feel sorry for you, Sam, but I can't. It's your fault we're in this mess in the first place.

##### SAM

My fault? Oh everything's my fault.

##### SUSAN

It certainly isn't mine. Every single thing that's happened to us and the children for the last hundred and thirty odd years has been your fault.

##### SAM

What are you talking about?

##### SUSAN

You know very well what I'm talking about. We had a decent existence once. It wasn't perfect but at least it made some sense. You set out to change it. I didn't.

##### SAM

Oh – for Pete's sake.

##### SUSAN

Sam, don't you remember what we had together?

##### SAM

You mean fifty years ago?

##### SUSAN

Fifty years ago? It was almost gone then.

##### SAM

A hundred years ago?

##### SUSAN

A hundred years ago – it was beginning to slip.

##### SAM

A hundred and fifty years ago?

##### SUSAN

A hundred and fifty years ago. That was just about the time we moved to Mayville.

##### SAM

Well, we had it then, Susan.

##### SUSAN

Yes we did, Sam – we had it then.

## Sketch 1: "The Cooper Family" (Mayville, Spring 1791)

Scene: Outside the Cooper home. A door leads into Sam's small furniture shop. There is a sign on the store's roof reading SAMUEL COOPER – FURNITURE. The background is a rolling meadow leading to distant hills.

#### [2] "Who is Samuel Cooper?"

##### MARY JO

Did I tell you, Tim, what Father said last evening in the shed?

##### TIM

No.

##### MARY JO

He said: "Mary Jo, it's shameful that by now you haven't wed.

I advise you not to tarry or your youth will slip away.

After all," he said, "remember you'll be seventeen in May."

##### TIM

Look at this!

##### MARY JO

Samuel Cooper.

##### TIM

Now who is Samu'l Cooper?

This wasn't here before.

It says that Samu'l Cooper is op'ning up a store.

##### MARY JO

I wonder when he got here?

##### TIM

It must have been today.

He wasn't here on Monday

When I was by this way.

##### GEORGE

An efficacious thing, this new United States Bank.

**JONATHAN**

Do you think so, George?

**GEORGE**

Indeed I do.

Now the dollar will be stable as the pound and the franc.

**CHARLES**

That's very true, George, very true!

**JONATHAN**

Look at this!

**GEORGE**

Now who is Samu'l Cooper?

I've never heard his name.

I don't know where he hails from, and don't know why he came.

**JONATHAN**

Now who is Samu'l Cooper?

I never heard his name.

I even don't know why he came.

**CHARLES**

It looks like Samu'l Cooper

Intends to settle down.

**GEORGE, JONATHAN**

That's fine, we're all in need of A carpenter in town.

**WILL**

Did you read they have an iron spinning wheel that runs by pow'r?

And they claim it does a week of manu'l labor in an hour.

**HANK**

Well, for me, I'd rather use the wheel I have of hick'ry wood.

These inventions come from England, so they can't be any good.

**WILL**

I don't know, Hank. There's a lot of talk about the coming industrial age. Folks say it'll mean real progress.

Now what's all this?

**ALTOS, BASSES**

Now who is Samu'l Cooper?  
There's none of us who know.  
Except that Samu'l Cooper  
Arrived a while ago.

**ALTOS, BASSES**

Now who is Samu'l Cooper?  
What sort of man is he?  
Does anybody know him,  
Or know his fam'ly tree?

Now who is Samu'l Cooper?  
We've never heard his name.

**SOPRANOS, TENORS**

Is he honest? Is he pleasant? Is he handy at his trade?  
Is he short or thin or fat or very small?  
Is he pious? Is he humble? Is he moral?  
Is he staid?

**ALL**

Doesn't anybody know the man at all?

*(SAM enters on porch.)*

**SAM**

Good afternoon.

**GEORGE**

Mr. Cooper?

**SAM**

Yes.

**GEORGE**

You came today?

**SAM**

Just before noon.

**GEORGE**

We don't know you, Mr. Cooper.

**SAM**

Well . . . then allow me to tell you about myself.

My name is Samu'l Cooper,  
There's none but God I fear.

I came from Massachusetts  
And headed straight for here.

I traveled with my fam'ly,  
Two children and a wife.  
We came with good intention,  
With only good intention,  
We came with all intention  
To settle here for life.

**GEORGE**

We see from your sign you're a carpenter, Mr. Cooper.

**SAM**

Yes. And if you'll allow, I'll tell you a little more.

I was born in Salem in a house beside a church,  
Where my father was the pastor till he died.  
And my mother taught me Milton and Johnson ev'ry day,  
And my father taught me God and tanned my hide.  
*(When it was necessary.)*

When the revolution came, I fought with all my might;  
I was in eleven battles in the war.  
And when those British louts went whimp'ring home where they belong,  
I became a young apprentice in a store.

In a furniture store in Boston, owned by Horace B. Slocum. You may have heard of him.

So while working hard and learning hard, I met a Boston girl;  
And soon I added wooing to my life.  
And after thirty months of courtship, she agreed I was sincere  
And consented to become my wife.

And the seasons rolled away, till a blazing August day  
When a cry was heard, and Johnny it became.

And the seasons rolled away, till another April day,

And another child; Eliz'beth is her name.

Then one night old Mister Slocum ran a trifle short of life,  
And his fam'ly closed his shop forever more.  
So my wife and I decided we would find a little town  
Which didn't have a furniture store.

And that's why I stand before you,  
That's all there is to tell.  
We came with good intention,  
With only good intention,  
We came with all intention  
In friendship here to dwell.

**SAM**

Now, if you'll allow, I'd like you to meet Mrs. Cooper.  
Susan!

**SUSAN**

Yes, Sam?

**SAM**

We have callers.

*(SUSAN enters on porch.)*

**SUSAN**

Good afternoon, everyone.  
I'm sorry our house isn't in order to invite you all in.  
These are our two children, John and Elizabeth.

**ELIZABETH**

How do you do?

**JOHNNY**

Hello!

**SAM**

I've told them how we came to be here.

**SUSAN**

Oh!  
Then you know that we are here with but the simplest goal in view.  
Just to live in faith and harmony is all we aim to do.

And I promise you my husband is a conscientious man,  
Who will serve you anytime and always do the best he can.

**GEORGE**

Mr. Cooper, my name is George Hamilton Beacon. And I say, welcome to Mayville!

**SAM**

Ha, thank you!

**CROWD**

Yes, welcome Samu'l Cooper!  
Yes, welcome to you all!  
And may you live among us  
Till rains no longer fall.

Oh, welcome Samu'l Cooper!  
And welcome to you four!  
And may you dwell among us  
Yes, may you dwell among us  
Till oceans roll no more.

**WOMAN**

Can you carve in any wood, Mr. Cooper?

**SAM**

Any wood at all.

**WOMAN**

Then I'll be back tomorrow.

**WOMAN**

We'll see you at church Sunday, Mrs. Cooper.

**JOHNNY**

Mother, can we go and see the covered wagon?

**SUSAN**

All right. But don't get lost.

**TIM**

We'll take care of them, Mrs. Cooper.

*(SAM and SUSAN alone on stage.)*

**SUSAN**

Welcome, Samuel Cooper. I think I'm going to like it here, Sam. Will you?

[3] **"Here I'll Stay"**

**SAM**

Susan, this is all I'm searching for:  
A place to live with you forever more;  
A sign that says it's Samuel Cooper's store.

There's no other world awaiting me;  
That meadow is as far as I can see.  
My heaven is not higher than that tree.

There's a far land, I'm told,  
Where I'll find a field of gold,  
But here I'll stay with you.

And they say there's an isle  
Deep with clover,  
Where your heart wears a smile  
All day through.

But I know well they're wrong,  
And I know where I belong,  
And here I'll stay with you.  
For that land is a sandy illusion!  
It's the theme of a dream gone astray.

And the world others woo  
I can find loving you,  
And so here I'll stay.

**SUSAN**

Since I was old enough to long  
And harken to a tender song,  
And learned that life should be ever fair,  
But not by living in the air,  
My longing used to be  
That I'd hear it said to me:

There's a far land, I'm told,  
Where I'll find a field of gold,  
But here I'll stay with you.

And they say there's an isle deep with clover,  
Where your heart wears a smile all day  
through.

**BOTH**

But I know well they're wrong,  
And I know where I belong,  
And here I'll stay with you.

For that land is a sandy illusion!  
It's the theme of a dream gone astray.  
And the world others woo  
I can find loving you,  
And so here I'll stay.

**Act 2: Eight Men**

[4] **"Progress"**

**THE EIGHT**

One time this was a very quiet planet.  
The reason was nobody was around.  
But then one day, Jehovah, who began it,  
Got bored and clamped a couple on the ground.

And right away when man and woman came here,  
They took a peek and nature took its course.  
He said, "I love you," and she answered,  
"Same here";  
And love became the greatest human force.

And from then and through the ages,  
It was love, love, love!  
From the peasant to the sages,  
It was love, love, love!

Man and woman soon discover,  
When they set out to explore,  
All the world loves a lover,  
But a lover loves it more.

Ev'rybody was devoted to it:  
Love, love, love!  
Until they all were bloated with it:  
Love, love, love, love, love, love!  
For suddenly the mind of man was changing;  
He started moving on in greater haste.  
And perspectives took a drastic rearranging,  
For love and home had fin'ly been replaced.

They discovered something better than affection,  
Far more rugged than a hug would ever be.  
And they started in a happier direction,  
Leaving love beneath the good old apple tree.

What is this thing  
That's greater than spring?  
What thing is this  
That's better than a kiss?  
What is the "X"  
That's bigger than sex?  
What could it be?  
What could it be?  
What could it be?

It's progress!  
Where ev'ry man can be a king.  
Why, next to progress,  
Love's a juvenile thing.  
Yes, with progress,  
Your chance to hit the top is great.  
One year you may need a loan  
And the following year you own  
New York state.

Yes, it's progress!  
Now that's the life for you.  
Where you can make a pile a day.  
Oh, it's incred' what you can do.  
Why, next to progress,  
You don't need brains at all,  
Love is dull as croquet.  
Just a helluva lot of gall.  
Yes, with progress,  
A Tom, a Dick, or Hank  
Why, there's a world to make and hold.  
Might any day buy up a bank.  
You start a clerk underneath  
And the following year your teeth are all gold.

One day the prices  
Begin to soar!  
You made a living,  
Now you need more.  
You're getting frantic;  
You're running short!  
You have a fam'ly  
You must support.  
And when you think it'll never stop,  
There is a sudden awful drop!  
It's a panic!  
It's a recession!  
It's a depression!  
It's a crash!  
It's –

Progress!  
The greatest thing there'll ever be!  
Why, next to progress,  
Love's a cup of warm tea.  
Yes, it's progress!  
Where any cluck can make a buck.  
You buy a few shares of stock  
And the following day . . .

The markets crumble!  
The prices crack!  
And down you tumble  
Upon your back!  
You're over-extended,  
You have no slack!  
It can't be mended.  
You can't turn back!  
And you are out in a growing mob,  
Without a dime, without a job!  
It's a panic!  
It's a recession!  
It's a depression!  
It's a crash!  
It's –

Progress!  
Where ev'ry man can own the skies!  
To win with progress,  
Just industrialize.  
Yes, it's progress!  
The only way to happiness.  
No greater love could there be than for P-R-  
O-G-R-E-  
Double S!

**Sketch 2: “The Farewell”  
(Mayville, April 1821)**

*Scene: Outside the Cooper home, the same as Part One, Sketch 1. The only difference is that the meadow and hills are obscured by rising factories.*

**[5] “I Remember It Well”**

**SAM**  
I'll close up the shop.  
Oh, I have to close it forever tonight, don't I?

**SUSAN**  
That's the hardest part.

**SAM**  
Well – I was making this chair for you. My last piece.  
As it should be.

**SUSAN**  
Funny, when you opened the store you made the first piece for me, too.  
This rocker.

**SAM**  
Oh, that's right, I did.

**SUSAN**  
Do you remember the night you gave it to me? It was just a few days after we came to Mayville.  
It was on my birthday.

**SAM**  
Remember? Susan, I remember every detail of that evening just as if it were yesterday.  
Just as if it were yesterday.

It was late at night.

**SUSAN**  
It was six fifteen.

**SAM**  
You were dressed in white.

**SUSAN**  
I was all in green.

**SAM**  
That's right! I remember it well.

It began to pour.

**SUSAN**  
It was warm and clear.

**SAM**  
We were in the store.

**SUSAN**  
We were both out here.

**SAM**  
That's right! I remember it well.

We were all alone,  
The kids had flown  
Upstairs to bed for the night.

**SUSAN**  
When you brought the chair,  
They both were there,  
But outside of that you are right.

**SAM**  
But the moon was low.

**SUSAN**  
Yes, the moon was low.

**SAM**  
And I loved you so,  
Yes, I did love you so,  
And it seemed even more,  
More than ever before.  
Am I right?

**SUSAN**  
Oh, yes, you're right.

**BOTH**  
I remember it well.

*(JOHNNY and ELIZABETH enter.)*

**[6] “Green-Up Time”**

**ELIZABETH**  
Look down the road. Everybody's coming!

**SAM**  
Oh, hurry. Johnny, take the chair.

**SUSAN**  
Sam, I'm glad we're having the party.

**SAM**  
So am I.

**THREE GUESTS**  
Susan Cooper, good to see you.  
Hope we haven't come too soon.

*(Other GUESTS enter.)*

**SUSAN**  
Not at all, for we've been ready  
Since the early afternoon.

**HANK and ALICE**  
Susan, what a lovely evening,  
Never saw the stars so bright.

**SUSAN**  
I'm so happy, Hank and Alice,  
We could have the dance tonight.

**ALICE**  
A green-up dance. We haven't had one for years.

**JOSIE**  
How did you ever think of it?

**SUSAN**  
Well,  
Walking along, I heard me sing;  
And I wondered why,  
Then I heard me sigh,  
“Look! It's spring! It's spring!”

Yesterday morning I did see  
Blossoms on the apple tree.  
I took a breath and thought, “Could it be  
It's green-up time?”  
Then I began to look around,  
And in ev'ry field I found  
Greens were a-pushing up through the  
ground  
For green-up time.

And, sure enough, the bluebells tinkled April  
in the glen.  
And, sure enough, I fell in love with love  
again.

Then I started feeling awful bright!  
Had a thought that hit me right.  
I'll have m'honey dance me tonight  
And have a time  
To welcome in the green-up time.

Then I got thinking even more,  
Home I flew to Samu'l's store.  
Said to my husband: “Look out the door,  
It's green-up time.”

We always like to reel and sing.  
We've a yard and ev'rything.  
Let's have a dance to dance in the spring,  
For green-up time."

And, sure enough, he looked at me, his eyes  
a-shining bright,  
And said: "Why yes indeed! How 'bout  
tomorrow night?"

I said to him, "I can hardly wait.  
I'll invite the folks for eight.  
And till the dawn we'll all celebrate  
And have a time  
To welcome in the green-up time."  
*(SAM enters from house and stands on  
porch, watching the proceedings.*

#### **DOUBLE QUARTET**

Bow to your lady, let's begin.  
Take her arm and start to spin.  
This is a night for startin' to spin,  
It's green-up time.

Hands on her waist and lift her high.  
She should almost touch the sky.  
This is a night for touchin' the sky,  
It's green-up time.

The cow is prime for milkin' and she's startin'  
in to moo,  
but no one's gonna milk her till the dance is  
through.

For, this is a night to skip and reel,  
Drink and eat a hearty meal.  
This is a night to do as we feel  
And have a time  
To welcome in the green-up time!

*(All dance the Green-Up Polka.)*

#### **ONE WOMAN**

Susan, Sam, it's time to go. The dawn is  
almost here.

#### **ANOTHER WOMAN**

It's been the grandest party we have had this  
year.

#### **SUSAN**

Thank you all for coming.

#### **SAM**

Good night, George.

#### **GEORGE**

Thank you, Sam. Good night.

#### **GUESTS**

We'll be talking many a day  
About the time  
We welcomed in the green-up,  
We welcomed in the green-up,  
We welcomed in the green-up time.

*(SAM and SUSAN are left alone, looking after  
departing guests.)*

#### **[7] "I Remember It Well" (Reprise)**

#### **SAM**

Ah! That was a fine last night.

#### **SUSAN**

Sam –

#### **SAM**

Walt will be coming for me soon.

#### **SUSAN**

I know.

#### **SAM**

This really is like the beginning of a new kind  
of life, isn't it?

#### **SUSAN**

Yes.

#### **SAM**

Are you afraid?

#### **SUSAN**

No.

#### **SAM**

Will you get used to it?

#### **SUSAN**

I can get used to anything, but being without you.

Oh dear! It looks like a cloudy day.

#### **SAM**

I am doing the right thing, aren't I, Susan?

#### **SUSAN**

Of course, Sam.

#### **SAM**

There's a changing sky  
Coming into view.  
But remember I  
Will forever be true;  
And I do love you so,  
And I'll love you, I know,  
Evermore.

#### **SUSAN**

Forever more,  
I'll remember it –

*(Chimes are heard striking the three-quarter  
hour. They wait and listen.)*

#### **SAM**

Quarter of.

*(JOHNNY and ELIZABETH appear in door of  
house, dressed in their nightgowns.)*

#### **SUSAN**

What are you two doing up?

#### **JOHNNY**

We wanted to say goodbye to Father.

#### **ELIZABETH**

Is that all right?

#### **SUSAN**

Yes.  
*(CHILDREN run to SAM as WALT enters.)*

#### **WALT**

Sam –

#### **SAM**

I'll be with you in a minute, Walt.  
Goodbye, Elizabeth.

#### **ELIZABETH**

Goodbye, Father.

#### **JOHNNY**

Father, who shall say grace at luncheon  
now?

#### **SAM**

Why, you son.

#### **JOHNNY**

Yes, sir.

#### **SAM**

Goodbye, Susan.

#### **SUSAN**

Bye, Sam.  
Take care.

#### **SAM**

Bless you.  
*(Exits and WALT after him)*

#### **ELIZABETH**

Mother . . . Mother . . .

#### **SUSAN**

What, dear?

#### **ELIZABETH**

Where exactly does Father have to go?

#### **SUSAN**

This is his first day at the factory.

#### **ELIZABETH**

When will he be back?

#### **SUSAN**

Tonight for supper. Now get along you two.  
It's too early to be up – off to bed with you.  
*(She follows them.)*

#### **Act 3: Quartette**

#### **[8] "Economics"**

#### **QUARTETTE**

Man and woman you got to admire.

They conquered cold and they conquered fire.  
They stuck together through thick and thin,  
Through lots of good and through lots of sin.

But there's one thing that beats 'em,  
That they just can't subdue;  
One thing that defeats 'em,  
And splits them up in two.  
And that love-defyin' thing  
About which we's gonna sing  
Is economics!  
Now Cora had a husband makin' seven a day.  
She left him for a guy who made eleven a day.  
Now that's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
But awful bad for love!

Now Sarah and her husband, they were doin'  
okay,  
For Sarah had an ev'nin' job and he worked  
all day.  
Now that's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
But awful bad for love!

Economics are rough on love!  
Economics are tough on love!  
You got a little money;  
You got a little honey:  
Money go!  
Honey go!

Now Ruby was a woman who could needle  
your spine,  
But when you went to kiss her it was cash on  
the line.  
Now that's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
But awful bad for love!

Now Joe, he had a job and worked with all of  
his might;  
He worked so doggone hard that he was tired  
at night!  
Now that's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
But awful bad for love!

Now Henry and Mathilda got along very nice,  
But when inflation came Mathilda boosted  
her price.  
Now that's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
But awful bad for love!

Economics are sad for love!  
Economics are bad for love!  
Now Flo, she can't be trusted;  
She'll leave you when you're busted:  
Dough come back!  
Flo comes back!

Now Edna used to slip her husband's pay  
down her chest.  
And just to keep it extra safe she never  
undressed.  
Now that's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
That's good economics,  
But awful bad for love!

**Sketch 3: "The New Baby"  
(bedroom of the Cooper house,  
September 1857)**

*[Editor's Note: Sam has left the factory and is  
about to start a new job with the railroad. Susan  
has told him that she wants to have another  
child. With his demanding travel schedule and  
economic uncertainty in mind, Sam has offered  
a number of reasons not to do so.]*

**SAM**  
*(Reading a newspaper.)*  
Good Lord! I didn't see this on the back page  
tonight! The State Assembly has turned down  
the request of the K. and Y. Railroad for a  
five million subsidy.

**SUSAN**  
Is that bad?

**SAM**  
Bad? Susan, this may have been the money  
the company was planning on to build the  
line through Pittsburgh.  
What if I report for work tomorrow and  
discover I don't have a job?

**SUSAN**  
We'll see it through, Sam. Like we always  
have.

**SAM**  
But where would I look? I mean if the  
railroads aren't hiring, who is?

**SUSAN**  
Sam, you don't know the facts yet –

**SAM**  
I know, but –

**SUSAN**  
Let's go to bed, dear. Try and get some rest.

**SAM**  
Well, Honey, until I know more, we'd better  
keep down expenses. You understand.

**SUSAN**  
Yes, Sam.

**SAM**  
Of course, the K. and Y. may already have  
the money for the Pittsburgh line and then –  
Susan – Susan, are you crying?

**SUSAN**  
No –

**SAM**  
Well as I said, maybe they already have the  
money, and what happened today won't  
affect us at all. That'd be a relief, wouldn't it?

**Act 4: The Three Tots**

**[9] "Mother's Getting Nervous"**

**THREE TOTS**  
Oh we have a mother  
Like most children do.  
She's like lots of mothers we know.  
But lately we've noticed that mother is blue;  
There's something that's both'rning her so.

**ONE TOT**  
We thought that we might be to blame,

**THREE TOTS**  
Till we found ev'ry mother's the same.

Mother's getting nervous;  
How jumpy and grumpy is she.  
All her spirits are low  
From one day to another,  
Oh we'd like to know  
What's wrong with Mother.

Mother's getting shaky,  
As shaky as leaves on a tree.  
She says she is feeling kind of extraneous;  
She won the award  
Of Miss Miscellaneous.  
Oh, Mother's getting nervous;  
She's nervous as she can be!

**SOLO TOTS**  
M is for the maximum of grieving;  
O is for "Oh my, does Mother fret";  
T is for the treatment she's receiving;  
H is for the hug she doesn't get;  
E is for the endless lonely evenings;  
R is for romance, there's not a speck.

**THREE TOTS**  
Put it all together, it spells "Mother,"  
And Mother is a nervous wreck!

Mother's life is boring;  
She's all in a world of her own.  
She's up in the air and starting to wobble;  
In fact, she is feeling quite miserobble.  
Oh, Mother's getting lonely;  
She's all in a world of her own.

**ONE TOT**  
Hit it!

*(TOTS break into a Foxtrot dance.)*

**Sketch 4: "My Kind of Night"  
(back porch and living room of the  
Cooper house, 1894)**  
*Scene: Early summer, in the evening. SAM is  
sitting on the back porch in a rocker.*

**[10] "My Kind of Night" & "Women's Club  
Blues"**

**SAM**

What a pleasant ev'ning, just rocking to and fro.  
It makes you wonder why a man has to roam.  
Working for the railroad sure keeps you on the go.  
Yes, sir, it's nice to have a night to come home.

This is mighty pleasant, just rocking to and fro.  
The air is lazy, the wind's at ease.  
This is my kind of ev'ning.  
And I'm feeling lazy and feeling at ease.  
This is my kind of night.

Haven't got a worry. I'm really doing fine.  
I even have a little salted away.  
Got the peace of knowing this house and lot are mine.  
In my opinion, Sam, my boy, you're okay.

I could sit here rocking until the break of day.  
The trees are drowsing the time away.  
This is my kind of ev'ning.  
And I feel like drowsing the hours away.  
This is my kind of night.

*(ELIZABETH and JOHNNY enter)*

**ELIZABETH**

Johnny, what's the hour?

**JOHNNY**

It's seven twenty-four.

**ELIZABETH**

What time did Mother say that she would be through?

**JOHNNY**

Not until eleven.

**ELIZABETH**

You mean three hours more?

**JOHNNY**

Let's see if Dad can think of something to do.

**ELIZABETH**

Dad will only be here another night or two.

**SAM**

The lilacs yonder are nodding low.  
This is my kind of ev'ning.

**ELIZABETH**

Daddy . . .

**SAM**

Oh, hello, Honey.  
*(He takes her in his arms.)*

**ELIZABETH**

Daddy, do you want to take a walk with us?

**SAM**

I would love to, Liz, but I'm exhausted. What time are Mother's meetings usually over?

**JOHNNY**

Around eleven.

**SAM**

That's pretty late. How often do they have those things?

**JOHNNY**

Once a week.

**ELIZABETH**

Every Wednesday it's a different house.  
Tonight's Mother's turn.

**SAM**

So I gather.

**ELIZABETH**

I don't like it when it's Mother's turn. We have to keep out of the house.

**SAM**

Well, honey, it doesn't happen often. And you wouldn't begrudge Mother her one night with her girlfriends, would you?

**JOHNNY**

Pop, tell us where you went this trip.

**SAM**

Tomorrow, Johnny. I want to relax tonight. This is the first chance I've had in a long time. Look! The Adamson children are out in their yard. Why don't you go play with them? I'll call you as soon as the meeting is over.

**JOHNNY**

All right, Pop. Come on, Liz.  
*(THEY exit.)*

**SAM**

Swellest pair of youngsters I guess I ever knew.  
And I'm not saying that because I'm their dad.  
Sam, you should be grateful that they belong to you.  
You've got the finest kids a man ever had.

Nicest little fam'ly a fellow ever had.  
The earth is humming a happy song.  
This is my kind of ev'ning.  
And I feel like humming and singing along.  
This is my kind of night.

*(The lights fade out on contented SAM as he slowly falls asleep, but come up to reveal SUSAN and a group of friends.)*

**SUSAN**

Ladies! Ladies!  
Ladies of the Women's Club, local branch, chapter seventeen – which was founded two years ago in eighteen-ninety-two –  
On a very cold night!  
We're gathered here because the world is changing!  
And our traditional position's out of fashion!  
And the time has come to redirect our passion!

**WOMEN**

Yes! We're sick of being neglected,  
And it's time we redirected  
Our passion!

**SUSAN**

I toss and turn alone in bed at night,  
My body aching for the right  
To vote.

**WOMEN**

We've got a yearning to vote!

**SUSAN**

And when I'm gazing at the moon above,  
I tremble thinking how I'd love  
To vote!

**WOMEN**

We've got a burning to vote!

**SUSAN**

I've got a mouth as red as roses,  
Crimson red as roses,  
Hardly ever touched at all.

But from now on,  
I want to use it,  
I'm gonna use it  
To yell in ev'ry public meeting and hall.  
I've got an urge, a powerful urge  
For someone to squeeze me,  
For someone to squeeze me in line at the polls.  
I've got a desire, a mounting desire  
For someone to seize me,  
And make me free and equal as a male!  
I'm sick of my domestic jail!

And when the stars are out at night,  
I start to dream about the right  
To work!

**WOMEN**

We got a yearning to work!

**SUSAN**

And when the lamp is burning dim and low,  
My heart begins to pound to go  
To work!

**WOMEN**

We got a burning to work!

**SUSAN**

I've got a pair of satin shoulders,  
Smooth as satin shoulders,  
I can move 'em like an eel.  
But from now on,  
I want to use 'em,  
I'm gonna use 'em,  
I'm gonna put those shoulders right to the wheel!

**SUSAN and WOMEN**

We want to be free! We want to be free!  
We want to be equal!  
We want to be free! We want to be free!  
We want to be free!

**SUSAN and TWO WOMEN**

I want to have the right to go and be a doctor.  
A woman ought to have the right to be a doctor.  
A doctor has to know about the facts of life.

**SUSAN**

And that you never learn about when you're  
a wife!

**TRIO and WOMEN**

Women should be free to go and be a doctor!  
Women ought to know about the facts of life!

**TRIO**

I want to have the right to be a county judge.  
A woman should be free to be a county judge.  
A judge, it is his job to sit and punish men.

**SUSAN**

It must be great to sit around and punish men.

**TRIO and WOMEN**

Women should be free to be a county judge!  
Women ought to have the right to punish men!

**TRIO**

I want to have the right to be a trav'ling  
salesman.  
A woman should be free to be a trav'ling  
salesman.  
To travel through the country must be lots of fun.

**SUSAN**

I'll bet that now and then the farmer has a  
son!

**TRIO and WOMEN**

Women should be free to go and be a  
salesman!  
Women should be free to go and have their fun!

**SUSAN**

I've got a figure white as iv'ry,  
Smooth and white as iv'ry.  
Once it used to hold a throb.  
But, from now on,  
I want to use it,

**WOMEN**

Yeah!

**SUSAN**

I'm gonna use it,

**WOMEN**

Hey!

**SUSAN**

I'm gonna make that figure useful holding a  
job!

**WOMEN**

We've got to be free! We've got to be free!

**SUSAN**

The meeting will now come to order.  
I'm gonna make that figure useful holding a job!

**WOMEN**

We've got to be free! We want to be free!

*(THEY ALL go upstage into the living room.  
SUSAN follows as lights fade. Lights come up  
on the exterior of the house as before, with  
SAM, who has slept through the previous  
number, still in the rocking chair on the  
porch.)*

**SAM**

The earth is humming a happy song. This is  
my kind of ev'ning.

And I feel like humming and singing along.  
This is my kind of night.

*(He is interrupted by the entrance of JOHNNY  
and ELIZABETH.)*

**ELIZABETH**

Daddy . . .

**SAM**

Hello, Honey.

**ELIZABETH**

Isn't that meeting over? I want to go to bed.

**JOHNNY**

It's getting too dark to play outside.

**SAM**

Uh, let's find out.

**SAM**

Susan!  
*(To children)*  
I'm getting kind of drowsy myself.

**SUSAN**

*(enters)*  
Sam, please don't bother me now. We have  
a great deal to do.

**SAM**

Hasn't it gone long enough? I mean, after all,  
Honey, this is my first night home and . . .

**SUSAN**

This is very important work we're doing, Sam.  
It can't be postponed to fit your timetable.

**SAM**

But the kids have nothing to do.

**SUSAN**

Well, why don't you play with them? Or are  
you too busy relaxing?  
*(To the children, tenderly)*  
It won't be long now, dears. Oh! Run along  
and play with the Adamsons. I'll call you  
when I've finished.

**JOHNNY**

All right, Mother.

*(SUSAN exits into the house. JOHNNY and  
ELIZABETH exit off. SAM settles back in his  
rocker.)*

**SAM**

The trees are drowsing the time away.  
This is my kind of ev'ning.  
And I feel like drowsing the hours away.  
This is my--

*(As the music fades, he looks into the  
house and scratches his head with worried  
bewilderment.)*

**Act 5: Hobo****[11] "Love Song"****HOBO**

New York, Tennessee, Oregon, Maine,  
Wichita, Little Rock, Butte and Spokane,  
I've seen 'em all, Mister.  
I've heard their noisy hum.  
You know 'em all, Mister,  
When you're a bum.

Wherever I go I listen,  
And I watch with open eyes.  
And I've heard and seen a woman singing  
Freedom to the skies.

And I've heard the song of Wall Street  
Singin' "climb you market, climb!"  
And a drinking song that whispers  
That it's Prohibition time.

Yes, I've heard a song of harvest  
From the green and copper hills,  
As the copper turns to pennies  
And the green to dollar bills.

Yes, I've heard 'em all, Mister,  
But I can't go sing 'em back.

I sing another song  
Along the track:

I sing a song about the ocean,  
Sing of how endless is the ocean,  
Sing of however near the shore and sea;  
And that's how true love should ever be.

I sing a song about the snowfall,  
Sing of how gentle is the snowfall,  
Sing of how pure the snow on ev'ry tree;  
And that's how true love should ever be.  
I've sung my song on the plain,  
With the wind and the rain  
Around me.

I've sung it high to a cloud  
And to people who crowd  
Along.

Oh, I sing a song about forever,  
Only a song about forever,  
Sing of how empty hearts forever long;  
But nobody listens to my song.

Won't someone stop the wheels a moment,  
Let the smoke a second clear?  
Water down the furnace,  
That's a song you ought to hear.

Oh, hear me, I only sing a love song.  
Hear me, I only sing a love song,  
Sing of how when it dies the world turns gray;  
But nobody hears me, what I say.

**Sketch 6: "The Cruise"**  
**(main dining room of an ocean liner, 1920s)**

*Scene: On stage is a number of tables with guests.*

**[12] "I'm Your Man"**

**BOYLAN**

I tell you, Mrs. Boylan really likes it. She really li –

**HARVEY**

I've taken this cruise ever since Prohibition came in. It gets me away from everything.

**SAM**

How about that real estate deal, Mr. Harvey? Do you think I could handle it for you?

**HARVEY**

I don't know, Cooper. Boylan and I like a cautious man.

**SAM**

Caution?

If it's caution you go for, then how do you do?  
I'm your man! I'm your man!  
If you're looking for someone as stingy as you,  
I'm your man! I'm your man!

I choke ev'ry dollar, and, Harvey, I've been  
That way from the day I began.  
I never would gamble for even a fin,  
I wouldn't bet on a race if I knew who would win!  
If that's the way that you work, then we're  
kith and we're kin.  
I'm your man! I'm your man!

*(SLADE and LEFFCOURT enter. SAM turns to SLADE.)*

Oh, Mr. Slade! I was looking for you. I thought we might talk over a few things.

**SLADE**

I don't know, Cooper, if we see eye to eye.  
I'm a gambler.

**SAM**

Gambler?

If it's gambling you go for, then how do you do?

I'm your man! I'm your man!  
If you're looking for someone as reckless as you,  
I'm your man! I'm your man!

I bet like a fool and they'll tell you I've been  
That way from the day I began.  
I follow my hunches no matter the price;  
I've got a case of lumbago from picking up dice.  
If that's the kind that you work with, then  
look at me twice.  
I'm your man! I'm your man!

**BOYLAN**

Your wife with you, Cooper?

**SAM**

Oh, she'll be right down, Mr. Boylan. Why?

**BOYLAN**

Good. I like to see a man home with his wife once in a while. Shows good character. I'm a homebody myself.

**SAM**

Homebody?  
If it's home you believe in, then how do you do?  
I'm your man! I'm your man!  
If you go for a husband who's loyal and true,  
I'm your man! I'm your man!

I never go staggging, 'cause I like to be  
At home ev'ry moment I can.  
The laughter of children each day when I wake;  
The fun my wife and I have Sunday out on  
the lake;

If that's the life that you live for, then, Mister,  
let's shake.  
I'm your man! I'm your man!

**LEFFCOURT**

Say, Cooper, if I threw a few deals your way,  
can you fix me up when I'm in town?

**SAM**

Can I? Ha! Listen!

If it's women you're after, then how do you do?  
I'm your man! I'm your man!  
If you're bustin' to locate a cutie or two,  
I'm your man! I'm your man!

Just give me a ring when you feel like a date,  
And I will supply what I can.  
And when you are off with a girl for the night  
And are afraid to be seen  
Where the candles are bright,  
And need a pal to go with you to make it look  
right . . .

**LEFFCOURT**

Say! He is my man!  
I like him fine!

**SLADE**

He can be a pal of mine,  
Anytime, any day.

**LEFFCOURT**

Yes sir, Sam. You're okay.

**ALL MEN**

Yes, Cooper, my boy, you are jake with us all;  
You're our man!

**SAM**

I'm your man!

**MEN**

For we go for a guy who is right on the ball;  
You're our man!

**SAM**

I'm your man!  
I'll always remember that this was the night  
A wonderful friendship began!

**MEN**

There's nothing as good for a fellow's morale!  
We'd rather meet a new buddy than even a gal;

**SAM**

For you can buy a new woman, but never a pal;  
I'm your man!

**MEN**

You're our man! You're our man!

**MEN**

You're our man!

**SAM**

I'm your man!

*(SUSAN enters from cabin on balcony and comes downstairs.)*

**SAM**

Oh, Susan!

**SUSAN**

Hello darling! Sorry I took so long. These nuts dropped in for a drink.

**SAM**

Hi! Come on Honey, let's dance.

**SUSAN**

*(over his shoulder)*  
Get comfortable. I'll be right over.  
Never met such fun people. How's everything going, darling?

**SAM**

*(as they dance)*  
Great! Everybody likes me. Now, if I can get a few things in black and white, we'll not only be on Easy Street, we'll be able to afford this trip. *(A MAN comes over and breaks in between them.)*

**MAN**

Hello – You're my man! You're my man!

**SAM**

How're ya, Fella?

**SUSAN**

Oh Sam! I'm having such a whirl! I just wish this cruise lasted more than a weekend.  
(*BILL TAYLOR enters.*)  
Oh! Hello Bill.

**BILL**

Hello Susan.

**SAM**

(*as they are dancing*)  
Who's that?

**SUSAN**

He's been playing up to me all afternoon. Isn't he cute?

**BOYLAN**

Hey Cooper, come on over here.

**SAM**

Say, we better sit down; I don't want to be away too long.

**SUSAN**

You mean over there with them?

**SAM**

Well Susan, I gotta keep after them.

**SUSAN**

Oh, they're so dull! If you have to, work all night. But why do I have to tag along?

**SAM**

Boylan was asking for you. You've got to sit with me.

**SUSAN**

That's your business, Sam, not mine. I want to have fun tonight. I've certainly waited long enough.

**SAM**

Look, Susan, do you want to ruin everything for me? What will they think?

**SUSAN**

Why don't you worry for a minute what I think? You don't even like being with them yourself.

**SAM**

Oh and being with those rattleheads is your idea of fun?

**SUSAN**

Yes. It is.

**SUSAN**

(*Goes to BILL at a table.*)  
Bill, can I join you?

**BILL**

Any time.

**SUSAN**

I feel like enjoying myself tonight.

**BILL**

Then I'm your man.  
(*Takes SUSAN and they start to dance slowly*)

**BILL**

What's he chasing real estate for, when he's got a piece of property like you?

**SUSAN**

I'm not property.  
(*They stop dancing standing in middle of stage.*)

**BILL**

I told you this afternoon; you're one tremendously attractive woman, Susan.

**SUSAN**

Really?

**BILL**

And that is no intellectual observation. You excite the living hell out of me.

**SUSAN**

I don't mean to.

**BILL**

I don't believe it. You couldn't look happier.

**SUSAN**

Well I like feeling attractive for a change.

**BILL**

Sure you do. Look Susan; let's get to the point. You want to enjoy yourself and so do I. Let's get out of here.

**SUSAN**

And go where?

**BILL**

To my cabin.

**SUSAN**

What for?

**BILL**

I'll think of something when we get there.

**SUSAN**

I'm afraid I've never done anything like that.

**BILL**

For someone as deserted as you, propriety must be very cold comfort.

**SUSAN**

It isn't propriety.

**BILL**

Then what are you waiting for? You're entitled to your own life. Do you think one day he's gonna start paying attention to you? He's too busy. Baby, I'm not.  
(*He rises.*)  
Coming?  
(*SUSAN thinks a moment, then slowly rises to follow.*)

**SAM**

Susan, where are you going?

**BILL**

(*to SAM*)  
Why don't you grow up? Haven't you made enough of a fool of yourself for one trip?  
(*To SUSAN*)  
Come on, kid.  
(*Starts away, SAM turns him around and hits him.*)

**SAM**

(*angry*)  
Where did you think you were going with –

**SUSAN**

(*breaks in and throws her arms around him*)  
Sam!

**SAM**

What a way to behave, in front of Boylan –

**SUSAN**

Sam, I had to do something.

**SAM**

Well, what do you want to do?

**SUSAN**

I want to be with you.

**SLADE**

Have one with us, Sam!

**LEFFCOURT**

Come on, Sam!

(*Pantomime between SUSAN and SAM at foot of stairs. She wants him to stay with her, and he is having a hard time deciding. But he decides to have one more drink with the boys, so he shoves the bottle in her hand. The MEN join him and escort him to table.*)

**MEN**

(*with SAM at table*)  
Why, here's to a hell of a year to us all!  
You're our man! You're our man!  
Say, where is the bottle? Let's make it a brawl!  
You're our man!

**SAM**

I'm your man!

**SAM and MEN**

I'll (let's) always remember that this was the night  
A wonderful friendship began!

There's nothing as good for a fellow's morale!  
We'd rather meet a new buddy than even a gal!  
For you can buy a new woman but never a pal!

**SAM**

I'm your man!

**MEN**

You're our man!  
You're our man!

**END OF PART ONE**



Themba Mvula as Magician  
in the Opening Act of Part I of *Love Life*.  
(Photo: James Glossop)

## Compact Disc 2

### [1] Entr'acte

#### PART TWO

#### Act 1: Madrigal Singers

### [2] "Ho, Billy O!"

#### LEADER

(to audience)

Good Evening. We would like to sing for you a modern madrigal entitled: "Ho, Billy O! The Wind of Spring Is Blowing."

#### MADRIGAL SINGERS

Oh, once upon the month of May,  
While strolling willy-nilly,  
And wond'ring how I'd pass the day,  
I met my good friend Billy.

Ho, Billy O!

The wind of spring is blowing.

Ho, Billy O!

So tell me where you're going.

He looked at me and sadly said,  
"The world is idiotic.

Oh, faith is gone and love is dead,  
And worse, I am neurotic."

Ho, Billy O!

The wind of spring is blowing.

Sing fa la la la la la la la la,

And nowhere to be going.

Sing fa la la la la la la la la,

The world is idiotic.

Sing fa la la la la la la la la,

And Billy is neurotic.

#### SOLO

I said: "Oh, Billy, look at me,  
I'm overly aggressive,  
And doctors ev'rywhere agree  
I'm manic and depressive."

#### SINGERS

Ho, Billy O!

The wind of spring is blowing.

Ho, Billy O!

And nowhere to be going.

#### SOLO

My father used to stay away,  
With home he'd never bother.

And mother hit me twice a day  
Because I looked like father.

#### SINGERS

Ho, Billy O!

The wind of spring is blowing.

Sing fa la la la la la la la la,

And nowhere to be going.

Sing fa la la la la la la la la,

What folly lies in thinking!

Sing fa la la la la la la la la,

Come, Billy, let's go drinking!

So down we went

(Ay, down we went)

To a bar we knew.

(To a bar we knew.)

And on the way

(Ay, on the way)

We met a lass named Mary Lou.

(We met a lass named Mary Lou.)

A lass that Billy and I both knew;  
A lass that we knew through and through.

Fa la la la la la la la la la la,

We knew her through and through.

Oh, sweet she was, I must admit,

Her dress all pink and frilly.

She curtsied low and smiled a bit,

And coyly said to Billy:

#### SOLO

"Ho, Billy O!

The wind of spring is blowing.

Ho, Billy O!

So tell me where you're going."

Said Billy, with a hopeless grin,

"The world is too chaotic.

The golden rule has turned to tin,

And worse, we're both neurotic."

#### SOLO

Said she: "Oh Billy, look at me,

I also am disgusted.

The doctors say that sexu'ly  
I'm very maladjusted."

### **SINGERS**

Ho, Billy O!  
The wind of spring is blowing.  
Sing fa la la la la la la,  
And nowhere to be going.  
Sing fa la la la la la la la,  
The world cannot be mastered.  
Sing fa la la la la la la la,  
Come, Billy, let's get plastered.

So went we three  
(So went we three)  
To the Club Nineteen.  
(To the Club Nineteen.)  
And on the way  
(Ay, on the way)  
We met a lass named Geraldine.  
(We met a lass named Geraldine.)

A lass who lived in a mansion big;  
A lass we thought an awful pig!  
Fa la la la la la la la la,  
She was an awful pig!

Oh, plump she was from head to toe,  
Her figure very hilly.  
But come she did and curtsy low,  
And shyly say to Billy:

### **SOLO**

"Ho, Billy O!  
The wind of spring is blowing.  
Ho, Billy o!  
So tell me where you're going."

Said Billy: "Child, we're up the creek;  
The world is too despotic.  
We've disinherited the meek,  
And so we're all neurotic."

Said she: "Oh, Billy, look at me,  
A piece of bad construction.  
And what is more, subconsciously  
I'm bent on self destruction."

### **SINGERS**

Ho, Billy O!  
The wind of spring is blowing.

Sing fa la la la la la la,  
And nowhere to be going.  
Sing fa la la la la la la la,  
What folly lies in thinking!  
Sing fa la la la la la la la,  
Come, Billy, let's get stinking!

So on we went,  
(Ay, on we went,)  
We neurotic four,  
(We neurotic four,)  
And drink we did  
(Ay, drink we did)  
Till we fell flat on the floor.  
(Till we fell flat on the floor.)

Then off to bed went we one and all;  
But whose we simply can't recall.  
Fa la la la la la la la la,  
We simply can't recall.  
Fa la la . . .  
Ho, Billy O!  
The wind of spring is blowing.  
Fa la la la,  
Fa la la la.

### **Sketch 1: "Radio Night" (living room of the Coopers' New York apartment, 1948)**

*[Editor's Note: SAM and SUSAN are seated,  
following a family struggle over which radio  
program to listen to. The radio turning out to  
be malfunctioning, JOHNNY and ELIZABETH  
have exited to visit with friends.]*

### **[3] "Susan's Dream"**

#### **SAM**

Got something you want to do tonight?

#### **SUSAN**

*(pause looking front)*  
The store is closed. You?

#### **SAM**

Nah. No poker tonight.  
*(Pause. Looks at SUSAN)*  
Well, what do you say, we go to bed?

#### **SUSAN**

Might as well.

#### **SAM**

Well.  
*(Slaps arm of chair. Rises)*

#### **SUSAN**

*(Does the same – speaks at same time)*  
Well.

#### **SAM**

Goodnight.  
*(Starts right)*

#### **SUSAN**

*(at same time starts left)*  
Goodnight.

*(Blackout. QUARTETTE enters.)*

### **ONE MEMBER**

This next song is called "Susan's Dream" . . .

### **QUARTETTE**

. . . And it's about a woman  
Who might be any woman;  
And about an age  
That might be any age  
From the beginning till now:

Susan,  
She had a husband man to make a home for,  
Made it shine because she loved him so.  
Susan  
Got lucky with the Lord and had some  
children,  
Gave 'em all her heart to help 'em grow.

But now and then her man went drinkin';  
The kids got sick and cried till morn.  
And now and then Susan,  
Oh Susan plumb got tired of home and livin',  
And began to wish she'd not been born.  
Yes, she did. She wished she'd not been  
born.

And then one night  
She was all wearied out.  
The kids had worn her ragged  
And her man was not about.

And she flopped on her knees  
By the side of her bed;  
And she wiped her flaming eyes  
And looked up and said:

Oh God, let me sleep,  
And when I sleep, let me see  
A heavenly dream  
Of the way life could be.  
That's all that I want.  
So do that for me.  
When I sleep let me dream  
Of the way life should be.

Then she got into bed,  
And her achin' slipped away.  
And soon she was asleep,  
And she heard a voice say:  
Susan, oh Susan, I heard you pray.  
Susan, oh Susan, you shall have your way.  
There's good in your soul  
And so you shall see  
The dream that you want  
Of the way life should be.

And Susan  
Then dreamed she had a man to make a  
home for,  
Made it shine because she loved him so.  
Susan,  
She dreamed she had a pair of angel  
children,  
Gave 'em all her heart to help 'em grow.

And now and then her man went drinkin';  
The kids got sick or acted bad.  
And suddenly Susan  
Woke up and with a sob she started smilin',  
And she felt no longer blue and sad.  
Susan dreamed exactly what she had.

### **Sketch 2: Again" (bedroom of the Coopers' apartment)**

*[Editor's Note: SAM and SUSAN have just  
finished packing his bag.]*

### **[4] "I Remember It Well" (Reprise)**

#### **SUSAN**

This is our last goodbye, isn't it?

**SAM**

That's right.

**SUSAN**

I was thinking back on the first one. Do you remember that morning you left, Sam?

**SAM**

I remember it just as if it were yesterday.

**SUSAN**

Oh, the sun was high.

**SAM**

It was dark and gray.

**SUSAN**

It was mid-July.

**SAM**

No, an April day.

**SUSAN**

That's right.  
I remember it well.

**SAM**

I can see you there,  
In the morning glow;  
When you said, "take care,"  
How I did love you so.

**SAM**

You'll look after the children, won't you?

**SUSAN**

I'll do my best. And Sam, you can see them any time you want.

**SAM**

Thanks. Goodbye, Susan.

**SUSAN**

Goodbye, Sam.

**SAM**

Oh, I've asked Jim Collins to represent me. You can get anybody you want.  
*(Exits. SUSAN looks after him.)*

[5] **"Is It Him or Is It Me?"**

**SUSAN**

What happens now?  
What do I do?  
I never really thought  
we ever would be through.

I never dreamed  
I'd see the day,  
But maybe he is right;  
We're better off this way.

No! I'm not going to cry!  
I won't! What's done is done!  
It's time that I was happy!  
Oh, Sam, what have we done?

When I came home from work each evening  
As tired and worn as I could be,  
Why was he cold instead of tender?  
Is it him or is it me?

Why, when I need his arms around me,  
Did he pretend he didn't see?  
Why was he numb to all my needing?  
Is it him or is it me?

Why did we have all those senseless quarrels  
Lasting till the early dawn?  
Why would he go off sometimes and leave  
me  
Not even knowing  
Where he's going?  
Why were there days of no one talking?  
Why did we always disagree?  
Where did he go? Why has he gone and left me?  
Is it him or is it me?

*(JOHNNY enters slowly.)*

**JOHNNY**

Mom –

**SUSAN**

Hello, darling.

**JOHNNY**

Dad came in and said goodbye to me.

**SUSAN**

Oh!

**JOHNNY**

Funny. I think I'm going to miss him.

**SUSAN**

I want you to, Johnny.

**JOHNNY**

Oh, Mom.

**SUSAN**

I still can smile when I remember  
How very much in love were we.  
Now who's to blame it's dead and over?  
Is it him or is it me?

We used to share our ev'ry moment.  
We were as close as two can be.  
Why are we now just bitter strangers?  
Is it him or is it me?

Gone are all the idle dreams and fancies;  
Silent are the future plans.  
And I know when all the idle dreams  
Are torn into tatters, nothing matters.

No, nothing matters when it's over;  
The only thing is to be free.  
So what's the use of all this endless  
wond'ring:  
Is it him or is it me?

**Act 3: The Divorce Ballet**

*[Editor's Note: During this Act, a couple dances in the foreground while Sam and Susan silently prepare and sign divorce papers in the background.]*

[6] **"The Divorce Ballet"**

**Sketch 3: "A Hotel Room"**

*At Rise: SAM is sitting in chair, center. He is smoking a cigarette and reading a newspaper, while listening to a radio program.*

**ANNOUNCER**

*(coming through radio)*

Thank you, gentlemen, for your interesting comments on this important topic. And so, ladies and gentlemen, that concludes another evening of the Political Round Table. We hope you will join us again next week. Thank you and good night.

*(SAM turns off radio and throws paper on floor. He looks for an ashtray but, finding none, throws his cigarette on the floor. He stamps on it, leans back in the chair to relax, and smiles.)*

[7] **"This Is the Life"**

**SAM**

This is the life, the life for me!  
This is the way that life should be! I'm free!

I can be as sloppy as I damn well please,  
I can sprawl on the bed at my leisure and ease,  
I can throw my ashes all around the floor,  
I can read at night, I can even snore!  
The closet's mine, ev'ry hanger in there.  
No more loaded hooks do I ever share.  
The tub is mine! The sink is mine!  
The chair is mine! The room is mine!

Yes, siree! This is the life, the life for me!  
I'm free!

Sure, I miss the kids, I guess.  
I miss them more than I could ever say.  
But I am told that time will make it less,  
And I'll grow used to having them away.  
Outside of that, I'm glad I am alone.  
This is the sweetest living I have known.

No more the troubled, over-anxious thought  
About her mood, or what she's thinking of.  
No more the hopeless feeling I am caught.  
Oh yes, there's peace in having not to love!  
Yes, there is peace in hearing no one sigh!  
Yes, there is peace, and that's the reason  
why . . .

This is the life, the life for me!  
This is the way it ought to be!  
I'm free!

*(Picks up phone on small table)*

Room service!

It's great when you're hungry to phone below,  
And not have to wait till your wife . . . *(into phone)* Hello?

Oh, this is Samu'l Cooper,

In seven twenty-eight.

I'd like to order dinner

Before it is too late.

I'll have shrimps and steak,

Make it medium-well,

And the richest dessert

In the whole hotel.

But speed is important.

Bring it on the run.

I'm hungry! . . . What?

Yes, I said for one!

You heard me! Damn it! Service for one!

*(Hangs up phone, stands still)*

Why do they ask me ev'ry time I phone?

What's so bizarre about a man alone?

Sure, I know it's not ideal.

I still have thoughts of her I can't forget.

But that's a thing they say that time will heal.

I wonder why it hasn't done it yet.

I wonder why the mem'ries never go.

I even think they're starting in to grow.

Now cut it out! Go out and have a whirl!

You know the spots! Go out and have a  
spree!

You've got a phone! Go get yourself a girl!

Go on you dope! You're absolutely free!

*(About to pick up the phone when suddenly  
a thought stops him. He puts receiver slowly  
back on hook.)*

I wish I were free of that dream I keep  
dreaming:

The three of them swimming, then starting to  
drown –

And I'm somewhere else, and I don't hear  
them screaming . . .

And thousands of people just watch them go  
down.

*(He shakes himself out of it.)*

No! I'm not sitting in tonight!

I'm going out where the lights are bright!

*(He picks up the phone violently.)*

Room service!

I've got my freedom! The thing is done!

But what's the sense if I don't have fun?

*(Into phone)*

This is Samu'l Cooper! The order's dead!

You've been too long! I'm going out instead!

*(Slams down phone)*

I'm going out.

I need a change of view.

There must be something

Out there to do!

I got my freedom,

The perfect life!

Don't have a fam'ly,

A home, a wife!

This is the life, the life for me!

This is the way it ought to be!

I'm free! I'm free! I'm free!

#### **Act 4: "The Illusion Minstrel Show"**

#### **[8] "The Minstrel Show"**

#### **CON MAN**

There's a far land, I'm told,  
Where I'll find a field of gold,

But here I'll stay with you.

And they say there's an isle

Deep with clover,

Where your heart wears a smile

All day through.

*(SAM and SUSAN have entered from  
opposite sides.)*

#### **CON MAN**

Hey, you two! You look like they threw the  
book of blues atcha.

#### **SAM**

Maybe.

#### **CON MAN**

Then I got whatcha need.

I got the stuff that'll take you out of yourself  
and make you hap-hap-happy you're alive. I

got rainbow medicine, baby. Rose water that  
goes down smooth. You don't even have to  
chew. Interested?

#### **SUSAN**

Sure.

#### **SAM**

I might be.

*(CON MAN quickly gives her a card.)*

#### **SUSAN**

*(looking at card and reading)*

Illusions? What's that?

#### **CON MAN**

Come along with me and you'll know.

I got a rainbow waitin' below.

If you are all jangled,

Your lives are tangled,

I'll dig you outta your woe!

Come on along where livin' is bright!

Where there is sunshine, sweetness, and  
light.

Where are we goin'? Don't you know?

To the Illusion Minstrel Show!

#### **MINSTRELS**

We're selling sunshine, sweetness and light.

We're makin' livin' easy and bright.

If you are all tangled,

Your nerves are jangled,

We'll get you straightened out right.

If you are feelin' weepy and low,

We'll dig you out from under your woe.

So bend an ear a while

And lubricate your smile;

We're the Illusion Minstrel Show.

#### **INTERLOCUTOR**

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Tonight we got some fixin' here, some fixin'  
to do.

Our two end men are in a mess and a stew.

And so we gotta help 'em,

Buckle down and help 'em.

#### **MINSTRELS**

We gotta make 'em happy here before we  
are through.

#### **INTERLOCUTOR**

Sue, how're you feelin'?

#### **SUSAN**

I'm miserable.

#### **INTERLOCUTOR**

Sam, how 'bout you?

#### **SAM**

I'm miserable.

#### **INTERLOCUTOR**

You see, what did I tell you, they are both in  
a stew.

But we will make 'em happy here before we  
are through.

#### **MINSTRELS**

So Sue and Sam, get ready, get ready to be  
happy.

We're gonna make you happy here before we  
are through.

#### **INTERLOCUTOR**

The reason you're blue

Has nothing to do

With whether you're single or you are a wife.

Everybody's depressed

From the east to the west;

And the reason for it all is simply life.

Do you catch?

#### **SUSAN**

Keep pitchin'.

#### **INTERLOCUTOR**

Now life cannot be handled;

It just cannot be handled.

And so we have arrived at this conclusive  
conclusion,

That life must be avoided;

It just must be avoided.

You gotta run away into a world of illusion.

Do you catch?

**SUSAN**

Throw that one again.

**INTERLOCUTOR**

We've come to the conclusion, conclusive conclusion,  
The way you can be happy's in a world of illusion.

Got it ?

**SUSAN**

Well . . . gimme . . . an illusion.

**MINSTRELS**

You're gonna jump with happiness before you go,  
We're the Illusion Minstrel Show.

**INTERLOCUTOR**

Introducing one of our most popular and easiest sets of illusions, Miss Horoscope and Miss Mysticism – better known as the fortune-telling sisters. Ladies!

**MISS HOROSCOPE and MISS MYSTICISM**

Oh, be like us and pay a daily call  
To Madame Zuzu,  
For life is simple when you leave it all to Madame Zuzu.  
For when our men have left us flat,  
She cheers us, saying that  
They were never meant for us:  
We're Pisces, they're Taurus.

And if you are a victim of divorce,  
Says Madame Zuzu,  
It's not your fault, it was a mystic force,  
Says Madame Zuzu.  
For cards and fate  
Rule what you do,  
So why should you be sad?  
Oh come and be relieved with Madame Zuzu.

**SUSAN**

Were you listenin', Sam, to what the sisters claim?  
Now according to them we're neither one to blame.

And all we have to do is sit around and wait  
Until a better day when there's a change in our fate.

**SAM**

Well, listen here. They're more confused than we.  
One has had two husbands and the other three.  
One husband left about a week ago  
'Cause on their wedding night the horoscope said: NO!

**SUSAN**

Sure 'nough?

**SAM**

Sure 'nough!

**INTERLOCUTOR**

How're you feelin', Sue?

**SUSAN**

I'm miserable.

**INTERLOCUTOR**

Sam, how 'bout you?

**SAM**

I'm miserable.  
Ain'tcha got a suitable illusion for me?

**INTERLOCUTOR**

Why, sure we got another one. Just listen and see!

**MINSTRELS**

We said we'd make you happy;  
We said we'd make you happy;  
We said we'd make you happy, so just listen and see!

**INTERLOCUTOR**

Introducing one of our most intellectual and corniest illusions of happiness – Mr. Cynic.  
Sir, the floor is yours.

**MR. CYNIC**

Takin' no chances on nothin';  
'Cause nothin' is worth more than that.  
Lovin' is somethin' for suckers.  
I kiss 'em and then leave 'em flat.

People only want to hurtcha.  
Let 'em all go and fall in the sea.

For I am takin' no chances on no one;  
And that way they can't bother me.

Takin' no chances on women,  
'Cause women ain't worth all the pain.  
If you think a woman is faithful,  
Have someone examine your brain.

Love's an item that you pay for.  
Oh, you are better far bein' free.  
Oh, I am fed up with people and livin',  
And, funny, they're fed up with me!

**SAM**

He's right! The trouble is that people feel too deep.  
So the only thing to do is put your feelin's to sleep.  
Then you can't get hurt, and that's the life for me.

**SUSAN**

Now Sam, he's talking through his H–A–T.  
For a cynic is a man who craves a diamond pin;  
But because he can't afford it, says it's only tin.  
And a woman may have the finest bosom known;  
But a turned-down man will say they're not her own.

**SAM**

You mean, sour grapes?

**SUSAN**

That's his name!

**SAM**

My! My! My!

**INTERLOCUTOR**

Now, lookie here, my friends, there's something wrong;  
We gave you two escapes to help you get along.  
We gave you mysticism,  
And then some cynicism;  
By now you should be feelin' really happy and strong.

**SUSAN**

Well, sir, the two illusions that you gave us won't do.

**INTERLOCUTOR**

All right; I'll give you one that will be perfect for you.

**MINSTRELS**

We said we'd make you happy!  
We said we'd make you happy!  
So here is one illusion that is perfect for you.

**INTERLOCUTOR**

Introducing our most celebrated illusion among the ladies: Miss Ideal Man.  
Miss Ideal Man is well known by all movie-goers, radio fans, and lovers of popular songs.  
Sue, pay attention. You'll like this one.  
She's irresistible.

**MISS IDEAL MAN**

Love is really what they say it is  
On the screen, on the screen.  
Oh, a lovely holiday it is,  
Like the motion picture you have seen.

**SUSAN**

Now see here, child, if that's what love can be,  
Why has it been the mess that it has been for me?

**MISS IDEAL MAN**

I will tell you why it isn't yet  
A delight, a delight.  
It is simply that you haven't met  
Your ideal man, Mister Right!

**SUSAN**

Mister Right?

**MISS IDEAL MAN**

Ah! Mister Right.  
Love is a dream you will discover,  
Ha ha ha ha ha,  
When you have found your perfect lover,  
Ha ha ha ha ha.  
So you must learn to wait and wait,  
(Ah!)

Until you find  
(Ah!)  
Your ideal mate.  
(Ah!)

**SUSAN**  
Mister Right?

**MISS IDEAL MAN**  
Of course. Mister Right!

**SUSAN**  
Why yes, you're right! That is what love can be;  
Now all I have to do is find the man for me!

**INTERLOCUTOR**  
Honey, are you happy?

**SUSAN**  
Finally I'm happy.

**MINSTRELS**  
Now she is as happy as a woman can be!

[9] **“Mr. Right & Finale”**

**INTERLOCUTOR**  
Do you know what your Mister Right will be like?

**SUSAN**  
Yes. I know.  
He will be a perfect dream of manhood.  
He'll be ev'rything and more a man should.  
Tender as a flow'r,  
He'll look like Tyrone Power.  
That's all I want of Mister Right.  
The year we wed, he'll make a million and retire;  
Then we'll lead a life of mad desire.  
He'll be part of me;  
I'll be part of he;  
It will be love at first sight,  
The day I find Mister Right.

He'll father me;  
And mother me;  
And sister me;  
And brother me;  
And in his arms he'll crush me,  
And constantly mush me.  
And he won't mind if I spend all his earnings,

Long as I'm releasing all my yearnings.  
He will live for me;  
I will live for he;  
And we will live ev'ry night,  
When I have found Mister Right.

Yes, I know that somewhere in this wide world there is an ideal man for me. And he'll awaken me – and complete me. With Mister Right, I'll never have to explain a thing! He'll always know. We won't have to say a word to each other for years. If I'm upset because I had trouble with the saleslady in the lingerie department on the second floor of Gimbels, I won't have to tell him. One look in my eyes and he'll know I had trouble with the saleslady in the lingerie department on the second floor of Gimbels. And when I make a little mistake – as whom doesn't – he'll always be kind and understanding. If I give away all his new clothes by mistake, he'll smile. And when I break his razor shaving my legs, he'll only be amused. Yes, that's Mister Right. My darling Mister Right.

Oh! The moment when we meet I'll tumble.  
Ah! I'll see him and I'll start to crumble.  
He will say “hello”  
And boom! Inside I'll know,  
At last I've found my Mister Right.

He'll take my hand and bing!  
My ev'ry thought will scatter.  
Then my heart will give a zing!  
And shatter.

Bells will start to ring.  
Ting-a-ling-a-ling.  
And we'll get married that night!  
Bang! And I have found Mr. Right.

He'll make not one mistake,  
He'll be solid good,  
Just like I dreamed  
He always could.  
Not ever sweet or arty,  
But strong and Bogarty.

One look and I will feel I'm in a cocktail shaker,  
For I'll know that I have met my maker.  
He'll have no match!

So on him I'll latch  
The moment he is in sight.  
That handy, dandy, dreamy, screamy man –  
Mister Right!

**SUSAN**  
What are you laughing at? You're Mister Wrong!

**SAM**  
And you expect to find a guy like that?

**SUSAN**  
Sure do!

**SAM**  
Ask her if she found him!

**SUSAN**  
Didja, honey?

**MISS IDEAL MAN**  
Why, no, I tried – but –

**SAM**  
Go on! Ask some more!  
Did you?

**GIRL ONE**  
No!

**SAM**  
Did you?

**GIRL TWO**  
No!

**SAM**  
Did you?

**GIRL THREE**  
No! Of course not!

**SUSAN**  
*(breaking in, to INTERLOCUTOR)*  
Say, what is this? What are you selling here?

**SAM**  
You know what he's sellin'. You heard 'im.  
Rainbow medicine! Rose water that goes down smooth! They're singing illusion songs!

**INTERLOCUTOR**  
Don't you like 'em?

**SAM**  
No! They don't work! Come on, Honey, this isn't for us! We gotta find something better.

Susan, I want to hear a true song.  
Susan, we've got to find a true song,  
One song that sings about forever more . . .

**SUSAN**  
Where, Sam? There's no song like that anymore.

**SAM**  
Sure there is! But you'll never find it here.

Susan! I want to hear a real song.  
Susan, we've got to find a real song,

One song that sings how near the shore and sea,  
And that's how I know true love can be.

**SUSAN**  
What do we do, Sam? I don't even know.  
Where do we look? Where do we go?

**SAM**  
*(points upstage)*  
Up there! The big trick!

**MINSTRELS**  
You better watch, he's leading you wrong.  
You better stay here where you belong!  
Or we will leave you be  
To face reality!  
And, man, reality  
Is awful agony.

**SAM**  
Are we gonna try it?

**SUSAN**  
I will if you do!

**SAM**  
Come on!

*(SAM and SUSAN exit right and left, respectively, to go on tightrope platform.)*

**MINSTRELS**

It's a catastrophe  
To face reality –

**INTERLOCUTOR**

You'll never make it, you two!

**MINSTRELS**

You'll see reality  
Is really misery –

**INTERLOCUTOR**

It's too tough!

**MINSTRELS**

REALITY –

**INTERLOCUTOR**

Do you hear me? It's too tough!

**MINSTRELS**

Is awful misery. Reality – reality –  
Reality – Reality – Reality – Reality – Reality  
– Reality – Reality –

*(SUSAN and SAM are revealed to be standing  
on opposing platforms.)*

**SAM**

Susan, can you see me?

**SUSAN**

I see you, Sam!

**SAM**

How do you feel?

**SUSAN**

I'm nervous. Aren't you?

**SAM**

Sure. It's a tough trick getting close enough  
to touch again.

**SUSAN**

I would have joined them if you hadn't  
stopped me.

**SAM**

So would I.

**SUSAN**

Why did you stop me, Sam?

**SAM**

I just couldn't see my wife falling for all of  
that rot and –

**SUSAN**

But I'm not your wife anymore, Sam.

**SAM**

You'll always be my wife. We belong to each  
other.

**SUSAN**

I know that now. Sam, I can get used to  
anything but being without you.

**SAM**

That's what you said once before.

**SUSAN**

I guess I still mean it. I'm ready, Sam.

**SAM**

Atta Girl – take a deep breath –  
*(Between SUSAN and SAM is a tightrope,  
and they are ready to start towards each  
other. CHILDREN enter and stand down  
center, backs to audience. SAM and SUSAN  
start walking toward each other, carefully  
balancing.)*

**SAM**

Are you all right?

**SUSAN**

So far.

**SAM**

*(He almost slips)*  
Oops!

**SUSAN**

Careful!

**SAM**

*(taking a step)*  
Don't lose balance.

**SUSAN**

I won't.

**SAM**

I'll meet you halfway.

**SUSAN**

I love you, Sam.

**SAM**

I love you too, honey.

**SAM**

The kids are watching!

**SUSAN**

Can we make it?

**SAM**

Make it? We've got to!

*(They are a short distance from each other  
as the curtain falls.)*

**THE END****[10] Bows****ADDITIONAL TRACKS**

*[Editor's Note: Two numbers cut prior to the  
New York run were not included in Opera  
North's production, but were recorded  
onstage at the Grand Theatre at that time.  
"You Understand Me So," was intended  
to be sung by Susan to Bill Taylor in the  
Cruise sketch at the end of Part I. Shortly  
before the New Haven opening, the creative  
team attenuated their shipboard flirtation,  
eliminating Susan's rendezvous in Bill's cabin  
and the song that went with it. "The Locker  
Room" is a curious number, performed  
immediately before the Divorce Ballet. It  
was scabrous by the standard of 1940s  
musicals: Lerner's lyrics leave no doubt that  
the "Locker Room Boys" frequent prostitutes  
and suffer from diminished libido. Sam's  
appearance within what otherwise appeared  
to be another vaudeville routine breached the  
hitherto rigorously maintained division and  
alternation between "sketches" and "acts."  
His conversations with a divorce lawyer,  
Freebish, accomplished little more than  
unearned laughs about slippery attorneys  
unwilling to discuss their fees. The real-life  
attorney John Wharton, an associate of Weill's  
in the Playwrights' Producing Company,  
diagnosed the problem the day after the New  
Haven opening: "You abandon the technique  
of using vaudeville acts to explain the coming  
scene; you jump from symbolism to reality,  
and back to symbolism without warning."  
Present-day audiences might find this less  
unsettling, but Lerner and Weill were probably  
wise to cut this inordinately long number after  
the first few Boston performances, when  
critics identified it as a misfire.]*

**[11] "You Understand Me So"****Part One, Sketch 5: "The Cruise"****BILL**

I think I know you, Susan.

**SUSAN**

I think you do too.

You look at me, gentle and kind,  
And you can see what's on my mind.  
I saw a moment ago  
You understand me so.

You have a way  
Warmer than spring.  
You always say  
Just the right thing.  
With ev'ry smile do you show  
You understand me so.

You so near  
Makes the fears inside me fly.  
You can hear  
Ev'ry silent sigh.

For  
You made me feel,  
Right from the start,  
A very real  
Peace in my heart.  
And suddenly do I know:

You understand me so.  
If I stayed, what would happen after that?

**BILL**  
Nothing. We'd probably never see each  
other again.

**SUSAN**  
Is that the way it should be?

**BILL**  
What other way is there?  
Why?

**SUSAN**  
When you're near  
All the fears inside me fly.  
You can hear  
Ev'ry silent sigh.

For  
You made me feel,  
Right from the start,  
A very real  
Peace in my heart.  
For, darling, this do I know:  
You understand me so.

**[12] "The Locker Room"**

**Part Two, Act 2: The Locker Room Boys**

*Scene: A typical locker room of a country club, gymnasium, or Turkish bath.*

*At Rise: BOB, PETE, BILL, HANK, THE TUMBLERS, and the FOUR ANONYMOUS MEN walk on, in front of the traveler. Some are stripped to the waist, others are in their shorts only; and one or two wear terrycloth robes.*

**ALL**  
What is the great invention of the era  
Where ev'ry man can go and be a man?  
And where your wife can call but you don't  
hear-a?  
That's the locker room!

When as a father you're a bloody failure;  
When you're ignored as leader of the clan;  
Where can you come and still have people  
hail yer?  
To the locker room!

Here you can be once again  
The mightiest man of modern men.  
And here is the simple reason why:  
All you have to do is lie.

**BILL**  
*(speaking directly and confidentially to the audience)*  
Isn't it easy?

**ALL**  
Where can you walk around without your  
clothes on  
And not have someone stare at you in  
gloom?  
Well, gather 'round, my friends, and see what  
goes on  
In the locker room! The locker room!

*(Traveler opens, revealing the locker room. THEY ALL turn and pivot to the locker room, then go in and take their places. The telephone is ringing. PETE answers it.)*

**PETE**  
Locker room . . .

*(Calls)*  
Hank, it's for you.

**HANK**  
Thanks.  
*(He crosses and takes the phone.)*  
Hello? Who is this? . . . My who? . . . How  
do you spell it? . . . W-I-F . . . Ooooo! My  
wife!!! Hello, Poopsie . . . I didn't recognize  
your voice. It was so soft. How were things  
at the office today, Poopsie? . . . Really?  
. . . How many fenders did you bang out?  
. . . My, you must be tired. They shouldn't  
ask you to swing an eighty-pound hammer.  
Don't they realize you're a woman? . . .  
Oh, they don't . . . Well, why don't you tell  
them? Maybe there's  
a sixty-pounder you can use. . . Where are  
you now, Poopsie? . . . Oh, I'll be along .  
. . . I know I'm late, Poopsie, but I . . . But,  
Poopsie . . . But, Poop . . . Yes, dear . . .  
yes, dear . . . Goodbye, dear.  
*(He hangs up. The others have been standing by pretending they weren't listening.)*

**PETE**  
Who was that?

**HANK**  
My wife. She wants me to come home.

**PETE**  
What did you tell her?

**HANK**  
I told her to go to hell. I'll come home when  
I'm good and ready.

**ALL**  
Oh my, what a brute that woman is!  
Whenever she bats an eye, it's his.  
But here he is one courageous guy.  
And all he has to do is lie.

**HANK**  
*(to the audience)*  
Isn't that easy? And I feel so good.

*(The line breaks and THEY go back to a characteristic pose.)*

**ALL**  
And when your pride has suffered  
indignations  
Because your wife is frigid as a clam,  
Where can you go and share humiliations?  
To the locker room! The locker room!

**SAM**  
Can it be done quietly?

**FREEBISH**  
Quietly? Did you read about the Tucker  
divorce last week?

**SAM**  
Yes.

**FREEBISH**  
Every paper said it was quiet. I handled that.  
Remember, I'm here to protect you, Cooper.  
Now let's get some facts. Any children?

**SAM**  
Two. By the way, what'll your legal charge  
be?

**FREEBISH**  
Don't worry about that.

*(SVEN, the masseur, enters pushing a massage table. SVEN has the girth of the Dome of St. Peter's.)*

**SVEN**  
Gentlemen, who's first?

**PETE**  
I think I am, Sven.

**SVEN**  
*(rubbing his hands in anticipation)*  
Well, hop on!  
*(PETE gets on the table and lies on his back. SVEN surveys him with a sadistic gleam in his eye. He begins to sing, illustrating his song as he goes along.)*

Where the manubrium and gladiolus meet  
and form a junction,  
I insert my knotty knuckles till the junction  
doesn't function.

Then I turn to his lymphatic glands and squeeze 'em all like hell!

**PETE**

Ooh!

**SVEN**

Ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho! This is swell!  
Then I tear a pair of ligaments to keep them all from kinking,  
And I shove his floating kidney till the kidney starts in sinking.  
Then I thumb his old umbilicus and batter up his spleen!

**PETE**

Oh!

**SVEN**

Ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho! This is keen!  
Over!

*(PETE turns over. SVEN stares down at his back with wild excitement.)*

Ah! Look at all these vertebrae!  
Ah! This'll be a holiday!  
Here I go upon his spine!  
Ho ho ho ho ho ho ho!  
I'm glad it isn't mine.  
Ho ho ho ho ho ho ho!

First I crack his sacroiliac until he is sciatic;  
Then I click a pair of clavicles to make him more rheumatic;  
Then I pound him and I pull him and I yank him and I jerk!

**PETE**

Ah!

**SVEN**

Ho ho ho ho! Ho ho ho ho! Ho ho ho ho ho ho ho!  
How I love my work!

**SAM**

I'd like to give them half my income.

**FREEBISH**

Half?!

**SAM**

Yes. I figure I'll need the other half to live on and for taxes and insurance.

**FREEBISH**

Man, you're insane! They're not entitled to half your income.

**SAM**

But it isn't very large. And I want to do it. They'll need it.

**FREEBISH**

That's not the point. A quarter is plenty. Now listen to me. I'm here to protect you.

**SAM**

By the way, what'll your fee be?

**SVEN**

Okay. You're done.  
*(PETE starts to get up.)*  
How do you feel?

**PETE**

Much better.  
*(He stands up, walks a step, and falls flat on his face. BILL comes over and looks down at him.)*

**BILL**

Now what the hell's the matter with him?

**HANK**

He's not as manly as the rest of us.

*(While SVEN picks PETE up and carries him off over his shoulder, pushing the table before him, the BOYS come down and sing:)*

**ALL**

There's not a game or sport that we don't shine in.  
We shoot a round of golf in under par.  
We catch a whale each time we drop a line in,  
In the locker room!

*(TUMBLERS now step out of line. The others withdraw and TUMBLERS proceed to do their act, flexing and showing their muscles as they go.)*

We brave the coldest weather coat- and hatless,  
And couldn't be more healthy than we are.  
We walk around like Hercules and Atlas,  
In the locker room! The locker room!

**FREEBISH**

You've got to be a realist about this, Cooper.  
You've got to think about your wife as your mortal enemy.

**SAM**

But she's not. She's a good woman.

**FREEBISH**

Don't be sentimental. She's going to try and put a big bite into you, or my name isn't Harry Freebish.

**SAM**

By the way, what will your fee be?

**BILL**

*(coughing)*  
Damn it! I think I caught a cold last night.

**BOB**

What a shame!

**BILL**

Yeah. You know, it's hard to get out of a warm bed and go home.

**BOB**

Got a new girl, Bill?

**BILL**

No. The same one I've had all week.  
I tell you, Bob, she's absolutely wild about me. Last night when I was leaving, she looked up at me gratefully and said: "Bill, you're so wonderful. From now on, call me direct."

*(THEY ALL immediately march down to the footlights. That is, all but BILL.)*

**ALL**

At love he is one colossal yawn!  
A bank account that's overdrawn.  
But here he is one romantic guy.  
And all he has to do is lie.

**BILL**

*(to the audience)*  
What could be simpler?  
All when as a caveman you are caving ova,  
And as a lover you are out of bloom,  
Where can you come and be a Casanova?  
To the locker room! The locker room!

We're the sexiest men you can find.  
But all of it's here in the mind.  
With our own wedded mate,  
Our av'rage is nought.  
But, boy, are we great  
With women we've bought!  
We're the sexiest men women know.  
We pay them to act like it's so.

*(A QUARTET forms and sings nostalgically.)*

**QUARTET**

In our small misty mountain retreat  
Where we go ev'ry weekend to cheat,  
There we're cozy and warm,  
Far from marital storm,  
With the fields made for meand'ring,  
And the cabins for philand'ring.

Take me back to that hill of delight  
Where a man can be king for a night.  
Bless that hideaway where we go  
To repair our crippled ego.  
Life is sweet  
In our mountain retreat.

**ALL**

We're the sexiest men on the walk,  
But all of it's here in our talk.  
We are second to none  
In verbal amour.  
And, boy, is it fun to be immature!  
We're the sexiest men to be had.  
And if you believe it, you're mad!

*(THEY quickly return to the tableau they formed at the beginning of the scene. THEY hold it as the curtains close.)*



Vaudeville Act 4 in Part I, the "Three Tots" observing that "Mother's Getting Nervous" (Lottie Gray, Felicity Moore and Amber Midgley with Joshua da Costa as their "Mother" prop). (Photo: James Glossop)

Joshua da Costa, Andrew Randall, Masimba Ushe and Will Hopkins as the Quartette in "Economics," Act 3 in Part I. (Photo: James Glossop)



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Anthony Kraus, Chorus Master  
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Will Hopkins, Amber Midgley, Felicity Moore,  
Andrew Randall, Louie Stow, Masimba Ushe

Producer: Johannes Kernmayer (Capriccio)  
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