DON'T GIVE THE NAME A BAD PLACE Types and Stereotypes in American Musical Theater 1870-1900

by Richard M. Sudhalter

Stereotyping is one of society's constants. It is a kind of mental shorthand, denying the basic anarchy of individuality by offering in its stead neatness and order, the comfort of consistency.

In a world of stereotypes everything has a name and place, a quick, simple identification to stuff into the mind's filing cabinet. And woe unto those who dare hold up the action by thinking in terms not of polarities, but of gradations or by contemplating specifics before generalities.

This is nowhere so apparent as in the treatment of outsiders—chiefly racial and ethnic minorities by majority host cultures. As principal recipient of mass immigration, the United States has been an unusually effective incubator for cultural stereotyping.

Kike. Mick. Wop and guinea. Spic. Polack. Nigger, coon, darky, and jigaboo. Chink and, latterly, slope or gook. Each a code word, each delivering an unspoken but highly inflammatory negative emotional charge.

Each, too, proceeding from a body of preconception—sometimes based loosely on fact, more often on misinformation—formed and hardened with time and use. From the medieval caricature of the hook-nosed Jew to today's Polish and Hungarian jokes, the ultimate effect of such cultural stereotyping is to demean and belittle.

Little wonder that in early twentieth-century America minority children or the children of immigrants seemed willing to go to any extremes to deny the past.

For some it was easier than for others. A change of name; careful tailoring of pronunciation and grammar; the nose job and other plastic surgery; a move to the affluent facelessness of the big-city suburbs. All these offered at least superficial assimilation into a new identity—or at least anonymity—within American mass culture.

Unless you weren't white.

"An Italian, a Pole—he can come here with an accent and he loses the accent and he's white. As long as he's cool and careful, you'll never know that he wasn't an American, 'cause he's white.

"But a black is always there because he has the black paint job, you see, and everyone can step over him. He's always isolated, and he's vulnerable all the time."

The speaker is Danny Barker: jazz guitarist and historian, raconteur, and, on four selections in this set, singer. His remarks during a recent conversation point up a basic disparity between the songs he performs here and other minority material, as sung by Max Morath and Clifford Jackson. The German, or "Dutch," stereotypes implicit in the songs of Gus Williams disappeared with the coming

of World War I, to be replaced by far uglier and more complex ones. The Irish were assimilated so completely that in 1961 the grandson of an Irish immigrant realized the greatest of all bygone American dreams—election to the presidency of the United States.

But black remains black, and relations between the black and white communities are still very much an issue. It is hardly surprising that the racial stereotypes embodied in some of these songs survived in popular music far into the twentieth century.

"You talk about these times, and bein' free, and those times back when those songs were written," Barker said. "Well, we're still goin' through those times. Listen--they're still givin' us this thing about this is the first black to do this, or the first to do that. You never hear about the first Pole or first Italian or whatever. You want to know about our progress? Think of that ol' hourglass, with one grain of sand at a time. That's us."

In the introduction to *Nobody*, her perceptive biography of the black singer-comedian Bert Williams, Ann Charters writes:

To some extent every immigrant group found its background ridiculed on the music hall stage, but for the Negro special conditions of prejudice, hostility and ignorance insured a unique longevity to the stereotyped portrait. For over one hundred years the impression of the Negro as racially and socially inferior was fostered by legions of comedians in blackface. Originating in the white man's "imitations" of Negroes in nineteenth century minstrel shows, the caricature took such firm hold on the American imagination that audiences expected any man with dark skin, no matter what his background or inclinations, to be a "real coon."

To which can be added Williams's own observation that "... in truth, I have never been able to discover that there was anything disgraceful in being a colored man. But I have often found it inconvenient--in America."

It was always inconvenient, even in the post-Civil War heyday of the traveling minstrel shows, which provided valuable apprenticeship and exposure for dozens of prominent black musicians, among them James Bland and William Christopher Handy. There were few other outlets for the talents of newly free blacks, and as a result, according to Eileen Southern in *The Music of Black Americans,* minstrel troupes drew hordes of songwriters, singers, dancers, instrumentalists, and comedians.

Some companies grew large and popular enough to travel and live well and to perform under comfortable circumstances, but even then there were attendant ironies. In antebellum times the minstrel show had been a white man's medium, with whites in blackface caricaturing what they and their audiences saw as the characteristics of the black man: oversize red lips, bulging eyes, exaggerated motion and gait, gaudy costuming. After the war black minstrels found they had to imitate the white man's burlesque of them in order to succeed. "Nothing seemed more absurd," said George Walker, Bert Williams' stage partner, "than to see a colored man making himself ridiculous in order to portray himself."

Yet it was a living, often a good one. It offered fame-and, for several figures of exceptional talents,

a chance to he heard and recognized internationally.

This was certainly true of James A. Bland. As a songwriter he is now regarded as the successor and easy equal to Stephen Foster, who died in 1864, when Bland was ten. Bland's "De Golden Wedding" (Track 7) pays affectionate homage to his days as a member of Haverly's Genuine Colored Minstrels, with references to such Haverly stalwarts as Jim Grace, Billy Kersands, and Tom Mackintosh. Kersands, who befriended the young Bland and won his lifelong gratitude, originated such dances as the soft shoe, or Virginia Essence, usually performed to Foster's "Old Folks at Home."

The Haverly troupe's travels took them abroad, where Bland found audiences willing to hear him not merely as a darky in blackface, but as a songwriter, banjoist, and singer rated as one of the most musically influential Americans of the time, along with Foster and bandmaster John Philip Sousa.

Yet though Bland's songs survived his death in 1911, his name and reputation did not; he died penniless and forgotten—even while millions were singing his "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny," "In the Evening by the Moonlight," "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers," and others, often crediting them to Foster. Tom Fletcher, himself a veteran black minstrel man who lived into the early nineteen-fifties, noted in his autobiography, *One Hundred Years of the Negro in Show Business*, that "Foster's friends and heirs kept his name before the public, a privilege Bland did not enjoy." Bland's unmarked grave in an outlying suburb of Philadelphia was rediscovered twenty-seven years after his death.

Though Bland lived and worked in a world of stereotypes, it would be hard to imagine a black further from the minstrel-show image of the shuffling, illiterate coon. Born in Flushing, New York, of college-educated parents, he mixed freely—and made many friends—among whites. One avowed admirer was a young cellist named Victor Herbert, recently arrived from Ireland, who on hearing "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny" resolved to investigate the music of his new land more deeply.

As the century neared its end, minstrel shows absorbed and adapted a dance that hadn't been seen in public since plantation days—with unexpected results. Almost overnight, the traditional cakewalk became a national fad.

In his autobiography, Tom Fletcher provides a colorful and informative description of plantation cakewalking:

Sometimes on pleasant evenings, boards would be laid down for an impromptu stage before the verandah so the guests could have a good view of the proceedings and a real shindig would take place with singing and dancing. The *cake walk*, in that section and at that time, was known as the *chalk-line walk*. There was no prancing, just a straight walk on a path made by turns and so forth, along which the dancers made their way with a pail of water on their heads. The couple that was the most erect and spilled the least water or no water at all was the winner.

According to most historical opinion, the word *cakewalk* may have referred to the reward bestowed on the winning couple at such festivities; later extravagances of name, such as "peregrinations for the pastry," would appear to corroborate this.

By 1890 the chalk-line walk had become the cakewalk and was being done ever more elaborately in an increasing number of all-black shows, usually to the accompaniment of a syncopated new style of piano playing first known as "jig piano," later as ragtime. National championship contests featuring cakewalking done to ragtime became annual events at Madison Square Garden in New York. Out of these developments came a composer who, like James Bland, had done his apprenticeship in the minstrel shows, but who was to gain his greatest popularity in a far more controversial way.

His name was Ernest Hogan, and he was responsible for a new syncopated tune that caught the public fancy--and whose title, "All Coons Look Alike to Me," became a lasting and damaging racial joke. Hogan later insisted he had used the word "coon" because the raccoon is "a very smart animal"; but his explanation seems doubtful in light of considerable evidence that "coon" was already in widespread use as a derogatory synonym for "Negro" at the time he wrote the song.

"All Coons Look Alike to Me" spawned dozens of imitations, each seemingly more offensive than the last: "He's Just a Little Nigger, but He's Mine, All Mine," "Coon, Coon, How I Wish My Color Would Change," "You May Be a Hawaiian on Broadway, but You're Just Another Nigger to Me." The list is endless, even including comedy sketches with such titles as "A Trip to Coontown," and "On Jolly Coon-ey Island."

This development seems all the more ignominious--especially to today's sensibilities--in that Hogan was black, as were several other prominent writers of "coon songs." Yet Tom Fletcher, with another generation's perspective, saw things differently:

Hogan has been severely criticized for using the word "coon." I myself don't particularly like such use of the word either, but the fact remains that the combination of the word and the new rhythm created a big sensation and gave show business of that era a badly needed shot in the arm.

He echoes--and quotes--Hogan's own defense of the craze as something economically good for blacks at a time when money and morale in show business were waning, and as something that helped bring ragtime into the open as an independent, ultimately popular form, paving the way for jazz. There may be truth in such a contention, but the constant humiliation and debasement inherent in the coon-song caricatures had a demoralizing effect.

James Weldon Johnson, brother of the celebrated black musician J. Rosamund Johnson and himself a songwriter of distinction, observed in his classic study *Black Manhattan:*

The status of the Negro as a citizen had been steadily declining for twenty-five years; and at the opening of the twentieth century his civil state was, in some respect, worse than at the close of the Civil War. . . . The outlook was dark and discouraging. The Negro himself had in large measure lost heart. . . . The general spirit of the race was one of hopelessness or acquiescence. The only way to survival seemed along the road of sheer opportunism and of conformity to the triumphant materialism of the age.

All of which helps explain the sense of self-justification in the protestations of Hogan and other

black contributors to the "coon" fad.

This curious period even managed to produce some popular music of real distinction--though it can be argued that the composers would have written well under any circumstances. Easily the outstanding figure to emerge was the violinist-conductor-composer Will Marion Cook, whose "Darktown Is Out Tonight" is included in this collection (Track 9).

Cook was born in Washington, D.C., to college-educated parents. He had studied at Oberlin College, in Berlin, and under Dvorák during the Czech composer's tenure at the National Conservatory of Music in New York. By the time Cook turned his attention to popular music, he had become a respected figure among black musicians in New York.

In 1898 Cook collaborated with the poet Paul Laurence Dunbar on *Clorindy, the Origin of the Cakewalk*, the first all-black musical comedy to succeed on Broadway--and one featuring songs full of "coon" stereotypes. In later years Cook recalled his mother's consternation on hearing him working out one of *Clorindy's* hits, "Who Dat Say `Chicken' in Dis Crowd?":

My mother, who was cooking my breakfast, came into the parlor, tears streaming from her eyes, and said: "Oh Will! Will! I've sent you all over the world to study and become a great musician, and you return such a nigger!" My mother was a graduate of Oberlin in the class of 1865 and thought that a Negro composer should write just like a white man.

After some difficulty finding backers, *Clorindy* opened at the Roof Garden of the Casino Theater in New York, with Ernest Hogan playing the lead. "Darktown Is Out Tonight" is the show's rousing opening, with a rhythmic thrust, built around a simple three-note motif, that presages developments in jazz nearly three decades in the future.

Again, Cook:

When the last note was sounded, the audience stood and cheered for at least ten minutes . . . it was pandemonium, but never was pandemonium dearer to my heart. . . . Negroes were at last on Broadway, and there to stay.

Though Tom Fletcher attributes the decline of the coon-song craze to the determination of Chris Smith, composer of the hit song "Good Morning, Carrie" and later "Ballin' the Jack," to get away from the stereotype formula, a more likely contention is that this fad simply ran its course and died out, as fads will.

Years later, in a 1928 panorama of black music he presented at Carnegie Hall, W. C. Handy revived the cakewalk and a pair of coon songs, sung in the style of Ernest Hogan by his friend Tom Fletcher. Handy's opinion that, whatever their effect, coon songs belong to the history of black music in America carries considerable credence today.

But, as James Weldon Johnson has said, the turn of the century was a difficult time to be black. Lynching and other outrages were still commonplace in the South, where post-Civil War legislation beneficial to blacks was all but ignored. Racial tensions had built up in the North as well, especially in the cities, where jobs and living space were scarce and the growing number of black workers was looked on by many whites as a threat.

On the hot, humid night of August 15, 1900, the tension in New York erupted in one of the most violent race riots in the city's history. Significantly, according to Johnson, "during the height of the riot the cry went out [among whites] to `get Ernest Hogan and [Bert] Williams and [George] Walker and [Bob] Cole and [J. Rosamund] Johnson," all popular black entertainment figures. "These seemed to be the only individual names the crowd was familiar with."

The wounds of that night of violence were slow to heal and resulted in a new militancy in many sectors of the black community. There was also, especially within the family, a retreat into a kind of fortress mentality. "Stay in Your Own Back Yard" (Track 6) could have been its rallying cry: As late as 1925 Eva Taylor, the first black woman to sing regularly on radio, recorded "Pickin' on Your Baby" with a band led by her husband, pianist/songwriter Clarence Williams (and featuring the young Louis Armstrong on cornet):

Oh, they're pickin' on your baby 'Cause I'm a Pickaninny Rose. Mammy, don't they know That they should not treat me so? Don't they know that every dark cloud Inside is silv'ry lined? Mammy, why are they pickin' on me All the time?

Here again was an attitude, born of fear and hostility, that was to remain entrenched for years and is still a strand in the complex web of black-white relations.

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The original sheet music to one of James Bland's characteristic minstrel songs, "Listen to the Silver Trumpet's Sounding," bears the inscription "Dedicated to Harrigan and Hart." This provides a reminder that these two celebrated performer-showmen were quick to see the potential in the first revival of the chalk-line walk. In 1877, a good decade before the national cakewalk craze hit its stride, they produced "Walking for Dat Cake, An Exquisite Picture of Negro Life and Customs" as a feature sketch at New York's Theater Comique on lower Broadway.

It was a characteristically enterprising gesture, especially for Edward "Ned" Harrigan, born on the Lower East Side in 1844. A self-contained man deeply absorbed in theater, he won early acclaim both as a prolific writer of sketches and plays and as an actor-singer of considerable skill.

His partner, Tony Hart, was born Anthony Cannon in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1855. Harrigan and Hart, and the English-born conductor David Braham, who was later Harrigan's father-in-law, formed a performing-writing-composing team that held New York spellbound for the better part of two decades.

Contemporary praise for both Harrigan and Hart was lavish. But it is the quiet, perceptive Harrigan who captures the historical imagination. In *The Merry Partners*, his study of Harrigan and Hart, E. J. Kahn, Jr., describes Harrigan as

... primarily concerned with the habitués of the slums—the newsboys and flower girls, the barbers and butchers, the Bowery toughs and South Street sailors, and the disreputable folk who hung out in the dives known as dance houses, where it was the custom for the male patrons to buy the resident hostesses a drink every time the music stopped; where the girls, who were clearly made of sterner stuff than their prototypes today, downed an authentic drink--as long as they could stay on their feet--during each of an evening's many pauses for refreshment and profit; and where a rapacious kind of stag line hovered, waiting for male patrons to pass out so they could be robbed or, if they were sailors, sold while unconscious to the captain of some short-handed ship.

Harrigan, too, dealt in stereotypes--but of a far different sort from those represented in minstrel shows or in the coon songs and sketches. There was no malice--nor even patronization--in his portraits, but rather a distinct affection. Again, Kahn:

Most of the characters who figured in Harrigan's plays were first or second-generation Irish and German and Italian immigrants who came to New York during the nineteenth century and of whom Harrigan was in the habit of deploring, half-jestingly, that they wouldn't come to his theater because the incidents he showed on stage were indistinguishable from what they experienced at home. In fact, though, his subjects loved looking at themselves, or farcical facsimiles thereof.

Khan goes on to describe how Harrigan, in search of material, would "plant himself on a park bench in some inelegant section of town and sit attentively there, notebook in hand," watching and listening to the assortment of characters parading by. If something caught his fancy, off he'd go in pursuit, scribbling notes as he ran. Such practices won Harrigan the sobriquet "America's Dickens," and high praise from such newspapers as the *New York Herald*:

He finds his inspiration in the city-bred murderer, blackleg, corner loafer, and in every conceivable and unnameable product of the town.

While some stereotyping may have figured in such Harrigan creations as *The Mulligan Guard Ball, Squatter Sovereignty,* and others, they left no doubt that real life held more variety, more unpredictability and sheer fascination than any stock racial or ethnic image could offer.

Tony Hart was of a different character. Nat C. Goodwin, a popular comedian of the day, called him, simply, "a genius":

He sang like a nightingale, danced like a fairy, and acted like a master comedian . . . his magnetism was compelling, his personality charming. He had the face of an Irish Apollo. His eyes were liquid blue, almost feminine in their dovelike expression. His head was large and round and covered with a luxurious growth of brown, curly hair, which clustered in ringlets over a strong brow. His disposition turned December into May. . . .

The Lower East Side of Harrigan and Hart's day was a gathering place for immigrants from Italy, Ireland, Germany, and other European countries. Consequently, these groups live in Harrigan's plays and sketches--along with blacks quite different from the lazy, ineffectual buffoons of the coon tradition. Describing the difficulties of New York's Italian community in establishing itself, Kahn noted:

The Negroes of New York--who were of course neither immigrants nor aliens, but for all the native-born white citizens of the city cared might as well have been--picked on the Italians, too. . . . Street fights between Negroes and Italians--the former armed with razors and the latter with stilettos--were a common occurrence in downtown New York, and, inevitably, on Harrigan's stage as well. There was nothing a Harrigan audience enjoyed more than to witness a band of blackface actors, razors at the ready, advance across the stage toward a band of Italians, chanting, in terms their opponents could presumably understand, "Cutta! Soona! Quicka!"

Though Harrigan poked gentle fun at most groups, he clearly held a special affection for the Irish. When *The Mulligan Guard Ball* opened at the Theater Comique on January 13, 1879, one of its most popular songs was "The Babies on Our Block" (Track 1), a nostalgic look at the songs and games of Irish children on the Lower East Side. It contains references to the songs "Little Sally Waters" and "Green Gravel," brought to the United States with the immigrants from Ireland.

Like most Harrigan farces, *The Mulligan Guard Ball* is less a show in any strict sense than a loosely structured vehicle for songs and comedy routines. The "plot" in this case concerns the mix-up that results when two guards organizations, one black, the other Irish, rent the same hall on the same night. *Squatter Sovereignty* follows the tireless efforts of its hero, street merchant Felix McIntyre, to marry off his son to the daughter of a prosperous widow. In *Reilly and the 400*, a young lawyer's humble background threatens to sabotage his prospective marriage to a beautiful society girl, until his father takes a hand.

"John Riley's Always Dry" (Track 3) is probably the closest item in this Harrigan and Hart collection to sheer stereotype, in that it pokes fun at the Irishman's legendary weakness for drink; yet here, too, the tone is affectionate.

More often, the songs were full of simple, wistful nostalgia and sentimentality. "Paddy Duffy's Cart" (Track 4) from the 1882 show *Squatter Sovereignty*, tells of a group of Irish boyhood chums, never to be reunited, and the memory of their evenings of song and friendship on a local lumber cart.

"Maggie Murphy's Home" (Track 2) differs from the others in one important respect--it was part of a production, *Reilly and the 400*, staged by Harrigan after the breakup of his partnership with Hart in 1885. Hart was by then debilitated by the effects of advancing syphilis. He performed less and less often, and spent most of his last years in and out of mental hospitals until his death in 1891.

Harrigan carried on as before, turning out new hits. *Reilly* ran for over two hundred performances in its first season. "Maggie Murphy's Home" is an unabashedly sentimental waltz.

Harrigan's subsequent career shaded off into vaudeville, then eventual semiobscurity as fashions in entertainment changed and audiences began to tire of the freewheeling, knockabout style of Harrigan farces. Despite the honor of a George M. Cohan song of 1907, which had the entire nation singing "H-A-double R-I-G-A-N spells Harrigan," the old showman was tired. The death of his son had dealt Harrigan a blow from which he never recovered. Finally, in 1909, he collapsed before going onstage at the Metropolitan Opera House for the finale of a show in his honor. He lived on for two years, a white-haired, emaciated invalid.

His death preceded by less than four years the suicide of Gus Williams (born Gustave Wilhelm Lewecke), one of the era's best-loved exponents of "Dutch" (derived from *Deutsch*) or mock-German vaudeville humor.

Like the team of Joe Weber and Lew Fields, Williams used the convolutions of German syntax and pronunciations, as applied to English, for humorous effect in his monologues and songs. In those pre-World War I days the stock stage German was an amiable, fun-loving fellow, hard-working but not excessively bright, who loved beer and high-spirited conversation.

Character stereotyping, yes--but far closer to Ned Harrigan's Irish laddies in its sense of affection than to the feckless darkies of minstrel show and coon song. In *Educational Theater Journal*, October, 1966, Paul Antonie Distler described a Weber and Fields routine in which

two ludicrously dressed men, . . . in loud checked suits, with goat-like beards sprouting from their chins . . . one elongated and thin, the other short and as fat as he is tall . . . engage in mock physical combat with bladder sticks and hurl Germanicized insults at one another as they make their way to the pool table. The audience is convulsed, howling with glee. . . .

The tone, type, and source of humor could have applied equally to Gus Williams in *Our German* Senator (billed as consisting of "three acts and a telephone"), *A Much-abused Dutchman*, or any of his other popular "refined vaudeville" acts.

His style was gentler, not quite so boisterous as that of Weber and Fields. Reviewing the show U and I at the Standard Theater, the New York Dramatic Mirror on March 28, 1891, remarked that

... Gus Williams, as Professor Johannes Ungerblotz, was as amusing as ever in a dialect part, and his quaint and quiet drolleries stood in strong artistic contrast to the noisy horse-play of others in the cast.

The songs, too, are unremittingly good-natured. "The German Fifth" (Track 11) celebrates pride at being both American and German, whereas "Don't Give de Name a Bad Blace" (Track 14) lampoons the Dutchy's tendency to scramble words and meanings and wind up totally befuddled by simple things.

"Rip van Winkle Was a Lucky Man" (Track 13) is another matter. It was written in 1901 by Jean Schwartz, composer of such standards as "Chinatown, My Chinatown," and takes a rather more acid look at the realities of its times. Things are hard for immigrants, it seems to say, and anyone

fortunate enough to miss them by staying asleep isn't doing badly. At the time the song appeared, much of Harlem was still occupied by whites, especially Germans.

The outbreak of World War I put an end to the lovable Dutchy. Kaiser Wilhelm in Germany was now the enemy, and a new, suitable ugly stereotype, the brutal, militaristic Hun soon appeared with the help of the Allied propaganda machine.

Though born on the Bowery and a veteran of the Civil War, Gus Williams still felt his ancestry keenly. He'd already seen his stage specialties undermined by growing popular movements opposing ethnic stereotyping on stage. Such organizations as the Chicago-based Anti Stage Jew Ridicule Committee of Mrs. Mollie Eda Osherman helped foster increasing self-consciousness among entertainers, especially in vaudeville. Williams tried to move into legitimate theater, only to receive a savage drubbing from the critics.

Finally, on January 15, 1915, came the news that Gus Williams had shot himself in a Yonkers railroad station. "He suffered from stomach trouble," one newspaper obituary commented, "but no other reason for his suicide was immediately apparent."

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Some of the worst excesses of racial and ethnic stereotyping in song and on the stage with their attendant strife have passed with the years. But their legacy lives on in the complex patterns that characterize those race relations to this day.

A final word from Danny Barker: "Don't ever forget--in America you have to *learn* to be black. You're constantly learning, wherever you are. You've always had to be smart as a goddamn fox—smarter. You still have to play those roles today, still have to be wily and crafty and cunning to be a black in America. You gotta be sharp, have your antennae up all the time, to feel where it's comin' from. Things change, sure--but don't you ever forget those grains of sand. That's the way it's been, and that's the way it still is."

Track 1

The Babies on Our Block

(David Braham and Edward Harrigan) (from *The Mulligan Guard Ball*) Max Morath, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Lois Winter, soprano; Rose Marie Jun, alto; Phil Olson, tenor; Charles Magruder, bass.

If you want for information Or in need of merriment, Come over with me socially To Murphy's tenement. He owns a row of houses In the first ward, near the dock, Where Ireland's represented By the babies on our block. There's the Phalens and the Whalens From the sweet Dunochadee, They are sitting on the railings With their children on their knee, All gossiping and talking With their neighbors in a flock, Singing "Little Sally Waters" With the babies on our block. "Oh, little Sally Waters, Sitting in the sun, A-crying and weeping for a young man; Oh, rise, Sally, rise, Wipe your eye out with your frock"; That's sung by the babies a-living on our block.

Of a warm day in the summer, When the breeze blows off the sea, A hundred thousand children Lay on the Battery; They come from Murphy's building, Oh, their noise would stop a clock! Oh, there's no perambulatory With the babies on our block. There's the Clearys and the Learys From the sweet Blackwater side, They are laying on the Batt'ry And they're gazing at the tide; All royal blood and noble, All of Dan O'Connell's stock, Singing "Gravel, Greeny Gravel" With the babies on our block. "Oh, Gravel, Greeny Gravel, How green the grasses grow, For all the pretty fair young maidens that I see"; Oh, "Green Gravel Green," Wipe your eye out with your frock; That's sung by the babies a-living on our block.

It's good morning to you, landlord; Come now, how are you today? When Patrick Murphy, Esquire, Comes down the alleyway With his shiny silken beaver, He's as solid as a rock, The envy of the neighbor boys A-living on our block. There's the Brannons and the Gannons, Far Down and Connaught men, Quite easy with the shovel And so handy with the pen; All neighborly and friendly, With relations by the flock, Singing "Little Sally Waters" With the babies on our block. "Oh, little Sally Waters, Sitting in the sun, A-crying and weeping for a young man; Oh, rise, Sally, rise, Wipe your eye out with your frock"; That's sung by the babies a-living on our block.

Track 2

Maggie Murphy's Home

(David Braham and Edward Harrigan) (from Reilly and the 400) Max Morath, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Lois Winter, soprano; Rose Marie Jun, alto; Phil Olson, tenor; Charles Magruder, bass.

Behind a grammar schoolhouse In a double tenement, I live with my old mother And always pay the rent. A bedroom and a parlor Is all we call our own, And you're welcome ev'ry evening At Maggie Murphy's home.

Chorus

On Sunday night, 'tis my delight And pleasure, don't you see, Meeting all the girls and all the boys That work down town with me. There's an organ in the parlor To give the house a tone, And you're welcome ev'ry evening At Maggie Murphy's home.

Such dancing in the parlor, There's a waltz for you and I, Such mashing in the corner, And kisses on the sly. Oh, bless the leisure hours That working people know, And they're welcome ev'ry evening At Maggie Murphy's home. (Chorus)

I walk through Hogan's Alley At the closing of the day, To greet my dear old mother. You'll hear the neighbors say, Oh, there goes little Maggie, I wish she were my own. Oh, may blessings ever linger O'er Maggie Murphy's home. *(Chorus)*

Track 3 John Riley's Always Dry

(David Braham and Edward Harrigan) (from *Mulligan's Silver Wedding*) Max Morath, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Lois Winter, soprano; Rose Marie Jun, alto; Phil Olson, tenor; Charles Magruder, bass.

I have an old companion, John Riley from Tralee; In fair or cloudy weather, John Riley's seen with me. His heart is like a mountain, His honor ye can't buy, But elbow bending is his fault, John Riley's always dry.

(Chorus)

Bass's ale by the pail He would order Rosanna to go out and buy; Dublin Stout, he would shout, Keep drinking and never say die; Whiskey prime, gin and wine, He would hand down a bottle and merrily cry: "My Rose Ann, fill the can, For honest John Riley's dry."

It's ev'ry morning early John Riley's out of bed, Sure never a feather bolster Lies under Riley's head; It's when the sun is rising, So eager and so sly, He slips out for his bitters, boys, John Riley's always dry. (Chorus)

His father often told him, When John was but a youth, That ev'ry mortal Riley All died from whiskey drouth; Of course it is a failing, The poor man can't deny, 'Tis but a freak of nature, boys, John Riley's always dry.

What puzzles all the doctors John Riley's ever met Is fresh or salty water Can't make John Riley wet. Sure he must have the liquor, Rum, brandy, gin, or rye, And should he miss the bottle, boys, John Riley'd surely die. *(Chorus)*

Track 4

Paddy Duffy's Cart
(David Braham and Edward Harrigan)
(from Squatter Sovereignty)
Max Morath, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; Quartet: Lois Winter, soprano; Rose Marie Jun, alto; Phil Olson, tenor; Charles Magruder, bass.

The many happy evenings I spent when but a lad On Paddy Duffy's lumber cart, quite safe away from dad. It stood down on the corner, near the old lamplight; You should see the congregation there on ev'ry summer night. Oh, there was Tommy Dobson, now a senator; Billy Flyn and Johnny Glyn, oh, they were kill'd in war: All merry boyish comrades, recollections bring, All seated there in Duffy's cart on summer nights to sing: "Twinkling stars are laughing, love, laughing on you and me;

While your bright eyes look in mine, peeping stars they seem to be."

We'd gather in the evening, all honest working boys,

And get on Paddy Duffy's cart, for no one marr'd our joys,

All seated in the moonlight, laughing 'mid its rays;

Oh, I love to walk of old New York, and of my boyish days.

Oh, there was Henry Gleason, now a millionaire; Curly Rob and Whitey Bob, they're living on the air:

All merry boyish comrades, recollections bring,

All seated there in Duffy's cart on summer nights to sing:

"Little Fraud, little Fraud, she's the daintiest darling of all.

"Little Fraud, little Fraud, oh, the daintiest darling of all."

Oh, a merry little maiden, so nobby, neat, and coy,

A-smiling up at Duffy's cart upon her sweetheart boy.

It made a jealous feeling, a quiet piece of chaff; But all in play it died away and ended with a laugh.

Oh, there was Larry Thomson, he was a chum of mine;

Lemmy Freer and Sandy Greer, they died in forty-nine:

All merry boyish comrades, recollections bring, All seated there in Duffy's cart on summer

nights to sing:

"Twinkling stars are laughing, love, laughing on you and me;

While your bright eyes look in mine, peeping stars they seem to be."

Track 5

Hang the Mulligan Banner Up

(David Braham and Edward Harrigan) (from *The Mulligan Guard Nominee*) Max Morath, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Lois Winter, soprano; Rose Marie Jun, alto; Phil Olson, tenor; Charles Magruder, bass.

Dan Mulligan, the coming man, so stalwart, bold, and strong,

He's always in the cause of right, and never in the wrong.

He wants you for constituents, the white man and the black,

And should you want a favor, boys, he'll never turn his back.

Chorus

Then hang the Mulligan banner up so boldly to the winds,

Now give it room, the Mulligan boom, we'll leave the Dutch behind;

All Africans, Italians, and Scandinavians,

Come rally round your leader, boys, bold Daniel Mulligan.

For energy and constancy, he's a lib'ral-minded man,

Old Caesar never had the pluck of Daniel Mulligan;

Sure had he lived in ancient Rome, all hist'ry would have cried

That our Hibernian Caesar, boys, with honor easy died.

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(Chorus)
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Then concentrate each delegate, oh, rally, rally, all! With might and main, oh, once again, we'll take the City Hall! When in the aldermanic chair bold Daniel takes his seat, We'll capture all the patronage, and lashings for to eat. *(Chorus)*

Track 6 **Stay in Your Own Back Yard** (Lyn Udall and Karl Kennett) Danny Barker, baritone; Dick Hyman, piano.

Lilac trees a-blooming in the corner by the gate,

Mammy in the little cabin door; Curly-headed pickaninny comin' home so late, Cryin' 'cause his little heart is sore; All the children playing 'round have skin so white and fair, None of them with him will ever play. So Mammy in her lap takes the little weeping chap,

And says, in her kind old way:

Chorus

Now, honey, yo' stay in yo' own back yard, Don' min' what dem white chiles do; What show yo' suppose dey's a-gwine to gib A black little coon like you? So stay on dis side of de high boahd fence, An', honey, don' cry so hard; Go out an' a-play jes' as much as yo' please, But stay in yo' own back yard.

Ev'ry day the children, as they passed old mammy's place,

Romping home from school at night or noon, Peering through the fence would see this eager little face, Such a wistful, lonesome little coon;

Till one day the little face was gone forever more,

God had called this dusky little elf,

And Mammy in the door sat and rocked as oft

before, And crooned to her old black self: *(Chorus)*

Track 7 De Golden Wedding

(James A. Bland) Danny Barker, baritone; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Bobby Floyd, first tenor; Ralph Fields, second tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.

Le's go to de golden wedding, All the darkies will be there; Oh, such dancing and such treading! And such yellow girls so fair! All the high-toned colored people That reside for miles around Have received an invitation, And they surely will come down.

Chorus

All the darkies will be there, Don't forget to curl your hair; Bring along your damsels fair, For soon we will be treading. Won't we have a jolly time, Eating cake and drinking wine? All the high-toned darkies Will be at the Golden Wedding.

We will have ice cream and honey, Apple brandy and mince pie; Darkies, won't it look too funny When Aunt Dinah does shoo-fly? Uncle Joe and Ezekiah From the old Car'lina state Will be at the Golden Wedding, 'Kase them colored gents am great. *(Chorus)*

Old Jim Grace will play the fiddle, Beat the bones and old tambo, And Kersands will play the essence On ole Jim Bohee's banjo; Mackintosh will kiss Lucinda, 'Kase she is so very shy, And the little pickaninnies, They will dance and sing shoo-fly. *(Chorus)*

Track 8 My Gal Is a High-born Lady

(Barney Fagan) Danny Barker, baritone; Dick Hyman, piano.

Thar is gwine to be a festival this evenin', And a gatherin' of color mighty rare; Thar'll be noted individuals of prominent distinctiveness, To permeate the colored atmosphere; Sunny Africa's Four Hundred's gwine to be thar, To do honor to my lovely fiancée; Thar will be a grand ovation of especial ostentation, When the parson gives the dusky bride away!

Chorus

My gal is a high-born lady, She's black but not too shady, Feathered like a peacock, just as gay; She is not colored, she was born that way. I'm proud of my black Venus, No coon can come between us. 'Long the line they can't outshine This high-born gal of mine!

When the preacher man propounds the vital question,

"Does ye' take the gal for better of for wuss?," I will feel as if my soul had left my body, gone to glory,

And I know my heart will make an awful fuss. I anticipates a very funny feelin',

Nigger's eyeballs like a diamond sure to shine; But I'll bask in honeyed clover when the ceremony's over

And I press the ruby lips of baby mine! *(Chorus)*

Track 9 Darktown Is Out Tonight

(Will Marion Cook) Danny Barker, baritone; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Bobby Floyd, first tenor; Ralph Fields, second tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.

Hey dere, Sal, Come on, gal, Jine dis promenade; Tek my ahm, What's de harm? Needn't be afraid! Dar's ole Dan--Watch dat man Comin' down de line. Dat ole coon Hottah'n June 'Long in sweatin' time. Howdy do? Hope dat you 'Joy yose'f immense! Reckon Bess Got dat dress Off Miss Lucy's fence. Clear de paf! Needn't laf, Dat'll be all right! White folks yo' Got no sho'! Dis huh's Darktown night, An' there'll be

Chorus

Warm coons a-prancin', Swell coons a-dancin', Tough coons who'll want to fight; So bring 'long yo' blazahs, Fetch out yo' razahs, Darktown is out tonight! (*Repeat*)

Watch dat pair, Dey doan' care How dey lif' dey feet. Graciuhs me! Jul'us, he Nevah could be beat! Whah's dat Lize? I'se surprise! Reckon she can't come. Nevah kno', Huh so slow, Jinin' in de fun. Yondah's Lize--Wid huh size, What's 'e 'spec' to do? Needn't grin, She can't win 'Thout she'd wa'k wid you. Bless de Lam! Huh come Sam, Wid Clorinda too! Now's de time, Git in line, Sho' what you kin do,

(Chorus) Everyone Huntin' fun, Know Darktown's the place. Case we'se coons And buffoons, That ain't no disgrace. Never min', For the time Comin' mighty soon, When the best, Like the rest Gwine a-be singin' coon. Time ain't long For our song Mighty sweet to hear, And ole darky band Sounds so grand, Make you feel so queer. Now's de time, Git in line, We ain't here to fight. What's de use Of abuse? Darktown is all right. An' there'll be (Chorus) (Repeat twice)

For there'll be

Track 10 Tell 'Em I'll Be There

(James A. Bland) Bobby Floyd, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Trio:* Ralph Fields, tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.

It's been a long time since I've been home, Tell the folks I'm coming. All through this world this child has roam'd, Tell them I will be there. Their faces all I long to see, Tell the folks I'm coming. It fills this heart of mine with glee, Tell them I'll be there.

Chorus

Tell 'em I'll be there, *(Repeat)* I'll be there, get ready for to greet me, Tell 'em I'll be there, *(Repeat)* Hannah, Jane, and Liza they will meet me. Tell 'em I'll be there, *(Repeat)* Way down in that good old clime, We'll play the fiddle, the bones, and the banjo. Won't we have a happy time!

So goodbye, darkies, don't you cry, Tell the folks I'm coming. I'll meet you children bye and bye, Tell them I will be there. I'll shake you children by the hand, Tell the folks I'm coming. When we meet in that happy land, Tell them I'll be there. *(Chorus)*

Track 11 **The German 5th**

(Gus Williams)

Clifford Jackson, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Alan Sokoloff, first tenor; Ralph Fields, second tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass

If you look at me your eyes out, You will see a soldier gay; I belong to the German Fifth, Vot promenades along Broadway; Ve have de German colors flying mit de red, de vite, de blue, Und ve alvays looks so nobby Ven ve march de city drough.

Chorus Double rank, Vatch dot flank! Don't dot vas a splendid tune? Mark dot time; Ain't dot fine? Ven ve march, ve don't stand still Hoopala. Shout hurrah! Dot's de bay dot's shure to kill. Rite face aboud, Turn inside oud, Hurrah for de German Fifth. *(Repeat)*

Ven ve vas in dot army, Ve got fed on barrel staves, Und ven ve don't vas fight, Ve had to vork at digging graves; Den ve got so awful sick Dot you could see us drough und drough, Und vile ve vas a-marching, Den our feet got plack und blue. *(Chorus)*

How ve vas home-guard privates, Ve got blenty grub to eat; Germans vos jealous of us, Ven ve valk along the sdreet. But for dot ve do not care, For no matter vere ve go, Dey all admire our marching, In de rain or drough de snow. *(Chorus)*

Track 12 **Cat Song** or **Can Anyvone Tell Vere Dot Cat Is Gone?** (Gus Williams) Clifford Jackson, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Alan Sokoloff, first tenor; Ralph Fields, second tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.

Of you lisden to me, I'll do vot I can To tole unto you I'm a miserable man. I losed me a cat Yust dree days ago, Und I feel so bad I don't know yot to do.

Chorus

Can anyvone tell vere dot cat is gone, Dot maldoose cat, dot kidden cat; Can anyvone tell vere dot cat is gone, Dot beautiful John Thomas cat.

He vos a nice cat He had vone eye-prow, Und such a sweed voice, Ven he'd say "Meow"; But den some bad poys, De got a din bail, Und dey tied it onto my pussycat's dail. *(Chorus)*

To any vot find him Und pring him to me, I'll give dot same vone Dwo dollars or dree. He had such nice eyes, Und den dey did shine, Und his dail it gurled ub Like a big number nine.

(Spoken) I vouldn't care so much to lose dot, ontly id have peen in our family ever since id vos a poodle, und I have had many a habby day mit dot cat. Ven I vos a child, ven I used to come home from school I used to blay mit dot son of maldoose cat, so dot now I miss id putty much some. But all I vant to know now is, (Chorus)

Track 13 **Rip van Winkle Was a Lucky Man** (Jean Schwartz and William Jerome) Clifford Jackson, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano.

In the Catskill Mountains Rip van Winkle slept for twenty years, At home he couldn't get along with his wife, it appears, They used to fight both day and night. One night she got real angry and turned Rippy from the door, And said he needn't ever play in her yard anymore, She told him he could take his clothes and go.

Chorus

Rip van Winkle was a lucky man. Rip van Winkle went away And slept for twenty happy years In the mountains, so they say. How lucky! Rip van Winkle had a lovely sleep, Deny it if you can; While his loss they was deploring, He was in the mountains snoring, Rip van Winkle was a lucky man.

Now just sit down and figure out the money that he saved. For twenty years his whiskers grew, his face had not been shaved, His brush it grew a mile or two; And during all that time his living didn't cost a cent, His wife at home she had to keep the house and pay the rent, While in the mountains Rip was living high.

Chorus

Rip van Winkle was a lucky man, Rip van Winkle was a gent, Lived on a bluff for twenty years, Didn't spend a single cent. How lucky! Rip van Winkle had a lead-pipe cinch, deny it no one can; While his wife was spending money, He was in the land of honey, Rip van Winkle was a lucky man.

He saw the Catskill Mountains, and he saw the Catskill rats, But he never had to live in any stingy Harlem flats, Four rooms and bath, just room to laugh, Those narrow-chested dining rooms that really is too small, That every time you want to eat, they serve you in the hall;

It serves you wrong, but still it serves you right.

Chorus

Rip van Winkle was a lucky man, Rip van Winkle took the cake, Never had to eat any homemade pies Like mother used to make. How lucky! Rip van Winkle knew a thing or two, deny it if you can; He never seen the women Down at Coney Island swimming, Rip van Winkle was a lucky man.

He didn't have to chop the wood or carry in the coal, Or walk upon his heels all day to try and save his sole. His mind was free from misery, No quarrel with a woman who would swear that white was black, And in the depths of winter put her cold feet on his back,

Or holler, "There's a burglar in the house."

Chorus

Rip van Winkle was a lucky man, Rip van Winkle took a dose, Just think of wearing twenty years The same old suit of clothes. How lucky! Rip van Winkle knew a thing or two, deny it no one can; If he'd agone asleep in Philly, He could have slept till he was silly, Rip van Winkle was a lucky man.

Track 14

Don't Give de Name a Bad Blace

(Gus Williams)

Clifford Jackson, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Alan Sokoloff, first tenor; Ralph Fields, second tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.

I keep a zaloon in dis cidy, I sell weisbeer and oder drinks too, Und alzo I keep a lunch gounter, My dables and chairs dey vas new; But a lod of dose loafers gome in dere, Und dey try for to knock me aboud, But I tole you dey can't fool dis Deutchman, For I hit dem rite all of de mout.

(Spoken) Yes, und ven I vas hitting dem, mine vife gomes ub to me und says,

Chorus

"Don't give de name a bad blaces,"

Und she looks at me rite in de face, "Or de bolices vill gwick arresd you, Of you give de name a bad blace." (*Repeat*)

I blay cards de whole of de day time, Seven oud und eucherem too, Und somedimes I blay dominixes, But den dat game vas to me new. But de game dat I don't understand much, Und at vich I vas ten dollars oud Almosd every dime dat I blay it, Vas poger, vere you ante oud.

(Spoken) Yes, dat's de game I don't understand. You see, I vas blaying poger de oder day, und vas bedding all my money because I had a goot hand, und ven de oder fellar asked me vas I had, I tole him dat I had four aces, und vat you dink, dat oder fellar had five aces, und I losed my money. Dat's de first dime dat I ever knew dat dere was nine aces in a deck of cards, und I felt so mad aboud it dat I vas going to fight, ven yust den mine vife hollered oud, (Chorus)

Some roosders vat gome in my zaloon, Dose vat is drinking, I mean, Venever dey get drough a-drinking Vill dell me to "set dem oud again." Und day vey they keep on a-dalking, I say, "Pay, gentlemens, it vas late!" But dey look, und dey make dere eye dat vay, Und dell me, "Put dat down on de schlate."

(Spoken) Und I say, "Gentlemens, ve don't got some schlates," und den vone big fellar dells me to keep id in my head und dat he would gome around in de morning und kick it oud, und den I tole him dat ve don't do business dat vay, he says, "You don't, eh?" I zays, "No, sir, not of de gourthouse knows herself, und I dink she don't, und of you don't pay me gwick I vill put a head off you," und I would have done it too, only for mine vife, who cried oud, (Chorus)

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Producer: Sam Parkins Recording engineer: Stan Tonkel Mixing engineer: Russ Payne Tape editor: Don Van Gordon, Soundwave Recording Studios Recorded at Columbia Recording Studios, 30th Street, NYC Digital mastering: Paul Zinman, SoundByte Productions, Inc., NYC Cover design: Bob Defrin Design, Inc., NYC Library of Congress Card No. 78-750464

The original recordings were made possible with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. This recording was made possible with grants from the New York State Council on the Arts

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DON'T GIVE THE NAME A BAD PLACE 80265-2

- 1 The Babies on Our Block (David Braham and Edward Harrigan) 3:14 Max Morath, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Lois Winter, soprano; Rose Marie Jun, alto; Phil Olson, tenor; Charles Magruder, bass.
- 2 Maggie Murphy's Home (David Braham and Edward Harrigan) 3:37 Max Morath, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Lois Winter, soprano; Rose Marie Jun, alto; Phil Olson, tenor; Charles Magruder, bass.
- 3 John Riley's Always Dry (David Braham and Edward Harrigan) 3:52 Max Morath, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Lois Winter, soprano; Rose

Marie Jun, alto; Phil Olson, tenor; Charles Magruder, bass.

- 4 Paddy Duffy's Cart (David Braham and Edward Harrigan) 3:56 Max Morath, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Lois Winter, soprano; Rose Marie Jun, alto; Phil Olson, tenor; Charles Magruder, bass.
- 5 Hang the Mulligan Banner Up (David Braham and Edward Harrigan) 2:24 Max Morath, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Lois Winter, soprano; Rose Marie Jun, alto; Phil Olson, tenor; Charles Magruder, bass.
- 6 **Stay in Your Own Back Yard** (Lyn Udall and Karl Kennett) 3:07 Danny Barker, baritone; Dick Hyman, piano.
- 7 De Golden Wedding (James A. Bland) 3:03 Danny Barker, baritone; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Bobby Floyd, first tenor; Ralph Fields, second tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.
- 8 **My Gal Is a High-born Lady** (Barney Fagan) 2:40 Danny Barker, baritone; Dick Hyman, piano.
- 9 Darktown Is Out Tonight (Will Marion Cook) 4:26 Danny Barker, baritone; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Bobby Floyd, first tenor; Ralph Fields, second tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.
- 10 Tell 'Em I'll Be There (James A. Bland) 3:08 Bobby Floyd, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Trio:* Ralph Fields, tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.
- 11 The German 5th (Gus Williams) 2:48 Clifford Jackson, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Alan Sokoloff, first tenor; Ralph Fields, second tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.
- 12 Cat Song or Can Anyvone Tell Vere Dot Cat Is Gone? (Gus Williams) 2:39 Clifford Jackson, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Alan Sokoloff, first tenor; Ralph Fields, second tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.
- 13 **Rip van Winkle Was a Lucky Man** (Jean Schwartz and William Jerome) 4:03 Clifford Jackson, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano.
- 14 Don't Give de Name a Bad Blace (Gus Williams) 3:49

Clifford Jackson, tenor; Dick Hyman, piano and conductor; *Quartet:* Alan Sokoloff, first tenor; Ralph Fields, second tenor; Bernard Knee, baritone; Charles Magruder, bass.

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