

**THE GERSHWINS'
TIP-TOES**

**Music and Lyrics by
GEORGE GERSHWIN and IRA GERSHWIN**

**Book by
GUY BOLTON and FRED THOMPSON**

**Starring
EMILY LOESSER LEWIS J. STADLEN ANDY TAYLOR LEE WILKOF
MARK BAKER CYNTHIA SOPHIEA RACHEL COLOFF ALET OURY**

**With
JOSEPH THALKEN and JOHN MUSTO
At the Pianos**

**And
THE CAST AND ORCHESTRA
From the
CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT PRODUCTION**

**Directed for the Stage by
SCOTT BARON**

**Associate Music Director
JOSEPH THALKEN**

**Recorded and Mixed by
CYNTHIA DANIELS**

**Executive Producer
MARK TRENT GOLDBERG**

**Music Direction
Restored and Produced by
ROB FISHER**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| Sylvia Metcalf | | Cynthia Sophiea |
| Rollo Metcalf (<i>Her Husband</i>) | | Mark Baker |
| Al Kaye | * | Lewis J. Stadlen |
| | * | |
| Hen Kaye | * <i>The Three Kayes</i> | Lee Wilkof |
| | * | |
| Tip-Toes Kaye | * | Emily Loesser |
| Steve Burton (<i>Sylvia's Brother</i>) | | Andy Taylor |
| Binnie Chester | * | Rachel Coloff |
| | * <i>Steve's Teachers</i> | |
| Denise Miller | * | Alet Oury |
| Professor | | Rob Fisher |
| Girls | | Anna Bergman Karyn Overstreet Margaret Shafer Marguerite Shannon |
| Boys | | Bryan Donovan Peter Flynn Damon Kirsche Jesse Means II |

ORCHESTRA

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|------------------|------------------------------|
| Flute | Keith Underwood |
| Oboe | Rob Ingliss |
| Clarinet | Les Scott |
| | Bill Blount |
| Bassoon | John Campo |
| Horn | Russ Rizner |
| | Daniel Culpepper |
| Trumpet | Lowell Hershey |
| | Darryl Shaw |
| Trombone | Bruce Bonvissuto |
| Piano | Joseph Thalken John Musto |
| Percussion/Drums | Arnie Kinsella |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Violin | Marilyn Reynolds, <i>Concertmistress</i> Barry Finclair Christoph Franzgrote Martin Agee Belinda Whitney Mineko Yajima |
| Viola | Richard Brice David Blinn |
| Cello | Lanny Paykin |
| Bass | Richard Sarpola |
| Music Coordinator | Seymour Red Press |

TIP-TOES RESTORATION

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| Score Restored by | Rob Fisher |
| Score Reconstruction Coordinator | Aaron Gandy |
| Reconstruction of existing parts and score preparation | James Stenborg, <i>assisted by</i> Robert Lamont |
| Missing orchestra parts completed by | Russell Warner |
| Missing duo piano parts restored by | Joseph Thalken |

Disc 1 (Total Time 56:39)

SELECTIONS

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|--|------|
| 1. | OVERTURE | | 5:02 |
| 2. | FLORIDA | Girls and Boys | 2:24 |
| 3. | NICE BABY | Rollo and Sylvia | 3:52 |
| 4. | LOOKING FOR A BOY | Tip-Toes with Uncle Hen | 3:45 |
| 5. | LADY LUCK | Girls and Boys | 2:29 |
| 6. | WHEN DO WE DANCE? | Steve, Binnie, Denise, Girls and Boys with Sylvia | 3:53 |
| 7. | THESE CHARMING PEOPLE | Al, Uncle Hen, and Tip-Toes | 4:41 |
| 8. | THAT CERTAIN FEELING | Tip-Toes and Steve | 4:01 |
| 9. | SWEET AND LOW-DOWN | Al, Binnie, Denise, Boys and Girls | 4:36 |
| 10. | FINALE ACT I | Company | 3:18 |
| 11. | ENTR'ACTE | | 2:45 |
| 12. | OUR LITTLE CAPTAIN | Boys, Tip-Toes with Steve | 1:23 |
| 13. | LOOKING FOR A BOY (Reprise) | Steve and Tip-Toes | 2:00 |
| 14. | IT'S A GREAT LITTLE WORLD! | Steve, Girls and Boys | 2:59 |
| 15. | NIGHTIE-NIGHT! | Tip-Toes and Steve | 5:39 |
| 16. | TIP-TOES | Binnie, Denise, Girls and Boys | 2:06 |
| 17. | FINALE ACT II | Company | 1:46 |

BRINGING *TIP-TOES* BACK TO LIFE

The Gershwin brothers had a very successful year in 1925, culminating in an extremely busy December for George. On December 3, he was soloist for the premiere of his Concerto in F; on the twenty-eighth, *Tip-Toes* opened on Broadway; on the twenty-ninth, Paul Whiteman led a performance of his *135th Street* (originally *Blue Monday*) to a cheering reception; and on the thirtieth, *Song of the Flame* opened on Broadway, with a score that George had contributed to. Almost as busy as George was the Florida real estate business that year.

The Florida land boom of the 1920s held the attention of the entire nation and was an influence on many aspects of popular culture: Plays, musicals, and songs were written to capture the energy of this craze. In the Twenties, Florida was like a different country, exotic and untamed. Real estate developers and promoters built grand hotels and began marketing plots of land with a vengeance previously unheard of. The behavior of the speculators was exemplified by the Mizner brothers, Addison and Wilson, who sold millions of dollars' worth of Florida real estate and were also designers and builders in the Palm Beach area. Hundreds of thousands of people flocked to south Florida hoping to get rich buying and selling real estate. The craze was further promoted as Florida became the nation's winter playground. The boom peaked in 1925, but ended abruptly in 1926 due to embargoes, shipwrecks, and hurricanes.

Set in Palm Beach at the height of the craze, *Tip-Toes* had a Broadway cast that included Queenie Smith as Tip-Toes Kaye and Allen Kearns as Steve Burton, and featured Jeanette MacDonald as Sylvia Metcalf. Tip-Toes's uncles Al and Hen were played by Andrew Tombes and Harry Watson Jr. The pit orchestra featured Victor Arden and Phil Ohman at twin pianos. George Gershwin had already used them in *Lady, Be Good!* (1924), and would call on them again for *Oh, Kay!* (1926) and *Funny Face* (1927). The two pianists had met while recording player piano rolls for QRS, and found that they worked well as a team. Ohman's brother Ernest said that "Phil sketched out the arrangements, but didn't write them down. He decided the style. In their duets, Phil played the treble." Arden seems to have been the more serious musician and Ohman the wit. Besides performing for the Gershwin shows, they did some vaudeville touring, had their own orchestra, and appeared regularly on radio.

Tip-Toes was produced by Alex A. Aarons and Vinton Freedley, who had been the producers of the Gershwins' smash hit *Lady, Be Good!*, starring Fred and Adele Astaire, the year before. Attempting to repeat that success, they once again combined the same book writers, Guy Bolton and Fred Thompson, with the Gershwin brothers. *Tip-Toes* was well received by audiences and the press, and ran for 194 performances. It was given a subsequent production at the Winter Garden Theatre in London, opening August 31, 1926, running for 181 performances.

The restoration of *Tip-Toes* began in 1982 with the discovery of the now-famous trove of music at a Secaucus, New Jersey, warehouse. Among the finds were the original orchestra books from the pit of Broadway's Liberty Theater, where *Tip-Toes* opened in 1925. Although there were no full orchestra scores for comparison, and the books were in a chaotic order, these instrumental parts seemed to represent the entire show. In 1989 there were two concerts at the Library of Congress to celebrate the discovery of Gershwin music assumed to be lost, and to begin a massive recording project of the Gershwin scores. On that program we restored and performed a couple of selections from *Tip-Toes*, and they proved to be charming and imaginatively scored.

It was not until Carnegie Hall decided, as part of its two-year Gershwin Centenary project, to

include concert performances of *Tip-Toes* in the spring of 1998 that the full restoration was undertaken. This was begun by reconciling original programs and scripts with the existing musical materials. The orchestra parts were transcribed into a full score, which revealed some places where instruments were missing measures. Any blank spots were then filled in. Often, where the scoring was incomplete in one part of the show, the missing elements were found in another passage. The material for the orchestra was surprisingly complete, and therefore it represents one of the very few totally authentic orchestrations from the mid-twenties. You will hear that it is a sound unlike that of its operetta contemporaries, or of the musical comedies to follow, although it has elements of both of those, and of popular dance bands. When you add duo-piano virtuosity, it creates a sound that is bubbly and unique, effervescent and joyful.

The least complete part of the score was the notation of the Arden and Ohman piano arrangements. Many sources were used to re-create their sound. In some numbers, a part was found for one or the other of the two pianos. Arden and Ohman recorded four of the songs from *Tip-Toes* with their own orchestra, featuring extensive duo-piano passages. These were transcribed and used at various points in the score. There were also recordings of George Gershwin playing some of these songs, which provided pianistic ideas that were incorporated. When there were no clues at all, one of our two pianists, Joseph Thalken, wrote duo-piano parts that he and John Musto later perfected.

The final part of the restoration process is the involvement of cast and orchestra. An understanding of style was essential for all the actors and musicians, and this group joyously embraced the experience of living and breathing a musical just as it was first heard in 1925. A week of performances in Carnegie Hall's intimate Weill Recital Hall provided the opportunity to sharpen the vaudeville timing and refine the acoustic balances of the piece. For performers and audiences alike it was a rare thrill to play and hear a score with no microphones involved. Of this run at Carnegie Hall, Stephen Holden of *The New York Times* wrote, "the songs and orchestrations have that irresistible fizz that at its perkier conveys a compressed frenzy of euphoria." —*Rob Fisher*

Rob Fisher, conductor, is the Music Director of City Center *Encores!*

THE GERSHWINS IN 1925

New Year's Day 1926. Floods swept Europe. Jimmy Walker took office as Mayor of New York. King Tut's coffin was carried to Cairo from the Valley of the Kings near Luxor. King Carol renounced the Romanian throne. Revelers thronged city streets as Prohibition enforcement failed to halt the New Year's merriment. Broadway was jammed as all theaters sold out. And a glance at newspapers of that day also reveals what a banner year-end the Gershwins had enjoyed.

The musical triumph *Tip-Toes*, with songs by the Gershwins and a cast headed by Queenie Smith, Allen Kearns, Andrew Tombes, and Harry Watson Jr. had opened four days earlier at the Liberty. Just a couple of blocks away, *Song of the Flame*, a romantic operetta with music by George Gershwin and Herbert Stothart, lyrics by Otto Harbach and Oscar Hammerstein II, featuring Tessa Kesta and a company of two hundred including the Russian Art Choir, was offering its first matinee at the 44th Street Theater. It had bowed on December 30. And Ira Gershwin's lyrics to Lewis Gensler's "You Must Come Over Blues" were being sung by Arthur West and Marion Sunshine in the musical *Captain Jinks* at the Martin Beck.

Anyone whose eyes traveled from the theatrical attractions to the classical music ads would likely notice “at Carnegie Hall tonight” Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra were offering the last appearance of the season of George Gershwin and B.G. DeSylva’s one-act jazz opera *135th Street* (a revision of 1922’s *Blue Monday*). Farther down the page readers would see that on the following Sunday Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony were to be at Mecca Auditorium performing works by Ravel and Tchaikovsky and presenting “by popular request” George Gershwin as soloist in his Piano Concerto in F.

Indeed, all of 1925 had been eventful for the Gershwin brothers. It had begun with George Gershwin meeting Igor Stravinsky in January; the famed Russian-born composer was enjoying his first U.S. tour. A month later, at the urging of violinist Samuel Dushkin, George turned two of his piano novelette sketches into a piece for violin and piano. The resulting “Short Story” was given its premiere on February 8 at New York’s University Club.

Soon afterward, the Gershwins and B.G. DeSylva started work on the musical *My Fair Lady*, retitled *Tell Me More* during its out-of-town tryout. This much-underappreciated work opened at the Gaiety Theatre on April 13, then in London a month later, where it ran for nearly three times as long as the New York production.

On July 20 George Gershwin became the first American-born musician to appear on the cover of *Time* magazine. Not long after, the Gershwin family moved from a flat on 110th Street in Manhattan to a five-story house at 316 West 103rd Street.

It was in April that George signed a contract with the Symphony Society of New York to compose and perform his “New York Concerto.” He began work on it in London in the spring, but the concerto was largely composed in the quiet of a studio at the Chautauqua Institute in upstate New York. The retitled Concerto in F received its world premiere on December 3, 1925, conducted by Walter Damrosch with the composer as piano soloist. It was the first of seven performances of the concerto that George would play within the first six weeks of its premiere. Ira’s year ended with a fan letter from fellow lyricist Lorenz Hart, about *Tip-Toes*, which read in part:

Your lyrics . . . give me as much pleasure as Mr. George Gershwin’s music and the utterly charming performance of Miss Queenie Smith. I have heard none so good this many a day . . . Such delicacies as your jingles prove that songs can be both popular and intelligent. May I take the liberty of saying that your rhymes show a healthy improvement over those in *Lady, Be Good!* You have helped a lot to make an evening delightful to me—and I am very grateful. Thank you. And may your success continue!

Lorenz Hart

—*Robert Kimball*

Robert Kimball is the Artistic Advisor to the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts.

SYNOPSIS

It's a busy day at the Palm Beach train station in 1925 where at the height of its frenzy, the land rush is on in the Sunshine State ("Florida"). In the crowd, Rollo Fish Metcalf, a dandy with a roving eye, unexpectedly runs into his wealthy socialite wife, Sylvia, who is in the midst of planning a party for her visiting brother, Steve, the glue-works scion worth "seven millions." Rollo manages to convince his wife that he is "girl blind," and the Metcalfs playfully express their affection for each other ("Nice Baby"). Rollo offers to wait at the station for the three vaudevillians whom Sylvia has engaged to entertain at her soiree for Steve the next evening.

After a long trip, the "Komical Kayes"—Al, Tip-Toes, and Uncle Hen—are thankful to disembark from the train, especially Tip-Toes, who, traveling frugally without a ticket, has spent most of the trip in their trunk dodging the porter. When, to his surprise, Rollo discovers that Tip-Toes is one of the performers, he pays off the troupe and sends them away. Once, Rollo had enjoyed a flirtation with Tip-Toes that ended when she discovered he was married, and naturally, he is afraid that she might let that piece of news slip to Sylvia.

Properly recompensed by Rollo, the Kayes decide to remain in Palm Beach, hoping to snag a millionaire for Tip-Toes as a sort of retirement plan. As Al says, "The soles of my shoes are so thin, I can stand on a dime and tell whether it's heads or tails." While Al and Uncle Hen run off to find rooms, Tip-Toes is rescued from the porter who had been hounding her by Steve, who hopes he hasn't been too "fresh." As he leaves, she muses that some people aren't "fresh" enough ("Looking for a Boy").

At the Palm Beach Surf Club that afternoon, things are in full swing, especially at the gaming tables ("Lady Luck"). Sylvia implements her plan to smooth some of the rough edges off the unsophisticated Steve by arranging for lessons in the finer things (bridge, dancing, music, golf, and elocution) from two awfully nice girls, Binnie and Denise ("When Do We Dance?"). Meanwhile, the three Kayes make plans to pass Tip-Toes off as Roberta Van Renssalaer, an affluent character from their act ("These Charming People").

On her quest for the true love of a millionaire, Tip-Toes (as Roberta) unwittingly lands in a game of "Pig-in-a-Poke" and is kissed by Steve, her savior from the train station earlier that morning. The attraction is as powerful as it is immediate, and "Roberta" and Steve both know it ("That Certain Feeling"). Al, on a quest of his own, makes the acquaintance of Binnie and Denise, who decide that they should spend the evening at the Blues Café ("Sweet and Low-Down").

Regretting her subterfuge with Steve, Tip-Toes makes it clear to her family that she doesn't want to kid some man into believing that she is something she isn't: "*Sincerity!* That's the big thing with me; I know that now." As Al and Uncle Hen deal with this blow to their scheme with characteristic quarrelling, Tip-Toes is almost run over by a car. And while it looks as though Tip-Toes has narrowly escaped serious harm, it turns out that the accident has caused some form of amnesia whereby she truly believes that she *is* Roberta Van Renssalaer. Relieved that Tip-Toes is safe, Al and Uncle Hen are none too eager to set the record straight, allowing Tip-Toes to remain as Roberta ("Finale Act I").

The next evening on Steve's yacht, preparations are made for the party and the welcome of his special guest ("Our Little Captain"). Even as Roberta, Tip-Toes knows she has something wonderful in Steve and together they rejoice in their good fortune in finding one another ("Looking for a Boy—Reprise").

Al and Uncle Hen's plan is beginning to backfire: It seems that "Roberta" is going to leave them penniless. Being a Van Renssalaer, there is no reason she should be constrained by the Kaye family budget, much to the consternation of the men. Steve, however, is ecstatic, unaware that everything is

about to unravel (“It’s a Great Little World!”). In trying to keep his flirtations secret from Sylvia, Rollo reveals Tip-Toes’s true identity to Steve, who is crushed. Confronted, as she emerges from her amnesia, Tip-Toes admits to the scheme but tries to assure Steve that she really has fallen for him and not his money. Steve has a confession of his own: “We’ve been living off our capital—and we’ve struck bottom. Well, they can’t kid me about owning a glue factory anymore; that’s something!” Leaving the yacht, he encourages Tip-Toes to go after one of the fourteen millionaires’ sons at the party.

Upset, but determined to prove to Steve that she loves him, Tip-Toes conspires to stay on his yacht that evening and confronts him on his return: “I’m on this boat and I’ve got to stay here all night without a chaperone.” Her shocking determination convinces him (“Nightie-Night!”).

The next day, Tip-Toes settles the Kayes’ extravagant hotel charges by performing a dance from their act (“Tip-Toes”). As Steve presents her with an engagement ring, Tip-Toes exclaims: “Look how it sparkles! Isn’t it marvelous what they do with imitation jewelry now-a-days?” She then learns that Steve really hasn’t lost his fortune, just in time for everyone to reunite (“Finale Act II”). —*Mark Trent Goldberg*

Mark Trent Goldberg is the Executive Director of the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts.

TELL ME MORE

One of the most overlooked Gershwin shows, *Tell Me More* was also the most unlikely of Jazz Age musicals. In an era marked by lavish extravaganzas and brash star vehicles, *Tell Me More*, which opened on April 13, 1925, relied on charm, modesty, and an impish sense of humor. Because it failed to recoup its investment on Broadway, it was relegated to the list of Gershwin flops; because its score was largely forgotten, it has been widely regarded as a minor effort. In truth, it's a key show. As the only full-length collaboration between George and Ira Gershwin and B.G. DeSylva, it combines the delicacy and grace of the scores George had written earlier in the decade with DeSylva and the bold wit he had pioneered in partnership with his brother Ira four months earlier in *Lady, Be Good!* The best of both worlds, *Tell Me More* was a one-of-a-kind achievement.

Contrary to the reputation the show has acquired, the original reviews were quite favorable, with only a handful of critics faulting the book or score. (*The New York Times* expressed the general critical consensus: "... a first-class Gershwin score, adequate comedy, intelligent lyrics, an appealing young heroine, and fast and furious dancing.") Part of the show's failure lay in the casting. As the critic for *The New York Telegraph* put it, "If the same good judgment had been used in the selection of the cast that was exercised in getting the Astaires and Walter Catlett for *Lady, Be Good!*, *Tell Me More* would take its place as one of the hits of the waning season." Despite the presence of the Yiddish vaudevillian Lou Holtz, *Tell Me More* had no star turn of the type that critics and audiences of the day savored. This clearly contributed to the show's brief New York run, a mere 100 performances. Significantly, while the show was failing on Broadway, it was a big success in London, with only a few textual changes and—one must gather from the reviews—a far more persuasive group of performers.

But *Tell Me More* also suffered from its own disregard for convention; its simple charms went unrewarded in an era when musical comedy books, for better or worse, veered toward the outrageous. The critic for *Billboard* felt that the libretto had "the initial drawback of not having individuality.... And individuality is of vital importance in a musical show these days." In the 1920s, when so many musical comedy books were virtually indistinguishable from each other, the critics were impatient with a libretto that didn't boast some originality. *Tell Me More* was just another mistaken-identities story of the girl-loves-boy-but-almost-loses-him-pretending-to-be-someone-she's-not variety that Fred Thompson had already whipped up in *Lady, Be Good!* and would re-use later that year in *Tip-Toes*. But *Tell Me More* lacked many of the novelties found in Thompson's other shows—there were no fancy disguises, foreign visitors, or exotic ailments. Instead, the three-couple format so common to Twenties musicals was exposed in its barest form. There was the romantic couple (Peg the shopgirl and Kenneth the polo player), the comic couple (Monty the Jewish clerk and Jane the aging debutante), and the dancing couple (Billy the ne'er-do-well and Bonnie the cut-up). There wasn't much else.

But ironically, this very simplicity makes *Tell Me More* a more entertaining show today, while other musicals' novelties have become inaccessible. The script isn't terribly funny, and the writing is occasionally tentative. But the motivations of the characters are all straightforward and sympathetic, and because the plotting centers around only six people, each plays a pivotal and satisfying role in the story line.

The Gershwins and DeSylva lavished the script with ballads, rhythm numbers, and comedy songs—a string of fresh melodic ideas that often became quite witty (the syncopated principal strain in "Why Do I Love You?," the unexpected triplet figure in "Kickin' the Clouds Away"). The resulting score achieved a combination of charm and frivolity all its own. (It also included one delectable in-joke: the burlesque "In Sardinia," a rare Gershwin waltz, was clearly a spoof of Jerome Kern and Clifford Grey's

“The Schnitza Komisski” from the long-running 1920 musical *Sally*.)

In letting the show’s tone dictate its musical form, the Gershwins and DeSylva upended many of the conventions of the period. *Lady, Be Good!* had already dispensed with an opening chorus, but how many shows had the daring to start with a ballad—or, for that matter, a ballad with carefully integrated lyrics? And when Act II rolled around, and the obligatory choral opening was called for, what other show had had the temerity to set the scene in soft-shoe tempo? But its authors dared to be gentle, to keep their show intimate, innocuous, and ultimately winning. And in 1925, they paid the price.

I knew little of *Tell Me More* when Mrs. Ira Gershwin and Gershwin historian and advisor Robert Kimball hired me in 1986 to help catalog newly found Gershwin manuscripts. But this wealth of material—principally unearthed at the Warner Brothers Music warehouse in Secaucus, New Jersey—included hundreds of piano-vocal manuscripts from *Tell Me More*, so I soon was given a crash course. (Oddly, the Secaucus discovery yielded no orchestrations from the show.) I was immediately intrigued, all the more so because these annotated piano-vocal scores, once deciphered, clearly delineated the shape of each song: the number of verses and refrains, the keys, the dance music, the accompanying lyrics.

So many Gershwin shows, particularly the more popular ones, were revived and revised through the years; they often survived in versions far removed from the originals. But the *Tell Me More* material, carefully packed away after its brief run, was like a time capsule that shed light on the Broadway of the Twenties: an era when most songs, even the ballads, had encores; when the vaudevillians, after finishing their routines, had playoff music, as if they were still working the two-a-day; when a good comedy number might call for four or five separate refrains.

Nearly ten years passed before the Library of Congress and the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts found the best way to preserve the score on disc. A Gershwin tribute at the Warner Theatre in Washington, D.C., in May of 1995 included a few selections from *Tell Me More*, to piano accompaniment; they were designed to lead to a piano-vocal recording of the complete score later that year. But many present at the concert—including Bob Kimball and myself, Betty Auman of the Library of Congress, and Mark Trent Goldberg, Executive Director of the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts—felt that the score deserved more than just piano accompaniment. The orchestrator Russell Warner, who had created and restored charts for so many Gershwin recordings, suggested a small instrumental treatment that might maintain the intimacy of the piece, but also give the varied score its due.

The restoration of *Tell Me More* took on new life in the summer of 1995, as music director Rob Fisher, vocal director Steven D. Bowen, and assistant archivist Aaron Gandy joined the mix. As we had all worked together on various projects, and as we all knew and respected the conventions of the period, a certain amount of shorthand was possible, resulting in arguably the most rewarding collaboration I had ever experienced. On September 16, 1995, in trying to explain to Russell Warner the format and tone of “When the Debbies Go By,” I wrote this impossibly rambling message: “A two-bar intro, taken from the first ending on the second page (marked A & B). Then a refrain for the girls with the same first ending; then they dance a refrain, ending with the two bars scribbled above the first ending, and exit. Then Jane, lead deb and Kate-Hepburn-in-*The Philadelphia-Story*-wannabe, appears and sings the verse, then the refrain with the second set of lyrics. We do that first ending again, then the boys pick up the refrain one last time with the first set of lyrics. At the end, we finally take the second ending. Despite all the furious sixteenth-note writing in the accompaniment, I think this number should maintain a certain elegance in its gaiety. They’re debs, after all. This number comes shortly after “Shop Girls and Mannequins.” That number should sound like poor beleaguered shopgirls racing with the clock; this one should sound like

spoiled little rich girls who never, ever sweat.” Russell faxed back just three words: “Ah! Thank you!”

Most of the songs heard here adhere closely to their original forms, but a few tracks require explanation. In the original Broadway production, both acts closed with a simple reprise of “Kickin’ the Clouds Away”; for the London version, lyricist Desmond Carter wrote new lyrics that provided for more extended Finales. As no musical manuscripts survive for these London Finales, Steve Bowen (as he had done for the studio recording of *Oh, Kay!* a year earlier) devised a piano-vocal for the end of Act I that cleverly set Carter’s lyric to various themes from the show. (In a most felicitous bit of luck, we discovered that the music for the discarded “I’m Somethin’ on Avenue A” matched a good chunk of the lyric.) Aaron Gandy followed suit and did the same for the Act II Finale. The countermelody to “Why Do I Love You?,” deleted prior to Broadway, was restored for the song’s fifth (!) refrain; the second verse to “Mr. and Mrs. Sipkin,” written by Carter for London, was slipped into the encore.

The restoration of the song “Baby!” was a story in itself. The music, set to a Clifford Grey lyric entitled “Sweetheart,” was initially intended for an unproduced 1922 musical, *Flying Island*. “Sweetheart” eventually found its way into the 1923 Gershwin/Grey London revue *The Rainbow*. For *Tell Me More*, the authors wrote a new lyric to the music of “Sweetheart,” and the resulting song, “Baby,” was introduced on Broadway. Finally, when *Tell Me More* played London, they set the “Baby” lyric to new music (since Londoners had already heard the tune in *The Rainbow*). On this recording, the Broadway tune is heard in the first two refrains; the third is the London version.

As the cast was engaged, new collaborations resulted. Sally Mayes rehearsed “Ukulele Lorelei” and suggested augmenting the chorus’s block harmonies (straight from the original score) with the “bubble” effect heard here. Only the first five measures of the “Three Times a Day” vocal arrangement survived, so Mitch Hanlon completed it for Diane Fratantoni and Philip Chaffin to sing. “Kickin’ the Clouds Away” had gone through several revisions in the original production. Although a delightful tune (and the only one that, due to its inclusion in 1983 in *My One and Only*, has retained a level of popularity), it was the most generically Twenties of the bunch, and as such, the authors never quite knew how to fit it into the story line. For this recording, we adopted the London approach, where the song was tailored for three of its leads. Steve Bowen crafted the vocal arrangement here, as sung by David Garrison, Christine Ebersole, and Patrick Cassidy.

During the recording sessions, copyist Don Oliver called *Tell Me More* “the Princess Theatre show that Jerome Kern never wrote,” referring to the intimate, literate, and engagingly contemporary musicals that Kern, along with P.G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton, had fashioned in the late Teens. Maybe *Tell Me More* did belong to an earlier time; it was certainly lost and forgotten among the more hedonistic pleasures of the Twenties. But perhaps, seventy-five years later, this recording will represent a first step toward restoring the show’s rightful place in Gershwin history. —Tommy Krasker

Tommy Krasker has been producing recordings since 1990 and lists *Lady, Be Good!*, *I Wish It So*, *Mamaloshen*, *Sweeney Todd: Live in Concert*, and *Where Do I Go From You?* among his personal favorites.

TELL ME MORE-SYNOPSIS

At a masquerade ball in Manhattan, Kenneth Dennison, son of one of New York's finest families, stands in a box overlooking the dance floor, eyeing a young girl below dressed as Pierrette. He wonders how best to approach her, but he doesn't have to wonder for long, for moments later, this same Pierrette, intending to visit a party in the adjoining box, opens Kenneth's door by mistake. He quickly introduces himself and admits his infatuation, and the girl, Peggy, cautiously flirts back ("Tell Me More"). At the song's end, she unmask, and the mood becomes more romantic ("Tell Me More encore"). And then Peggy slips away, leaving Kenneth to wonder when they'll meet again.

Peggy, it turns out, is a working girl, a sales clerk at the fancy Maison Elise, a smart millinery establishment on Fifth Avenue. Following a brief night's sleep, she arrives at the shop the next morning in time to witness all the usual arrivals: her fellow saleswomen ("Shop Girls and Mannequins"); Monty, the tailor ("Mr. and Mrs. Sipkin"); and finally, her old school chum Jane Wallace ("When the Debbies Go By"), there to do a bit of shopping. Peg admits to Jane how hard it's been for her since her dad died and left her penniless. Jane wonders if Peg's brother Billy might help her out, but alas, Peg and Billy had a silly quarrel after the funeral and haven't spoken in months. A sympathetic Jane invites Peggy to her summer home in Viewport, but Peggy is too proud to accept charity.

Who should enter the shop but Kenneth, accompanied by his pal Billy. Billy is pleading with Kenneth to meet his sister Margaret, but Kenneth can't think of anyone but his Pierrette— and his only clue to her whereabouts is the mask she left behind, marked "Property of Maison Elise." As Billy wanders off, Kenneth spies Peggy across the room, and is delighted that his search has ended so quickly. Alas, he has to go off to Viewport tomorrow to visit his people ("Everybody's going to Viewport," Peggy moans), but the lovebirds promise that once Kenneth returns, they'll be inseparable ("Three Times a Day").

Theirs is not the only tryst taking place at the Maison Elise. Monty and Jane have been carrying on for months, but always on the sly. (Her father is an eminent financier, and the news that his daughter has fallen for a poor tailor might be too much for his heart.) Hearing that Jane is leaving for Viewport, Monty summons his courage and proposes marriage. Jane accepts, leaving the two of them to recount the pain that love has caused them ("Why Do I Love You?"). In a nearby room, Bonnie, another shopgirl, meets Billy. He affects the air of a rugged cowboy in order to impress her; she's skeptical, but happy to play along ("How Can I Win You Now?").

And then Jane re-enters with an idea: Peg will journey to Viewport with her and let Monty come along, posing as her brother Billy. That way, Jane and Monty can be together, and her family will be none the wiser. Feeling that her friend needs her help (and aware that Kenneth will be in Viewport as well), Peg agrees. The entire sales force and clientele of the Maison Elise appear on the scene to celebrate the young lovers' optimism ("Kickin' the Clouds Away"). Their joy is derailed only briefly by the arrival of Jane's mother and an unfortunate faux pas by Monty ("Finale Act I").

One week later, the sun is shining brightly over fashionable Viewport ("Love Is in the Air"). Jane finds herself very much in her element ("My Fair Lady"), while Monty, very much out of his element, nonetheless wins over the crowd with tales of his ancestral home ("In Sardinia"). Peg and Kenneth grow closer, and even Billy and Bonnie's thoughts turn to romance ("Baby!"). But when Bonnie, ever the blabbermouth, tells Billy that Peggy's in Viewport with a brother who's not really her brother, Billy jumps to the obvious conclusion and, ever the loyal friend, informs Kenneth of his Pierrette's deceit. (Billy's quite content to break up the pair; after all, he's still committed to fixing up Kenneth with his sister Margaret.)

Ken confronts Peg, but she's too hurt by the accusation to tell him the truth. The lovers quarrel, and suddenly, with the imminent arrival of Jane's father ("Finaletto Act II"), all three relationships seem in jeopardy.

Misunderstandings are resolved a few hours later in the hotel garden ("Opening Ensemble"), where Bonnie has taken a job as an eccentric dancer ("Ukulele Lorelei") and Monty is working as a waiter to pay off his hotel bill. As Kenneth laments his broken heart, Peg takes pity and reveals the reasons for her deception. Jane's mother asserts her position as head of the Wallace household and blesses her daughter's engagement to Monty. And as the three couples celebrate their impending nuptials, Peg and Billy stumble upon each other for the first time in months —"Billy!" "Margaret!"— and brother and sister, too, are reunited ("Finale Act II").

—*Tommy Krasker*

PRODUCTION CREDITS:

Producer: Tommy Krasker

Executive producer: Elizabeth H. Auman

Recorded and mixed by Joel Moss.

Digital mastering: Ric Wilson, Digisonics, Northridge, CA.

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Assistant Archivist: Aaron Gandy

Chorus contractor: Evelyn Halus

Orchestral contractor: Thomas Griep

Production coordinator: Michelle Glymph

Music Preparation: Donald Oliver, Chelsea Music Service, Inc.

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Tell Me More
Tell Me More (Encore)
Three Times a Day
Why Do I Love You?
Kickin' the Clouds Away
My Fair Lady
Baby!

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In Sardinia

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Shopgirls and Mannequins
Mr. and Mrs. Sipkin
When the Debbies Go By
How Can I Win You Now?
Love Is in the Air
Ukulele Lorelei

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Overture
Finale Act I
Finaletto Act II
Finale Act II

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**NEW WORLD RECORDS
16 Penn Plaza #835
NEW YORK, NY 10001-1820
TEL 212.290-1680 FAX 212.290-1685
Website: www.newworldrecords.org
email: info@newworldrecords.org**

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