

JACK O'DIAMONDS

London run: Gaiety Theatre, February 25th

Transfer: Cambridge Theatre May 20th (126 performances)

Music: Noel Gay

Book & Lyrics: Clifford Gray & H.F. Maltby

Additional Lyrics: Kenneth Duffield

Director: John Harwood

Choreographer: Fred A. Leslie

Musical Director: Ray Theobald/Noel Gay

Producer: Kenneth Duffield

Cast: Bobbie Comber (*Colonel Featherstone*),
Viola Compton (*Mrs Featherstone*), Joan Panter (*Phyllis*),
Dino Galvani (*Emmanuel Montero*), Richard Dolman (*Jack*),
Greta Fayne (*Susie*), Reginald Purdell (*Chick Osborne*),
Zelma O'Neal (*Peggy Turner*)

Songs: Someone to Sew Your Buttons On, Why d'you Have to Run After Me?
Do I Have to Explain? What's a Kiss Among Friends? Rhythm Fan

Story: Hen-pecked Colonel Featherstone's money-seeking wife is looking for a wealthy husband for their daughter, Phyllis. Initially she is working on Emanuel Montero from Argentina, but suddenly there is Jack, back from South Africa. The trouble is she has got her Jacks mixed up: this is Jack Denham, and not the millionaire, Jack O'Diamonds. The wrong Jack woos Phyllis at the Ascot Gold Cup, but very soon Mrs Featherstone finds out her mistake, and Phyllis drops him – luckily straight into the arms of Sweet Susie Crawford. Meantime Jack's best friend, Chick Osborne ends up with the lively Peggy Turner.

Notes: With its witty book and good tunes, a lavish costume parade of Ascot dresses, and some spectacular effects, including real water for a thundery rain-storm, this was a hit show. Unfortunately it was forced to leave the Gaiety because of a pre-booked incoming show, but it only managed a four week run in its new theatre, the Cambridge.



Zelma O'Neal



THE ROSE OF PERSIA (1st Revival)

London run: Prince's Theatre, February 28th (25 performances)

Music: Arthur Sullivan

Book & Lyrics: Basil Hood

Director: William J. Wilson

Musical Director: Sydney Baynes

Cast: Joseph Spree (*Abu-el Hassan*), Amy Augarde (*Dancing Sunbeam*),
Franklyn Kelsey (*Abdallah*), Lilian Keyes (*Blush of Morning*),
Robert Naylor (*Yussuf*), Helene Raye (*Sultana*), Eddie Garr (*The Sultan*),
Leonard Russell (*The Vizier*), Phillip Merritt (*The Physician*),
Norman Greene (*Executioner*)

Songs: 'Neath my lattice through the night, Musical Maidens are we, I'm the Sultan's
Vigilant Vizier, Laughing low on Tip-toe, There was once a small street Arab.

Story: Abu-el-Hassan, wealthy and with many wives, spends his time with the lower, poor classes in the town. His chief wife, the harridan Dancing Sunbeam, wants him declared mad, and the priest Abdallah, who is set to inherit everything, would like him dead. However, If Hassan is proved mad the will would, of course, be invalid. A more sympathetic wife, Blush of Morning, is aware of the plotting. Yussuf, a travelling story-teller, entertains Hassan with a group of veiled dancing girls, who are really royal slaves who have sneaked out of the Sultan's Palace in disguise for a night on the town. Secretly amongst them is the Sultana herself making a most improper and indeed illegal foray outside the harem. The Sultana, however, is not the only member of the royal family out doing a little slumming. The Sultan, his Vizier, his Physician and his Executioner all arrive at Hassan's home dressed as dervishes, and play a trick on him, but after many complications all is restored, evil-doers punished and foolishness forgiven.

Notes: The original production at the Savoy Theatre on November 29th 1899 was Sir Arthur Sullivan's first big success after ending his partnership with Gilbert. It ran for 213 performances, and was followed by a New York production which only managed a three week run. This was its first revival in London, although it has been a mainstay of amateur companies in the intervening years.



THE BEGGAR'S OPERA (Revival)

London run: Criterion, March 6th (38 performances)

Music: Various (arranged by Frederic Austin)

Book & Lyrics: John Gay

Director: Stephen Thomas

Cast: Dennis Hoey (*Peachum*), Margaret Yarde (*Mrs Peachum*), Joan Collier (*Polly Peachum*), Charles Mayhew (*Macheath*), Isabel Jeans (*Lucy Lockitt*).

Notes: This was the first major revival of the Nigel Playfair/Lyric Hammersmith version of 1920.

The original 1920 poster

DANCING CITY

London run: Coliseum, April 26th (65 performances)

Music: Hans May

Book & Lyrics: Carl Rössler & Arthur Rebner

English version: Harold Plumtre

English Lyrics: David Yates Mason

Director: André Charlott

Cast: Lea Seidl (*Empress Maria-Theresa*), Franco Foresta (*Archduke Franz*), Jay Laurier (*Prohaska*), Betty Norton (*Cenci*), Doris Hare (*Kathie*), Eddie Garr (*Mayor of Vienna*), Nancy Neale, Betty French, Eileen o'Mahoney, Karle Melene, Farleigh Price,

Songs: Vienna My Own, One Day, I Always Like to Be Alone, I Only Long For You, How Can You Say such Frightful Things? In Ravenna, People Love to Dance.



Franco Foresta



Lea Seidl

Story: The Empress Maria-Theresa objects to the iniquities of the new fangled dance, the waltz, while meantime her husband the Archduke Franz is flirting with a lady in waiting. To punish him, the Empress disguises herself and attends a local party where, of course, the Archduke flirts with her, not realising it is his wife. Sub-plots and supporting characters include Prohaska, the bucolic Court Councillor, Cenci and Kathie, two ladies of the Court, the Mayor of Vienna

Notes: The Viennese composer Hans May, mostly known for his film scores, had very recently arrived in Britain as a refugee from the Nazi Anschluss. He would go on to write for many British films in the 40s and 50s, particularly the score for "Brighton Rock", and would later write the hit musical "Carissima". "Dancing City" featured two foreign artists, Lea Seidl and Franco Foresta, the Italian tenor. Following complaints about his problems with the English language and difficulty in handling the dialogue, he was rapidly replaced by

Derek Oldham. The show closed on June 15th, after just seven weeks.

GLAMOROUS NIGHT

London run: Drury Lane, May 2nd (234 Performances)

Music & Book: Ivor Novello

Lyrics: Christopher Hassall

Director: Leontine Sagan

Choreographer: Ralph Reader

Musical Director: Charles Prentice

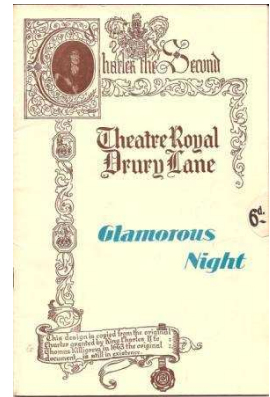
Cast: Ivor Novello (*Anthony Allen*), Mary Ellis (*Militza Hajos*), Minnie Rayner (*Phoebe*), Barry Jones (*King Stefan of Krasnia*), Peter Graves (*Nico*), Olive Gilbert, Trefor Jones, Elisabeth Welch, Muriel Barron.

Songs: Glamorous Night, Fold your wings, Shine through my Dreams, When a Gypsy Played, Far Away in Shanty Town, Why Isn't It You?, The Girl I Knew, Some Day My Heart Will Awake

Story: Anthony Allen, a young inventor, has invented a successful television system. In order to prevent the competition and possible demise of radio, the chief of a radio organisation pays Allen not to promote the invention. Allen travels to Central Europe and goes to the Ruritanian kingdom of Krasnia where he meets Militza, a gypsy princess, who is engaged to marry the King of Krasnia. Allen falls in love with her after saving her life in a shipwreck. For the good of the kingdom, he denies his love and gives her up. The gypsies help the King quell a revolution. The inventor returns to England to watch the king's wedding on his new invention.

Notes: "Glamorous Night" was the first of several Novello musicals in the 1930s given an expensive, spectacular production, with several scene changes and a large cast, including many extras and dancers. Scenes included a London street, the set of an operetta performed in the fictional country of Krasnia, shipboard skating and assassination scenes, the sinking of the ship, a bustling gypsy wedding and a Royal ballroom. In spite of excellent business the show had to come off on November 30th because Drury Lane was already committed to its annual pantomime. The production then toured the provinces before re-opening at the London Coliseum on May 28th 1936 for a run of 91 performances. A film version was made in 1937 with Barry MacKay, Otto Kruger and Mary Ellis.

(The plot very much echoed the current state of affairs where the King of Rumania was willing to give up his throne for the love of a Romany actress, Mme Lupesco. When the film version was made in 1937 the abdication of King Edward VII because of his love for Wallis Simpson was even more relevant.)



The sinking of the "Silver Star"



Ivor Novello as Anthony



Mary Ellis as Militza

THE FLYING TRAPEZE

London run: Alhambra, May 4th (73 performances)

Music: Ralph Benatsky & Mabel Wynne

Book: Hans Müller

English version: Douglas Furber

English lyrics: Douglas Furber, Desmond Carter & Frank Eyton

Director: Erik Charell

Choreographer: Frederick Ashton

Musical Director:

Cast: Jack Buchanan (*René*), June Clyde (*Marie Louise*), Fred Conyngham (*Pierre*), Ivy St Helier (*La Directrice*), Fred Emney (*Bombi, Circus Manager*), Pearl Argyle & Hugh Laing (*Paulette & Petrner*), Wally Mark (*Clown*), Richard Hearne (*Burlesque Tumbler*), Joan Emney (*Fat Girl*), Herbert C. Walton (*Chief of Police*), Cicely Jonas (*Empress*).

Story: Set in a Paris Circus in 1860, the first act is a dress rehearsal with all the various performers, while the second act is the actual performance. René, the King of the Air, is suspected by the police: someone has swung his way into the bedroom of the Empress Eugenie and left a bouquet for her. René, however, despite these romantic gestures, is now attracted to young Marie-Louise, who longs to be part of the circus, and who is assiduously courted by Pierre. When René discovers Marie-Louise is actually his daughter by a long-forgotten flame, she returns to her distracted young lover. Amongst the other circus folk are the circus owner, La Directrice, Bombi the circus owner, the dancers Paulette and Partner, the Clown, the Burlesque Tumbler, and the Fat Girl. The Empress Eugenie comes to the circus, eager to see this mysterious cat-burglar, and so does the Chief of Police. René is arrested in mid-performance and sentenced to imprisonment there and then, until the Empress steps forward to pardon him.

Notes: The show was felt to be rather long and patchy, and with an orchestra on stage and a series of circus acts and acrobats getting in the way of the plot, it was diffuse and unfocussed. The music was not original, and had been drawn from earlier Benatsky shows. It lasted just eight weeks.



Fred Emney & Jack Buchanan

Photo by Stage Photo Co

GAY MASQUERADE

London run: Princes Theatre, May 14th (3 performances)

Music: Michel Hajos

Book & Lyrics: Reginald Fogwell

Director: Reginald Fogwell

Choreographer: Idzikowski

Cast: Helen Gilliland (*Kriska*), Morton Selton (*Nicholas*), Tom Burke (*Carol*), Hugh Wakefield (*Max*), Marie Ault, Nancy Brown, Gabrielle Casartelli, Vincent Sternroyd

Story: The heroine Kriska lives under the guardianship of the genial old Nicholas. Romance comes when she falls in love with the supposed gypsy Carol, who turns out to be as immeasurably wealthy as he is immeasurably romantic. Despite comic relief from a character called Max, and lavish scenes round gypsy camp-fires, and glittering ballrooms filled with glamorous waltzing couples, this was a dreadful, over-blown flop.

Notes: Reginald Fogwell was an established film director and a writer of screenplays – his most recent film had been “Two Hearts in Waltz Time” with Carl Brisson and Frances Day. However, he managed to misjudge this show completely, which opened on a Tuesday and failed to finish the week.

GAY DECEIVERS

London run: Gaiety, May 23rd
 Transfer: Coliseum July 15th
 (Total 123 performances)
Music: Moïse Simon & Martin Broones
Book & Lyrics: Henri Duvernois,
 Bertal-Maubon & Champfleury
English version: Reginald Arkell
Director: William Mollison
Choreographer: Frederick Lord
Musical Director: Debroy Somers
Producer: Lee Ephraim

Cast: David Hutcheson (*Bob Ferris*),
 Charlotte Greenwood (*Isabel Ferris*),
 Clifford Mollison (*Pat Russell*),
 Claire Luce (*Maricousa Lavelle*),
 Walter Williams (*Horace Lavelle*),
 Gina Malo (*Vivienne*),
 Victor Dill (*Rupert Paget*),
 Ivor Barnard (*John Soames*),
 Wyn Weaver, Jeffrey Piddock, Enid Lowe



Photo by Houston Rogers

Charlotte Greenwood & Ivor Barnard

Songs: Zing Went the Strings of My Heart, It Happened in the Moonlight, Serenade

Story: Bob Ferris, nephew of the wealthy and eccentric Isabel Ferris, is shipped off to Princess Island in the West Indies to have a little discipline instilled into him on his aunt's sugar plantation. Knowing what is coming to him, he persuades his friend Pat Russell to swap identities – so that Pat does all the hard work while Bob can pursue a romance with Maricousa Lavelle, the fiery rhumba-dancing daughter of Horace Lavelle. Every time the put-upon Pat tries to reveal his true identity, Bob calls for him to be ducked in a bucket of water – the only way to stave off the delusions he is prone to. Aunt Isabel parachutes herself into the island to sort it all out: Bob, unmasked, ends up with Maricousa, and Pat ends up with Vivienne, daughter of Rupert Paget of the Colonial Office.

Notes: Based very loosely on the French musical hit “Toi et moi”, the original show contained much Latin-American music by the Cuban composer Moïse Simon. For this English adaptation most of the songs were by the American Martin Broones, whose wife Charlotte Greenwood played the leading role. The score interpolated “Zing Went the Strings of My Heart” from the Broadway musical “Thumbs Up”. It was clearly a mistake to move the very successful show from the more intimate Gaiety to the vast expanses of the Coliseum (made necessary by a prior booking at the Gaiety), and it managed just two months in its new venue.

TANTIVY TOWERS (1st Revival)

London run: Lyric Hammersmith, June 6th (21 performances)
Music: Thomas F. Dunhill
Book & Lyrics: A.P. Herbert
Director: Dennis Arundell
Musical Director: Claud Powell
Producer: Claud Powell

Cast: Hazel Jennings (*Jenny Jay*), Steuart Wilson (*Hugh Heather*),
 Dennis Arundell (*Viscount Harkaway*), Maggie Teyte (*Lady Ann Gallop*),
 George H. Bishop (*Earl of Tantivy*), Violet Southam (*Countess of Tantivy*),
 rank Phillips (*Captain Bareback*)

Original London run: Lyric Hammersmith/New Theatre , Jan/April 1931

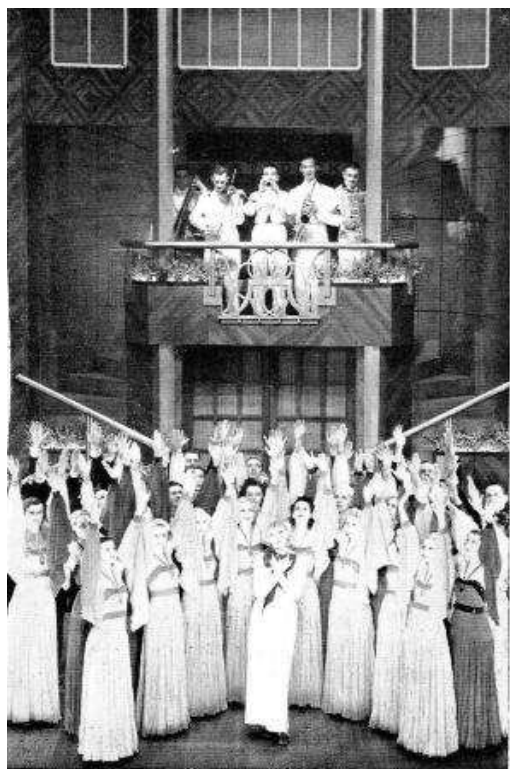


Photo by Eric Gray

ANYTHING GOES

London run: Palace, June 14th
(261 performances)

Music & Lyrics: Cole Porter
Book: Guy Bolton
& P.G. Wodehouse

Director: Frank Collins

Choreographer: Buddy Bradley

Musical Director: Francis Collinson

Producer: Charles B. Cochran

Cast: Jeanne Aubert (*Reno*),
Jack Whiting (*Billy Crocker*),
Sydney Howard (*Moon-Faced Mooney*),
Adele Dixon (*Hope Harcourt*),
Betty Kean (*Bonnie*)

Songs: I Get a Kick Out of You, There'll Always Be a Lady Fair, All through the Night, Blow Gabriel Blow, You're the Top, Be Like the Bluebird, The Gypsy in Me

Story: On board the "SS American" are nightclub singer Reno Sweeney and her friend Billy Crocker. Billy has stowed away to be near his beloved Hope Harcourt, who is accompanied by her fiancé, Sir Evelyn, and destined for a marriage planned for business reasons, not love. Other passengers include

Moonface Mooney, Public Enemy No 13, who is disguised as a Priest. In the course of the show Billy is mistaken for a notorious killer and is forced to dress up in various disguises, Moonface loses everything in a gambling session with two Chinamen and Sir Evelyn is exposed for philandering. But happily, Billy ends up with Hope, Reno ends up with Sir Evelyn, and Moonface turns out to be an innocent man after all.

Notes: The original 1934 Broadway production (starring Ethel Merman) had an elaborate plot involving a shipwreck. Just before opening night there was a real maritime disaster when the "SS Morro Castle" sank with a loss of 125 lives. This meant some considerable last-minute re-writing. The first London production ran for 261 performances at the Palace Theatre starring the French actress Jeanne Aubert, and the nationality of Reno Sweeney was changed from American to French to suit the leading lady's nationality.

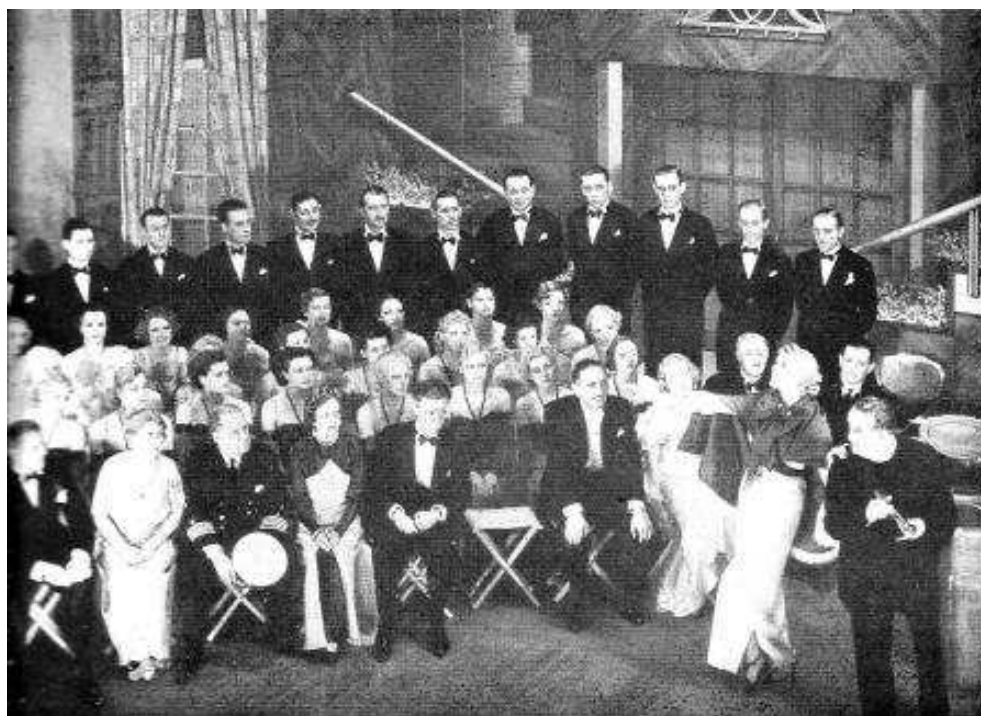
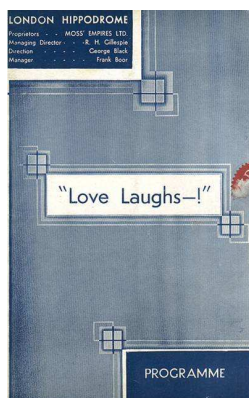


Photo by Eric Gray



LOVE LAUGHS!

London run: London Hippodrome, June 27th
(96 performances)

Music: Noel Gay

Book & Lyrics: Clifford Grey & Greatrex Newman

Additional songs: Mabel Wayne & Desmond Carter

Director: Campbell Gullan

Choreographer: Frederick Lord

Musical Director: Bill Mayerl

Cast: Allan Kearns (*Tony Thornton*),
Laddie Cliff (*Gus Burns*), Paul Blake (*Lord Tollington*),
Barbara Newbury (*Eve Crawley*),

Renee Houston (*Jenny*), Kelvin Bernard (*Crouch*), Noel Leyland, James Carew,
Gilly Flower, Joan Swinstead, Sydney Keith.

Songs: Our Very Occasional Guinea a Day, Caravan of Dreams, Eve, Oh to be in Dartmoor, Time, Show Me How to Hi-De-Hi, I'm Mad about Music (*By Wayne/Carter: Here's to You and Love, You're My Secret Worry*)

Story: Tony Thornton is a film-writer, and his friend, Gus Burns, a publicity man, both facing the sack because they have failed to get the necessary "plugs" for their latest film "The Jewel Princess". They come up with a scheme to fake the robbery of the diamond necklace specially lent to the film company by Lord Tollington and worn by leading lady Eve Crawley in the film. They achieve the publicity but unfortunately with the result that they end up for real in Dartmoor, guilty of a non-existent robbery. At this point Jenny the continuity girl (in love with Gus), and Eve (in love with Tony) manage to help them escape, and after a series of near-misses with the pursuing law, the truth comes out – the necklace they "stole" was a fake. Lord Tollington in collusion with Crouch, his chauffeur, had lent the company a fake necklace as part of an insurance scam. The Lord and Crouch replace Tony and Gus in their Dartmoor cell, and all ends happily.



Barbara Newbury & Renee Houston
with Laddie Cliff & Allen Kearns



Webster Booth & Jacqueline Francell

A KINGDOM FOR A COW

London run: Savoy, June 28th (11 performances)

Music: Kurt Weill

Original book & Lyrics: Robert Vambery

Adapted Book: Reginald Arkell

English lyrics: Desmond Carter

Director: Ernest Matrai & Felix Weissberger

Musical Director: Muir Matheson

Cast: Webster Booth (*Juan*), Jacqueline Francell (*Juantita*),
George Gee (*Leslie Jones*), Aubrey Mather (*President*),
Bobbie Comber (*General Conchas*), Hay Petrie, Vivienne Chatterton,
Cecil Brooking

Songs: In 1497, Two Hearts, Goodbye My Love, As Long as I Love,

Story: Ucqua and Santa Maria are two South Sea Islands living happily together. Juan and Juanita are planning to marry because Juan owns a cow that can provide six litres of milk a day. But an American arms-dealer, Leslie Jones, bribes and flatters the Islands' Presidents into buying machine-guns and rifles they do not need. To pay for these weapons, a tax is introduced, and to pay the tax, Juan has to sell his cow and cancel the wedding, and is then conscripted into the army. Juanita has to get a job singing in a night-club. When General Garcia Conchas launches a military coup and Juan opposes him, Juan is captured and ordered to face a firing-squad. But it turns out that all the rifles and bullets are duds. The people finally realise how they have been exploited and peace is declared. Juan finally gets to buy another cow, and, at last, wedding bells ring out.

Notes: In 1934 Kurt Weill and Robert Vambery, both refugees from Nazi Germany, began work in Paris on an operetta called "Der Kuhhandel". The German title means "cattle trading", but in the German slang of the 1930s it referred to manoeuvrings by politicians. No management showed any interest so the operetta was abandoned. Then in early 1935, they collaborated with Reginald Arkell and Desmond Carter on a musical-comedy version of the same story. It premiered at the Savoy and was praised by certain critics and musical experts, but completely failed at the box-office, running for only two weeks.

TULIP TIME

London run: Alhambra, August 14th (425 performances)

Music: Colin Wark

Lyrics: Bruce Sievier

Book: Worton David & Alfred Parker

Additional music & lyrics: Hubert W. David

Director: Anne Croft

Choreographer: Buddy Bradley

Producer: Anne Croft

Cast: Bernard Clifton (*Carl Vincent*), Jean Colin (*Angela Brightwell*), Betty Baskomb (*Hazel Pears*), Steve Geray (*Baron "Piggy"*), Joan Fred Emney (*Miss Gandersluis*), George Gee (*Jepson*), George Hayes (*P.C. Humperdinck*), Sydney Fairbrother (*Miss Schnapps*), Ena Grossmith (*Hope*)

Songs: Sailing with the Breeze, To Market We must go, Song & Chorus, Aces of the Air,

Story: Carl Vincent, a young flying officer, secretly marries Angela Brightwell, and at the wedding Angela's school-friend Hazel falls for Carl's friend, a goofy Hungarian aristocrat called "Piggy". The problem is both girls are still students at Miss Gandersluis' Academy for Girls in the Dutch town of Vanderlue – and as soon as the wedding is over they are packed off back to school. Carl and Piggy are desperate to see their girls again, but the school is closely guarded. With Carl's batman, Jepson, disguised as an imposing matron with two daughters to educate, they arrive at the school – for a series of comical scenes involving dormitories, school visits to the tulip fields, and a host of adventures until finally they are all able to escape, flown away in the capable hands of Flying Officer Carl.

Notes: Based on the 1895 play "The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown" by Robert Buchanan and Charles Marlowe, the first attempt at turning it into a musical was called "Sweet Seventeen" and had toured during 1933 with little success. It was then re-written several times, and made it into London helped by the fact the Alhambra was suddenly empty following the "Flying Trapeze" failure. Playing twice-nightly and with specially reduced price tickets it was, finally, a hit. Among the schoolgirls were Wendy Toye and Ruby Moule (who would later, renamed Vanessa Lee, become a West End star).



Bernard Clifton & Jean Colin



Bernard Clifton & Steve Geray as schoolgirls

PLEASE TEACHER!

London run: London Hippodrome, October 2nd
(301 performances)

Music: Jack Waller & Joseph Tunbridge

Lyrics: R.P. Weston & Bert Lee

Book: K.R.G. Browne, R.P. Weston & Bert Lee

Director-Choreographer: Ralph Reader

Musical Director: Joseph Tunbridge

Producer: Jack Waller

Cast: Bobby Howes (*Tommy Deacon*), Sepha Treble (*Ann Trent*),
Wylie Watson (*Clutterbuck*), Vera Pearce (*Miss Trundle*),
Carl Bernard (*Wing Foo*), Arthur Bentley (*Ho Fang*)

Songs: You Give Me Ideas, Whispering Trees, Out in the Open Air, Exercise, Mind How you Cross the Road, The Song of the Cello

Story: Tommy Deacon gains entrance to a Girls' School by pretending to be the brother of Ann Trent, with whom he is in love. Hidden in a bust of Napoleon somewhere on the premises, which once belonged to his aunt, is a fortune of £50,000. As there are five busts, Tommy's search, which must be pursued in secret, takes him all over the place. Clutterbuck, the music master, helps

him on the understanding that he is to have 10% of the findings. They go through a series of farcical adventures: pretending to be sleepwalkers when they are caught in the girls' dormitory; some strange business with Miss Trundle the gym mistress; involvement with Wing Foo and Ho Fang, sinister Chinamen who live next door to the school; and having to take part in the end-of-term school pageant, "Women in History"

Notes: After its successful London run, and a provincial tour, a film version was made in 1938, although plans for a New York production fell through. The show was revived in 1950 for a provincial tour starring Eddie Molloy and Hattie Jacques as the Gym Mistress – but that tour never made it into the West End.

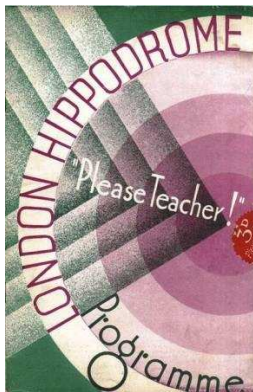


Photo by Stage Photo Co

Bobby Howes & Sepha Treble

RIVALS!

London run: Kingsway, October 23rd (86 performances)

Music: J.R. Monsell & Herbert Hughes

Book & Lyrics: J.R. Monsell

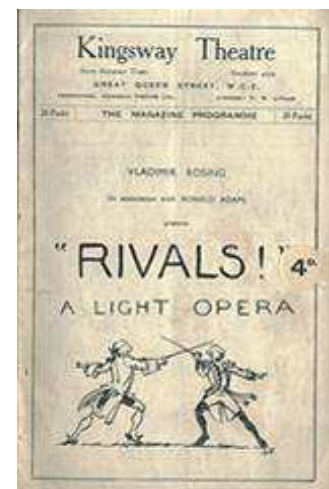
Additional songs: Irvin Hinchcliffe

Director: Vladimir Rosing

Musical Director: Hyam Greenbaum

Cast: Elsie French (*Mrs Malaprop*),
Norman Williams (*Sir Anthony Absolute*),
Frederick Ranalow (*Sir Lucius O'Trigger*),
Winifred Campbell (*Lydia Languish*),
Bruce Carfax (*Captain Absolute*),
Grahame Clifford (*Bob Acres*)

Notes: This was a musical version of Sheridan's "The Rivals", and had been tried out at the Embassy on September 24th. It ran for eleven weeks, during which it was honoured by a visit from Queen Mary.





Fred Emney, Leslie Henson & Richard Hearne

SEEING STARS

London run: Gaiety Theatre, October 31st
(236 performances)

Music: Martin Brookes

Lyrics: Graham John

Book: Guy Bolton & Fred Thompson

Director: William Mollison

Choreographer: Frederick Lord

Musical Director: Debroy Somers

Producer: Frith Shephard & Leslie Henson

Cast: Roy Royston (*Ken Carraway*),
Leslie Henson (*Jimmie Swing*),
Louise Browne (*Princess Valerie*),
Fred Emney (*Archduke Rollo*),
Jessie Hitter (*Archduchess Helen*),
Richard Hearne (*Stefan*),
Florence Desmond (*Countess Poldi*)

Songs: Don't Stand in the Doorway, Public

Sweetheart Number One, You Grow On Me, It's Lovely to be in Love Again, Never to be Forgotten Melody, Rocking with You in My Arms

Story: Ken Carraway and Jimmie Swing are hotel owners with big money problems, and to avoid the bailiffs, Jimmie disguises himself as an Oriental fortune-teller (and a hotel porter). But this leads to more trouble, until Jimmie is accepted in marriage by the democratically-minded Princess Valerie, whose parents, the tipling Archduke Rollo and the Archduchess Helen are the dethroned rulers of some European country. Stefan, the ex-ruler's equerry adds to the general gaiety with his eccentric dancing as does the Countess Poldi.

Notes: The very thin plot was an excuse for Leslie Henson, Richard Hearne and Florence Desmond to perform their established specialties in comedy, performing alongside the veteran drunk act of Fred Emney's, the variety act of the Four Crotchets and Kay Foster, and lavish dance spectacles from a large chorus. A little way into the run Florence Desmond developed a mysterious illness (eventually put down to excessive lead in her lipstick brand) and, being unable to continue, the part was re-written for the German cabaret artist, Hildegarde.

TWENTY TO ONE

London run: London Coliseum, November 12th (383 performances)

Music: Billy Mayerl

Lyrics: Frank Eyton

Book: L. Arthur Rose

Director: L. Arthur Rose

Choreographer: Fred A. Leslie

Musical Director: Harold Brewer

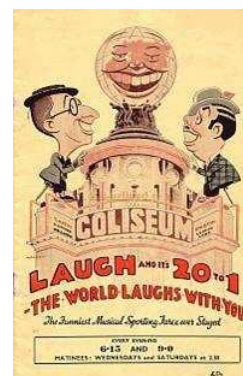
Producer: Lupino Lane

Cast: Margaret Yarde (*Mrs Murgatroyd-Smith*), Clifford Mollison (*Timothy Quaintance*),
Lupino Lane (*Bill Snibson*), Betty Norton (*Mary Wallington*),
Arthur Rigby Jr (*General Wallington*), Joyce Barbour (*Lucretia Harbottle*)

Songs: How do you Like your Eggs Fried?, I've Never Felt like This Before

Story: Mrs Murgatroyd-Smith is President of the Anti-Gambling League, where one of her members, Timothy Quaintance, has some financial problems. Bill Snibson, a repentant bookmaker joins the League in a fit of guilt, but rapidly reverts to his old form when he is able to help Timothy by getting him a "dead cert" at twenty to one. The horse wins, and timid Timothy even manages to win the hand of Mary, daughter of the pompous General Wallington. Meantime Bill manages to get in and out of every possible scrape, continually tripping over the carpet, falling up or down stairs, and even managing to get Lucretia Harbottle, a stalwart of the League, outrageously drunk.

Notes: After a six week tour with some re-writing and refining, the show opened in London to huge success. It was a lavish production, with two dozen chorus girls and some spectacular dances. Lupino Lane's lead character of Bill Snibson was such a success, that he would revive the name and personality in 1937's "Me and My Girl" which would prove to be an even greater hit. The show played twice-nightly, and early in the run Lupino Lane lost his voice. Rather than cancel, his understudy Len Morris walked behind him doing all the dialogue and singing whilst the star himself did all the acrobatics and comic business.



A ROYAL EXCHANGE

London run: His Majesty's, December 6th (10 performances)

Music: Edward Horan

Book & Lyrics: Frederick Herendeen

English version: Archie Menzies

Director: Tom Reynolds

Choreographer: Max Rivers

Cast: Ramon Novarro (*Carlos Gavilan*),
Hugh Wakefield (*Baron Martinez*),
Doris Kenyon (*Princess Sylvia*), Eddie Foy Jr (*Con Conley*),
Doris Carson (*Countess Eloise*)

Songs: Fame is a Phoney, The Hair of the Heir, You're Asking Me, Evening Star, I Found a Song, Nuts Over You, Romance is Calling

Story: Carlos Gavilan, a film-star, bears a remarkable resemblance to the vanished Prince of San Verna, and is snapped up by Baron Martinez, the leading statesman of that principality and entreated to impersonate the missing ruler. He undertakes the task and among other things has to pretend to Princess Sylvia, the vanished monarch's bride that he is the man who married her three years before and bolted with a lady-in-waiting on the marriage night. The Prince is charmed with him and when a day or two later the Baron learns that the lawful ruler has been killed in Paris, his substitute is able to continue his career as royal ruler and husband, and the show ends on a chorus of celebration and gaiety.



Photo by Stage Photo Co

Ramon Novarro & Doris Kenyon

Notes: The main selling point of this show was the hugely successful film-star Ramon Novarro in the leading role. Following his wildly successful singing appearance the previous year at the London Palladium, this was the chance to see him acting as well. The problem was, for all his smouldering on-screen performances, his stage-acting was non-existent. Following dreadful notices, the show closed on December 14th, after ten performances. This show had originally opened on Broadway on January 30th 1934, and ran for 120 performances. Its American title was "All the King's Men" and had been adapted from the stage play "Carlo Rocco". The British version had been considerably re-written, with a number of characters dropped and a number of name-changes – but using most of the original music.

LA POUPEE (4th Revival)

London run: His Majesty's, December 21st (9 performances)

Music: Edmond Audran

Book & Lyrics: Maurice Ordonneau

English version: Arthur Sturgess

Director: F. Pope Stamper

Cast: Walter Bird (*Lancelot*), Mark Lester (*Hilarius*), Jean Leslie (*Madame Hilarius*),
Rosalie Dyer (*Henri*), Conway Dixon (*Baron Chanterelle*), Jean Colin (*Alesia*)

Notes: This was more or less the same production which had played Daly's in 1930 and had been on the provincial touring circuit through the intervening years. Several cast members had remained throughout, although the production had undergone some small directing changes. This came into London for just one week before resuming its tour.

Original London run: Prince of Wales, February 1897

First revival: Prince of Wales, December 1898

Second revival: Prince of Wales, 1904

Third revival: Daly's December 1930

FRITZI

London run: Adelphi, December 20th

Transfer: Shaftesbury Theatre, January 13th 1936
(Total 64 performances)

Music: Carl Tucker

Lyrics: Arthur Stanley

Book: Sydney Blow & Edward Royce

Director: John Wyse

Choreographer: Marianne & Peter Sergei

Musical Director: Arthur Rule

Cast: Rosalinde Fuller (*Fritzi*), Ivan Wilmot (*André Sorbier*),
Madeleine Seymour (*Paulette Leclaire*),
Alfred Wellesley (*Gendarme Chieff*), Leslie French (*Charles*),
Betty Frankis (*Desirée*), Bruce Winston (*Paul DuPortal*)

Songs: I Love You, My Lord the Carriage Waits, A One Man Woman, It Had to Be You, Fluttering Round a Flame, And So let's Go, Laugh All the Shadows Away, Come Under My Wing, Star Gazing.

Story: Fritzi is a stage-struck Parisian gamine, based in an old wine cellar, and running a troupe of boys, ostensibly earning a living by making cigarettes from discarded fag-ends, but supplementing their income by "collecting" things which are not their own. Fritzi is enamoured of the famous actor-manager André Sorbier of the Boîte aux Joujoux. By chance, one of the things "collected" by the gang is a pie ordered by Sorbier, and when the actor and the pursuing gendarmerie track her down, she passes herself off as an impoverished baroness and wheedles her way into an audition. Once inside the theatre she manages to out-wit the leading lady, Paulette Leclaire, and get herself invited for supper at Sorbier's private apartment. However, things go awry, and she runs away, back to the wine-cellar and the boys. In true musical comedy style, however, the smitten Sorbier comes after her and offers her marriage. Other characters in the story include Charles, a lively stage manager, Desirée, a rival actress, and Paul Duportal, a theatrical backer whose real trade is in ladies' corsets.

Notes: Carl Tucker (the composer) was heavily promoted as being "from Vienna", and the leading lady, Rosalinde Fuller, a well known classical actress, was promoted as having begun her career at the Folies Bergère. It was this mish-mash of musical styles that made the show heavy-going - dance sequences such as "South Sea Idyll" and a Valse Scena, acrobats and a mouth-organ speciality didn't really fit alongside its romantic story. It ran its contracted month at the Adelphi and then transferred for a further six weeks at the Shaftesbury - but never really caught on. (When Rosalinde Fuller died in 1982, aged 90, it was discovered that she had had an affair in 1920 with the author F.Scott Fitzgerald and was the inspiration for the chorus girl character in his novel "Head and Shoulders")



Rosalinde Fuller

Photo by Francis Brugiere

AT THE SILVER SWAN

London run: Palace, February 19th (51 performances)

Music: Edmond Samuels

Book & Lyrics: Guy Bolton & Clifford Grey

Director: John Harwood

Choreographer: Max Rivers

Musical Director: Percival Mackey

Producer: Charlton Marton

Cast: Bruce Carfax (*Terry Burke*), Alice Delysia (*Alice Brevanne*), Marta Labarr (*Mary Weston*), Steve Geray (*Sergei Tonicoff*), Magda Kun (*Katja*), Lucienne & Ashor (*Speciality Dancers*)

Songs: Jackeroo, Bushranger, Boomerang, Gorgeou, The Man I Adore

Story: Set in the 1870s Australian outback, Terry Burke is a fellow with an eye for the ladies, and manages to have them all falling at his feet. The two most smitten are Frenchwoman Alice Brevanne and an English girl, Mary Weston. When it turns out that Mary is actually Alice's long-lost sister, the noble, sensible Alice allows her younger sister to get the prize of marrying Terry. A sub-plot involved Sergei Tonicoff and Katja, comical foreigners adrift in Australian culture, and a dance speciality act, Lucienne and Ashor, who get involved in a bar-fight, a kind of "Outback Apache" which was sensationally violent, and spectacularly acrobatic and brought the house down at every performance.

Notes: This was originally written by Edmond Samuels, a wealthy Australian enthusiast who came to London especially to promote his work. Under the title "The Highwayman", he paid for a concert performance at the Wigmore Hall and attracted sufficient interest for producer Charlton Marton to stage it, albeit with a re-written book and lyrics and some additional music by Percival Mackey. The final result was credited it "from a theme suggested by "The Highwayman". After a two week tryout in Glasgow it came into London for a six week run and a cool reception. A disheartened composer returned to Australia, where he finally managed to get his original version staged in Sydney with limited success nearly fifteen years later.



Alice Delysia

RISE AND SHINE

London run: Drury Lane, May 7th (44 performances)



Photo by Stage Photo Co

RISE AND SHINE

London run: Drury Lane, May 7th (44 performances)

Music: Robert Stolz

Original Book & Lyrics: Arnold & Gilbert

English Book & Lyrics: Harry Graham & Desmond Carter

Director-Choreographer: Ralph Reader

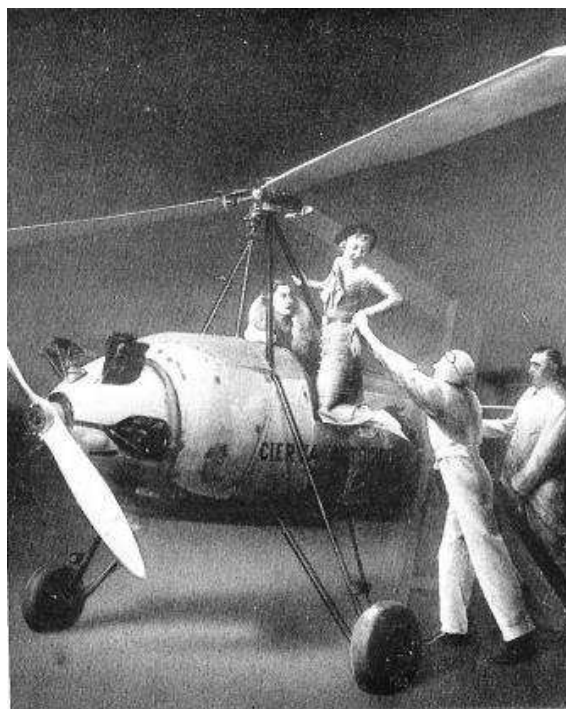
Cast: Meriel Forbes (*Princess Yraine*),
Grace Lane (*Queen of Moronia*), John Kevan (*Boris*),
Binnie Hale (*Anne*), Syd Walker (*Oswald Sibthorpe*),
Geoffrey Sumner (*Alec Merton*),
Jack Whiting (*Jack Harding*), D. Hay Petri (*Count Bruzzi*),
Clarice Hardwick (*Marie*),
Irene Browne (*Duchess of Bermondsey*).

Songs: Darling You, I'm Building Up to an Awful Let Down, Leave it to Love, Take Your Time From Me, Home Again, The Song of the Alpine Guides, Moronia is Throwing a Party, Tokay (Title song: Rise and Shine by Vincent Youmans)

Story: Princess Yraine of Moronia is packed off to England by her mother the Queen because she has fallen in love with a young Moronian Officer, Boris. The Queen accompanies her daughter to London and engages as the Princess's companion, a young lady named Anne, recommended by her uncle, Oswald Sibthorpe, head of the Moronian Travel Bureau. Anne is engaged to silly-ass Alec Merton, but soon falls in love with his smart friend, Jack Harding, a famous aviator. Anne and the Princess secretly conspire and persuade Jack to fly her back to Moronia his helicopter, and there, in the Schloss Pumpnickel, the Princess and Boris are married. There is a terrible fuss when the Moronian Ambassador, Count Bruzzi, finds out, and he has Anne and Jack arrested. But all turns out happily, and Anne and Jack can marry, silly-ass Alec has got a new love in pert young Marie, and even Uncle Oswald has made a catch in the form of the Duchess of Bermondsey.

Notes: The original title of this show was "Flying High", but a straight play with the same name had opened on Broadway and was being considered for a London production, so the musical's title was changed to "Rise and Shine". One of its memorable scenes featured a helicopter taking off (though in those days it was called a "gyroscope") – pre-dating the famous "Miss Saigon" helicopter by 43 years! In spite of its spectacle, this show was not a success and ended its run on June 13th

A revised version, cut down, altered and adapted by Con West and Geoffrey Orme went out on a provincial tour in 1937 under a new title "Darling You". This played at Streatham Hill Theatre in March 1937.



Meriel Forbes, Binnie Hale & Jack Whiting

Photo by Stage Photo Co

GLAMOROUS NIGHT (1st Revival)

London run: Coliseum, May 28th (91 Performances)

Music & Book: Ivor Novello

Lyrics: Christopher Hassall

Director: F.C. Marshall

Musical Director: Tom Lewis

Producer: Prince Littler

Cast: Barry Sinclair (*Anthony Allen*), Muriel Barron (*Militza Hajos*), Minnie Rayner (*Phoebe*),
Cyril Gardiner (*King Stefan of Krasnia*), Wilfred Gartrell (*Nico*), Olive Gilbert .

Notes: When Ivor Novello was told the hugely successful Drury Lane run of "Glamorous Night" would be withdrawn because of the forthcoming pantomime season, he was furious. It was madness to withdraw such a smash hit success. He even offered to guarantee Drury Lane £8,000 profit if they agreed to cancel the pantomime and allow his show to keep running. However, they said no, so "Glamorous Night" moved briefly to Streatham Hill Theatre and then to Glasgow for the Christmas season. It returned to London at the Coliseum with this production, but with several cast changes – and without Ivor Novello and Mary Ellis, and with its impetus lost, it ran for just seven weeks. However, it went out on a provincial tour again with great success.

NO NO NANETTE (1st Revival)

London run: Hippodrome, July 8th
(87 performances)

Music: Vincent Youmans

Lyrics: Irving Caesar & Otto Harbach

Book: Otto Harbach & Frank Mandel

Director: William Mollison

Choreographer: Joan Davis

Musical Director: Harry Perritt

Producer: Jack Waller & Moss Empires

Cast: Shaun Glenville (*Jimmy Smith*),
Maidie Andrews (*Sue Smith*),
Phyllis Monkham (*Lucille Early*),
Clifford Mollison (*Billy Early*),
Charlotte Leigh (*Pauline*),
Barbara Vernon (*Nanette*), Joan Savage,
Howard Lester



Helena Taylor, Kitty Glen & Viviette Donneley (Chorus)

Songs: Too Many Rings Around Rosie,
The Call of the Sea, I Want to Be Happy, Tea for Two, You Can Dance With Any Girl at All, Where Has My
Hubby Gone Blues?, Take a Little One Step



Story: Jimmy Smith, a married New York Bible manufacturer and the guardian of Nannette, has most innocently been giving financial support to help the careers of three different girls in three different cities. Jimmy, his wife and ward, together with family friends Lucille and Billy Early all gather for a holiday at Jimmy's Chickadee Cottage in Atlantic City. Totally unplanned, the cottage is also visited by the three young ladies. This causes all manner of complications and misunderstandings, not helped by the presence of the Smith's family maid, Pauline.

Notes: The original production was stuck on a USA provincial tour undergoing re-writes and re-casting, when a facsimile production opened at London's Palace Theatre in March 1925 starring Ginnie Hale and George Grosssmith. The London run lasted 665 performances – twice the New York run - when the show finally made it to Broadway six months after the London premiere. This was its first revival in the West End, and ran for just over nine weeks

Original London run: Palace Theatre, March 1925

LILAC TIME (7th Revival)

London run: Coliseum, July 29th (78 performances)

Music: Franz Schubert

English version & Lyrics: Adrian Ross

Director: Lee Ephraim

Musical Director: H.A. Carruthers

Cast: Maurice d'Oisley (*Schubert*), Helen Gilliland (*Lili*),
Charles Mayhew (*Von Schober*), George Graves (*Christian Veit*)

Notes: This was the existing provincial tour brought into the Coliseum as a stopgap. It ran for eight and a half weeks before being replaced with the provincial tour of "The Desert Song". The show had been in continuous performance either in London or the provinces for the past fourteen years without a break.

Original London production: Lyric Theatre, December 1922

First Revival: Lyric, December 1925; Second Revival: Daly's December, 1927

Third Revival: Daly's Theatre, 1928; Fourth Revival : Lyric Theatre, May 1930

Fifth Revival: Globe, December 1932; Sixth Revival: Alhambra, December 1933

THE TWO BOUQUETS

London run: Ambassadors Theatre, August 13th

Music: Adapted from various Victorian composers

Book & Lyrics: Herbert & Eleanor Farjeon

Director: Maxwell Wray

Cast: George Benson (*Edward Gill*),
Adelaide Stanley (*Kate*), Edith Lee (*Laura*),
Bruce Carfax (*Julian*), Warren Jenkins (*Albert*),
Frederick Ranalow, Joyce Barbour, Gertrude Musgrove,
James Page, Heather Boys, Eleanor Hallam, Betty Pugh.

Songs: Fly Forth O Gentle Dove, Dearest Miss Flo, Juanita,
When I Was Just a Bounding Boy.

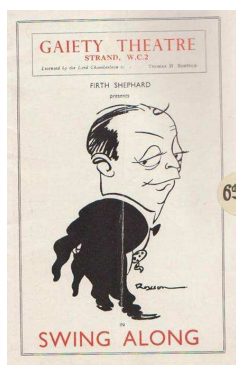
Story: Kate Gill and her cousin, Laura, nearly lose their lovers as a result of a mix-up. The fault lies with Kate's brother, Edward, a deplorable rake who becomes regrettably tipsy and mixes up the two bouquets entrusted to him by his friends, Julian and Albert. After much misunderstanding, all ends happily.

Notes: Written by brother and sister, Herbert and Eleanor Farjeon, the music was arranged from around twenty different Victorian composers.



*Edith Lee, George Benson,
Frederick Ranalow & Adelaide Stanley*

Photo by Stage Photo Co



SWING ALONG

London run: Gaiety, September 2nd (311 performances)

Music: Martin Brookes

Lyrics: Graham John

Book: Guy Bolton, Fred Thompson & Douglas Furber

Director: Leslie Henson & Herbert Bryan

Cast: Leslie Henson (*Maxie Mumm*), John E. Coyle (*Xabiski*), Gavin Gordon (*Torterro*),
Fred Emney (*Julien Brevai*), Louise Browne (*Lili Brevai*), Roy Royston (*Paul Jerome*),
Richard Hearne (*Alphonse*), Zelma O'Neal (*Miami*)

Songs: Let's Be Ladies, Like a Tin Can Tied to a Puppy Dog's Tail, Unbelievable, Trafalgar Square, Another Dream Gone Wrong

Story: Maxie Mumm, having been cleaned out at Monte Carlo, is persuaded, for a considerable sum, to get mixed up in European politics. He undertakes to impersonate the notorious Xabiski, the chief of the Yellow Shirts, a man whose life is in danger from a rival political faction, the No Shirts, headed by Torterro. Meantime the elderly Julien Brevai wants his lovely niece, Lili, to marry Xabiski, but she is in love with Paul Jerome. To get close to her, Paul, too, decides to impersonate Xabiski. With Alphonse, an evil photographer, a rival fake Xabiski, a real Xabiski, pursuing hoodlums, and a showgirl called Miami all on his tail, Maxie is forced to don a whole series of additional disguises – even a bride, a soubrette and a can-can dancer – before the story comes to a suitable happy ending.

Notes: This was reuniting the West End's favourite team: Leslie Henson, Fred Emney, Richard Hearne, and with the never-failing brilliance of Leslie Henson, it was a sure-fire hit. It ran for 311 performances before going a provincial tour.



Leslie Henson & Fred Emney

Photo by Stage Photo Co

CARELESS RAPTURE

London run: Drury Lane, September 11th (295 performances)

Music: Ivor Novello

Book: Ivor Novello

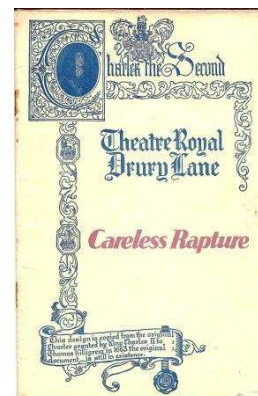
Lyrics: Christopher Hassell

Director: Leontine Sagan

Choreographer: Joan Davis & Antony Tudor

Musical Director: Charles Prentice

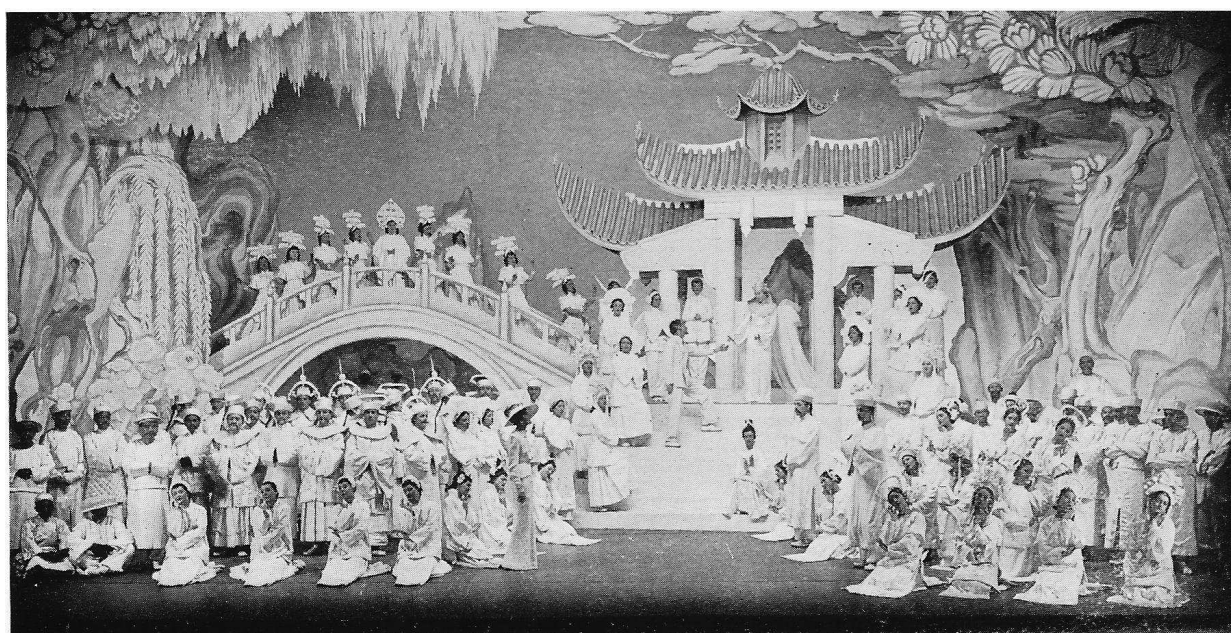
Cast: Ivor Novello (*Michael*), Ivan Samsom (*Sir Rodney*), Dorothy Dickson (*Penelope Lee*), Zena Dare (*Phyllida Frame*), Olive Gilbert (*Mme Simonette*),



Songs: Why is there ever goodbye? Singing Lesson, Slow Rhythms of Long Ago, Bridge of Lovers, Music in May, Love made the song, Wait for me, Hampstead Heath, We are the wives, The Manchuko, Love made the song, Pick of the navy.

Story: Michael is the illegitimate brother of Sir Rodney Alderney. They are both in love with the same woman, musical comedy star Penelope Lee. Even though Penelope is formally engaged to his half-brother, Michael pursues Penelope everywhere - from a beauty parlour run by Phyllida Frame to a singing lesson with Mme Simonette, to the home of his rival, and to the stage of the Drury Lane Theatre where she is performing in a musical with fellow performer, Tony. Michael persuades her to join him on an outing to the bank holiday fair on Hampstead Heath, instead of the Savoy where Rodney would have taken her. However, Rodney is suddenly posted to China and takes Penelope with him. There she uses her theatrical experience to help out the Fu-Chin Amateur Operatic Society, the leading players being Mrs Winton and Captain Mellish. Michael follows Rodney and Penelope but they are all caught up in an earthquake. He manages to save Penelope's life and they both flee to the mountains to escape the after-shocks. However they are separated when Michael is kidnapped by bandits. Luckily he manages to escape just in time to whisk Penelope away from his brother.

Notes: Following Novello's hugely successful "Glamorous Night", this was another large-scale extravaganza, aimed at repeating the earlier hit – this time replacing the spectacular shipwreck with an earthquake. The part of Michael is a non-singing role, written specially for Ivor Novello himself, who did not sing in any of his shows, although he allowed himself to do some "send-up" singing in the amateur operatic sequence in this particular show. This time the show was allowed to run from September to June of the following year – Drury Lane had learned its earlier mistake by allowing a pantomime to interrupt a successful Novello run. Later in the run Peter Graves replaced Novello.



The Bridge of Lovers—the all-white finale

Photo by Stage Photo Co

THIS'LL MAKE YOU WHISTLE

London run: Palace Theatre, September 15th
Transfer: Daly's, January 21st 1937 (190 performances total)

Music & Lyrics: Sigler, Goodhart & Hoffman

Book: Guy Bolton & Fred Thompson

Director: Jack Buchanan

Choreographer: Buddy Bradley

Musical Director: George Windeatt

Cast: Jack Buchanan (*Bill Hopping*),
Sylvia Leslie (*Laura Buxton*), Jean Gillie (*Joan Longhurst*),
David Hutchenson (*Archie Codrington*),
William Kendall (*Reggie*), Charles Stone (*Sebastian*),
Elsie Randolph (*Bobbie Rivers*)
Maidie Hope (*Mrs Longhurst*)

Songs: My Red Letter Day, You've Got the Wrong Rumba,
Without Rhythm, Keep Your Eye on the Sky, There Isn't
Any Limit to My Love, I'm in a Dancing Mood.



Photo by Stage Photo Co

David Hutchenson, Jack Buchanan & William Kendall

Story: Bill Hopping in his luxury Knightsbridge flat is a man about time saddled with sporty, horsey Laura Buxton – an old flame he would like to lose now that he has met the delightfully feminine Joan Longhurst. Bill's friends Archie Codrington and Reggie Benson suggest the best way to achieve this is to offend and shock Laura's wealthy uncle, Sebastian. If Uncle Sebastian disapproves and threatens to cut Laura out of his will, that should do the trick. They pretend they all live a life of dissipation and gay abandon and persuade artist's model Bobbie Rivers to aid their deception by behaving outrageously. Unfortunately it turns out that Uncle Sebastian loves every minutes of this "naughty" life and follows them to France to join in the gay abandon. After difficulties with the French gendarmerie and Mrs Longhurst, the prospective mother-in-law, all is resolved when Bill gets his Joan, Reggie ends up happily with Laura, and the others sort themselves out appropriately.

Notes: Guy Bolton and Fred Thompson had had a very successful run of Broadway hits, but now firmly based themselves in London, where they were joined by three Americans to provide the music and lyrics. Its pre-London tour required some re-writing and much revision. A film version, directed by Herbert Wilcox, was made during the run and was premiered at the Empire on February 19th 1937 – one week before the stage show ended its run. During that one week it was possible to see the same cast in the same show, live or on film, in a theatre and a cinema in the same street.

CERTAINLY, SIR!

London run : Hippodrome, September 17th (20 performances)

Music: Jack Waller & Joseph Tunbridge

Book & Lyrics: R.P. Weston & Bert Lee

Director-Choreographer: Ralph Reader

Musical Director: Joseph Tunbridge

Producer: Jack Waller

Cast: Carl Bernard (*Peter Pomeroy*), Renee Houston (*Kirstie Cameron*), Mackenzie Ward (*Sebastian Withers*),
Donald Burr (*Tony Luffington*), George Robey (*Heppelwhite*), Winifred Izard (*Mrs Withers*)

Songs: I'm More than Surprised I'm Amazed, We're a Pair, The Wind and the Rain, Wait Until the Sun Shines

Story: Peter Pomeroy is so totally in love with Scottish lass Kirstie Cameron, that every time he sees her he falls into a cataleptic fit and is often mistaken for being dead. Sebastian Withers (who is also in love with Kirstie) and his friend Tony Luffington (who is in love with Sebastian's sister) suddenly find they have a "corpse" on their hands whilst attending a fancy dress ball at the Lanchester Hotel. They take the body to Sebastian's house, lay it out on the billiard table and instruct Heppelwhite, Sebastian's butler, to get rid of it. It turns out that Heppelwhite is a crook in league with others to blackmail Sebastian, but these nefarious intentions are thrown into confusion when after a yacht trip to Tangier, the "corpse" suddenly turns up alive and throws another fit.

Notes: This was a bit of mish-mash: a fancy dress parade; chorus dancers as Dresden shepherdesses; tap-dancing sailors in a tribute to Nelson and Britannia; piano selections from Tchaikowsky, Chopin, Strauss and Wagner all mixed in with a bizarre plot and geared round the George Robey persona. It ran just 20 performances.

OVER SHE GOES

London run: Saville Theatre, September 23rd (248 performances)

Music: Bill Mayerl

Lyrics: Desmond Carter & Frank Eyton

Book: Stanley Lupino & Arty Ash

Director: Stanley Lupino

Choreographer: Laddie Cliff

Musical Director: Billy Mayerl

Cast: Eric Fawcett (*Lord Harry Drewsden*), Laddie Cliff (*Billy Bowler*),

Stanley Lupino (*Tommy Teacher*), Adele Dixon (*Pamela*),

Sally Gray (*Kitty Deardon*), Teddie St Denis (*Dolly Jordon*),

Barbara Francis (*Alice Mayhill*), Barry O'Neill (*Silas Morner*)

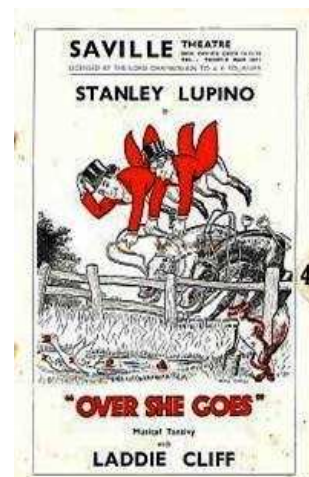
Songs: Yes No, Turn on the Taps, The Dance Goes On, County Wedding, I Breathe on Windows, Mine's a Hopless Case

Story: Lord Harry Drewsden, the new heir, has moved into Drewsden Towers, newly enriched and ennobled because of the disappearance and presumed death of his uncle. He shares his good fortune with two partners, Billy Bowler and Tommy Teacher - all three were formerly part of a third-rate, none-to-successful music-hall act. All three are also engaged to be married: Harry to Pamela, Billy to Kitty Deardon, and Tommy to Dolly Jordon. But suddenly Alice Mayhill re-appears. She was Harry's former fiancée but she jilted him when he had no prospects and no money. Now he has a title and wealth she threatens a breach of promise action, waving a compromising letter as her evidence. Lord Harry and friends try and fail to steal the letter, and then come up with a scheme: Tommy will impersonate Lord Harry's uncle come to life again and so convince the gold-digging Alice that Harry is once again a poor music hall performer. Because Tommy has disappeared (he is now pretending to be the dead Uncle) a worried Dolly suspects foul play and calls in the police to investigate. Things get more complicated when the bully-boy Silas Morner starts courting Dolly, and ends up being arrested for Tommy's "murder". To add even more to the confusion, the REAL Lord Drewsden turns up, not dead after all. Silas ends up with Alice, and the three men go back to the music-hall, this time including the three girls and working as a sextet.

Notes: A film version was made in 1937 with Laddie Cliff, Stanley Lupino and John Wood – with Richard Murdoch in a small role as a Policeman.



Syd Walker, Stanley Lupino & Laddie Cliff



THE DESERT SONG (2nd Revival)

London run: Coliseum, September 24th (112 Performances)

Music: Sigmund Romberg

Book & Lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein II, Otto Harbach & Frank Mandel

Director: Lee Ephraim

Musical Director: Hermann Finck

Cast: Harry Welchman (*Pierre Birabeau*), Edith Day (*Margot Bonvalet*), Frederic Bentley (*Bennie Kidd*),

Lola Waring (*Azuri*), Sidney Pointer (*Sid el Kar*), Walter Bird (*Capt Paul Fontaine*),

Maud Zimbla (*Clementina*), Clarice Hardwick (*Susan*)

Notes: This second London revival was part of an ongoing provincial tour. The cast included many of the original performers from nine years earlier – and the orchestra was conducted on this limited engagement by the original conductor. It ran for three months, being withdrawn for the Coliseum's pantomime season.

Original London run: Drury Lane, 1927

First revival: Alhambra, June 1931

GOING PLACES

London run: Savoy, October 8th (44 performances)

Music & Lyrics: Vivian Ellis

Book: Guy Bolton & Fred Thompson

Director: William Mollison

Choreographer: Walter Gore & Frederick Lord

Musical Director: Kennedy Russell

Cast: Robert Nainby (*Thomas Bax*), Arthur Riscoe (*Freddy Bax*), Richard Dolman (*Gerry Tucker*), June Knight (*Jeanne Laporte*), Olga Baclanova (*Mme Petrova*), Peggy Rawlings (*Sheila*), Dino Galvani (*Riccardo*)

Songs: How Do You Like Your Music?, Drop in Next Time You're Passing, Each Day at Breakfast, There Aren't Enough Love Songs, The Pavements of Paris, Boy Meets Girl, in Madame's House in Passy, Madame Petrova, You're a Superliner

Story: Uncle Thomas Bax is financing his nephew Freddy's music studies in Paris, and turns up unannounced to see how Freddy is getting along. Freddy of course has been having a gay old time, not studying at all, and all his "compositions" have actually been composed by his friend Gerry Tucker. Emergency measures are called for: Freddy's sweetheart, Jeanne Laporte, is called upon to impersonate Madame Petrova, the famous opera star and to give a concert of "Freddy's songs" for Uncle Thomas's benefit. All this subterfuge causes problems between Gerry and his own girlfriend, Sheila, and some major problems with Riccardo, Jeanne's fiercely jealous lover, and even more when the real Olga Petrova arrives on the scene.

Notes: The inexhaustible Guy Bolton and Fred Thompson were back a second time within a month – but this time they were not quite so successful, in spite of the show introducing American June Knight, the Broadway star of Cole Porter's "Jubilee". The opening night received boos from the gallery and it came off after just five weeks.



Arthur Riscoe

BALALAIKA

London run: His Majesty's, December 22nd (569 performances)



BALALAIKA

London run: His Majesty's, December 22nd (569 performances)

Music: George Posford & Bernard Grün

Book & Lyrics: Eric Maschwitz

Director: Leontine Sagan

Choreographer: Joan Davis

Musical Director: Walford Hayden

Producer: Eric Maschwitz

Cast: Eric Marshall (*Colonel Balakirev*),
Dorothy Seacombe (*Mrs Morrison*),
Bennett O'Loughlan (*Randall P. Morrison*),
Roger Treville (*Peter Karagin*), Muriel Angelus (*Lydia Marakova*),
Jerrold Robertshaw (*Prince Karagin*), Arthur Hardy (*Marakov*),
Clifford Mollinson (*Nicki*), Betty Warren (*Masha*)



Songs: Where Are the Snows?, The Devil In Red , Red Rose what can Your Meaning Be?, Hail to Thee Russia, Come This Holy Night of Christmas, All a man requires of a woman, In The Moonlight, If The World Were Mine, At The Balalaika, Ballerina, Sad And Lonely, Be A Casanova, The Night Grows Old

Story: The story begins in Paris in 1924 , in the Balalaika nightclub, where an old man (the former Colonel Balakirev) is singing a sad ballad “Where are the snows?” to an audience of vulgar, drunken Americans (the Robinsons) and assorted drinkers. Then, in flashback, the action moves to St Petersburg in 1914. Count Peter Karagin, want to marry Lydia Marakova, a ballet dancer at the Marinsky Theatre, but his aristocratic father, Prince Karagin, and her fiercely Republican father both strongly object to this inappropriate union. Then war breaks out and Peter joins his Cossack unit in Galicia. Two years later he returns and is reunited with Lydia at a gala ballet performance where he saves the life of Tsar Nicholas during an attempted assassination. The would-be assassin turns out to be Lydia’s father himself. Before Marakov can be brought to trial, the Russian Revolution breaks out, and Peter and Lydia are parted, seemingly forever. However, they do meet again, in Paris at the Balalaika Club in 1924 – a club run by Nicki, Peter’s former valet and his wife Masha – and a venue where the now impoverished Peter is a night-club singer, and his former Cossack comrades work as waiters and caretakers. It also is revealed that Lydia’s father is now the Soviet Ambassador to Paris.

Notes: This is a revised version of the 1933 play “The Great Hussar”. With gipsy songs and dances, a major ballet performance, dramatic revolution scenes, and Cossack dancing it was a great critical and popular success. An MGM film version was made in 1939 starring Nelson Eddy and Ilona Massey using a new score made up of songs by Sigmund Romberg. Only one song, “At the Balalaika” remained from the original stage show..

YOUR NUMBER'S UP

London run: Gate, December 23rd

Music: Geoffrey Wright

Book & Lyrics: Diana Morgan & Robert MacDermot

Director: Norman Marsall

Musical Director: Geoffrey Wright & Lionel Salter

Notes: Performed with two pianos and drums and written by a husband and wife team, this was the Christmas attraction at the small theatre club, The Gate. This was a venue usually known for its little revues, but this was a “proper” musical. It was possibly the very first of the small-scale musical productions on what would later be called “the fringe” – and the first in what would become an increasingly important part of the musical scene.

Photo by Stage Photo Co



Vera Zorina, Sergieff & Jack Whiting in
"Slaughter on Tenth Avenue"

ON YOUR TOES

London run: Palace, February 5th (50 performances)

Returned: Coliseum, April 19th (54 performances)

Music: Richard Rodgers

Lyrics: Lorenz Hart

Book: George Abbott, Rodgers and Hart

Director: Leslie Henson & George Abbott

Choreographer: George Balanchine
re-created by Andy Anderson

Musical Director: Lew Stone

Producer: Lee Ephraim

Cast: Jack Whiting (*Junior Dolan*),
Vera Zorina (*Vera Barnova*),
Olive Blakeney (*Peggy Porterfield*),
Vernon Kelso (*Sergei Alexandrovitch*),
Gina Malo (*Frankie Frayne*),
Dick Taylor (*Vassilli*),
Eddie Pola (*Sidney Cohen*),
Jack Donohue (*Konstantine Morrosine*)

Songs: It's Got to Be Love, There's a Small Hotel, Too Good for the Average Man, Glad to Be Unhappy, Slaughter on Tenth Avenue, The Heart is Quicker Than the Eye, Quiet Night

Story: Junior Dolan has given up his vaudeville touring career and become a music teacher at the Knickerbocker University. His students include his girlfriend, Frankie, and Sidney Cohen, who has written a jazz ballet. Arts patron Peggy Porterfield decides to finance a production of this ballet, and uses her financial muscle to persuade Sergei Alexandrovitch, impresario of the visiting Russian Ballet to stage this work, now entitled "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue". Junior becomes involved both onstage and off with the prima ballerina, Vera Baronova. This causes trouble with Junior's girlfriend, Frankie, and Vera's regular partner, Morrosine, who tries to have Junior bumped off. However, all ends happily, with the couples back with their rightful partners.

Notes: The original Broadway production opened on November 29th 1936, starring Ray Bolger, and was the first major Broadway show choreographed by George Balanchine. George Abbott was involved in the original direction, taking over during the show's Boston try-out. The London production received good critical notices but the public was not interested and the show ran for just 50 performances. It was replaced in the middle of March by "The Vagabond King", and "On Your Toes" went on a provincial tour. However, "Vagabond King" was a quick flop, so "On Your Toes" was brought back in for a second try – but again only managed 54 performances. The producer, Lee Ephraim lost the enormous sum of £10,000 on this venture.

BIG BUSINESS

London run: Hippodrome, February 18th
(124 performances)

Wylie Watson, Vera Pearce,
Bobby Howes & Bertha Belmore



Photo by Stage Photo Co



BIG BUSINESS

London run: Hippodrome, February 18th (124 performances)

Music: Jack Waller & Joseph Tunbridge

Lyrics: Bert Lee & Desmond Carter

Book: K.R.G. Browne, Bert Lee & Desmond Carter

Director - Choreographer: Ralph Reader

Musical Director: Joseph Tunbridge

Producer: Jack Waller

Cast: Bobby Howes (*Jimmy Rackshaw*), Vera Pearce (*Annabel Ray*), Bertha Belmore (*Emmeline Ray*), Enid Dixon-Orr (*Mary Martin*), David Burns (*Spike Morgan*), Richard Clarke (*Lincoln J. Hopper*), Wylie Watson (*Sexton Holmes*), Herbert C. Walton (*Mayor of Brighthaven*), George Moon (*Taxidermist*)

Songs: I've Got a Thing About You, Mammy, Cosmopolitan Duet, I'm on Wings, Limehouse Nights, A Dance a Day, Grandfather's Whiskers

Story: Jimmy Rackshaw, an impoverished commercial traveller, fails to sell any of his beauty products to Annabelle and Emmeline Ray, two wealthy sisters who own Beauty Creams Ltd. However, he does get to meet and fall in love with Mary Martin, who works for them as a beauty specialist. The sisters own a valuable painting, and Annabelle is worried that two suspicious Americans, Spike Morgan and his boss Lincoln J. Hopper, might be trying to steal it. So she hires Jimmy to act as a kind of security guard. The incompetent detective Sexton Holmes offers a bit of extra help whilst a charity pageant is taking place in the grounds of the sisters' mansion. During this pageant there is a blackface burlesque, and a Robin Hood show, with Annabelle as a buxom Robin Hood, Emmeline as Will Scarlet, Sexton Holmes as a tipsy Friar Tuck, and Jimmy as an undersized Little John. The picture is stolen and the innocent Mayor of Brighthaven is suspected while the real crooks hide in a taxidermist's studio and escape disguised as a giraffe. Naturally, all is sorted out at the end and Jimmy and Mary are off to be married.

Notes: In spite of poor notices this show managed a five month run on the strength of its star names. It was generally regarded as having a nonsensical tenuous plot designed to do no more than provide comic "turns" for its star performers.

THE VAGABOND KING (1st Revival)

London run: Coliseum, March 18th



(Left) The Original programme 1927;
(Right) Derek Oldham & Winnie Melville from the original production 1927

THE VAGABOND KING (1st Revival)

London run: Coliseum, March 18th (36 performances)

Music: Rudolph Friml

Lyrics: Brian Hooker

Book: Brian Hooker, Russell Janney & W.H. Post

Director: Stanley Bell

Choreographer: Anna Duse

Musical Director:

Cast: Harry Welchman (*Francois Villon*), George Graves (*Guy Taborie*), Maria Elsner (*Katherine de Vaucelles*), H.A. Saintsbury (*King Louis XI*), Sylvia Welling (*Huguette du Hamel*), Lawrence Shiel (*Thibaut*), Nancy Neale (*Lady Mary*)

Songs: Song of the Vagabonds, Some Day, Only a Rose, Huguette Waltz, Love Me Tonight, Nocturne, Love for Sale

Story: Francois Villon – poet, braggart, thief and darling of the Paris rabble – has been sending anonymous love poems to the King’s intended bride, Katherine de Vaucelles. Intrigued by this secret admirer, she arranges a secret rendezvous but is followed by the disguised King, who is furious to hear Villon mocking the failures of his reign and saying what he would do instead "if I were king." The king threatens Villon with death for his treachery, but says the death sentence will be delayed for 24 hours so that Villon can have all the powers of a King, command the army and free Paris according to his boast. If he fails, he will be hanged, if he succeeds he will be exiled. He emerges victorious, and the king decides to reward him with his life in exile but taking Katherine with him as his wife.

Notes: This was based on the 1901 play “If I Were King” by Justin Huntley McCarthy. This had already been turned into a musical – a very early Rodgers and Hart experiment staged in a college production with Dorothy Fields – and seeing this had inspired Russell Janney to commission his own version. It opened on Broadway on September 21st 1925 (511 performances) and then in London at the Winter Garden Theatre on April 19th 1927, starring Derek Oldham, Winnie Melville and Norah Blaney. It ran for 480 performances and then toured extensively. It was filmed twice: in 1930 with Dennis King, Jeanette MacDonald and Lillian Roth, and again in 1956 with Kathryn Grayson.

Original London run: Winter Garden, April 1927

THE GRAND DUCHESS (3rd Revival)

London run: Daly’s, April 29th

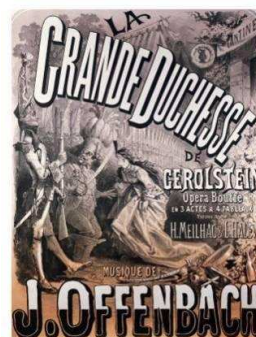
Music: Jacques Offenbach

Music adapted by: Sydney Baines

New English libretto: G.P. Robinson

Director: R. Claud Jenkins

Cast: Enid Cruickshank (*The Grand Duchess*), Eddie Garr (*Baron Puck*), Richard Goolden (*Prince Paul*), Bruce Carfax (*Fritz*), Nancy Neale (*Wanda*), W.S. Percy (*General Boum*), Clifton Boyne (*Baron Grog*)



Story: The 20-year-old Grand Duchess has quarrelled with her tutor, Baron Puck. She is betrothed to the foppish Prince Paul but soon falls in love with the handsome soldier Fritz. However, Fritz is only interested in pretty young Wanda. The Duchess promotes Fritz to commander-in-chief in order to spite General Boum, who sends Fritz off to war, where he wins the battle easily by making the whole opposing army drunk, by “firing” 300,000 well-filled bottles instead of bullets. The Duchess is delighted, but then horrified when Fritz asks permission to marry Wanda. This is too much for the Duchess, who conspires to assassinate Fritz before the wedding night. However, it all sorts itself out when the Duchess decides “If you can’t have those you could love, you must try to love those you can have.”

Notes: “La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein”, music by Jacques Offenbach to a libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, premiered in Paris in 1867 and was an immediate hit, with productions the same year in New York and at Covent Garden in an English translation by Charles Kenny starring Emily Soldene. It was revived in London at the Gaiety in 1876 starring Alice May, who had just returned from an Australian tour in the same show. It was given a new translation by Charles Brookfield and new lyrics by Adrian Ross for a “cleaned-up” version by the D’Oyly Carte company at the Savoy in 1897, running for 99 performances. This was a completely new version with new lyrics and a new book, and much of the music re-arranged.

Original London run: Covent Garden, November 1867

First revival: Gaiety, 1876; Second revival: Savoy Theatre, 1897

PAGANINI

London run: Lyceum, May 20th

Music: Franz Lehar

Original Book & Lyrics: Paul Knepler & Bela Jenbach

English version: A.P. Herbert & Reginald Arkell

English Lyrics: A. P. Herbert

Director: Tyrone Guthrie

Choreographer: Carl Randall

Musical Director: Frank Collinson

Producer: C.B. Cochran

Cast: Richard Tauber (*Niccolo Paganini*), Esmé Percy (*Bartucci*), Evelyn Laye (*Princess Anna*), George Hayes (*Prince Felice*), Joan Panter (*Bella Giretti*), Charles Heslop (*Giacomo Pimpinelli*), Bertram Wallis (*Count Hédouville*)

Songs: Girls Were Made to Love and Kiss, Love at Last, All My Soul Come Out of Hiding, Nobody Could Love You More, Love Live Forever,

Story: Niccolo Paganini and his manager Bartucci, touring Italy, are threatened with arrest because they gave an unauthorised concert in Lucca. However Princess Anna Elisa, sister of the Emperor Napoleon, prevents this arrest after she has heard him sing. There is a ban on a repeat performance, but the Prince countermands this after he has heard Paganini play the violin, though some of the crowd are hostile because of rumours that Paganini sold his soul to the devil in return for his amazing talents. The Princess is jealous when Pimpinelli, the Town Mayor, tells her the song Paganini wrote and dedicated solely to her is exactly the same song he wrote and dedicated to the Prince's mistress, Bella Giretti. Furious, she decides to have him expelled from the country, but as soon as she hears him singing, she once more relents and begins an affair with him. Word of this romance reaches a furious Napoleon in Paris, who immediately sends Count Hédouville to Lucca with orders for Paganini to leave Italy immediately. The Princess follows in disguise, and they meet in a mountain tavern on the border. He assures her she will be the only woman in his life, but he, as an artist, must remain alone. She returns to Lucca, he leaves to conquer the rest of Europe.

Notes: This was the first of Lehar's work especially composed for the voice of Richard Tauber. It was premiered in Vienna in 1925 (though without Tauber because of contractual problems) and then given its Berlin premiere (with Tauber) in January 1926. It ran three months in Berlin and then went on to world-wide performances. The story had no real basis in history, except that Paganini did work as a court musician in Lucca for some three years – but that was of no import for the success of the show. It had performances in fifty different cities in its first year alone. Tauber, who had a Jewish father, had fled Nazi Germany, and was happily re-creating his Lehar successes in the English language.



Evelyn Laye & Richard Tauber

Photo by George Dallison



Photo by George Dallison

CREST OF THE WAVE

London run: Drury Lane, September 1st (203 performances)

Music: Ivor Novello

Lyrics: Christopher Hassall

Book: Ivor Novello

Director: Leontine Sagan

Choreographer: Lydia Sokolova & Antony Tudor

Musical Director: Charles Prentice

Cast: Ivor Novello (*Don/Otto Fresch*), Ena Burrell (*Leonora Hayden/Helen Winter*), Marie Löhr (*Duchess Virginia*), Peter Graves (*Lord William*), Dorothy Dickson (*Honey Wortle*), Minnie Rayner (*Mrs Wortle*), Olive Gilbert, Finlay Currie, Walter Crisham



Songs: Rose of England, Why Isn't it You?, Haven of your Heart, If You Only Knew. Boys, Campy Liza

Story: Don, the Duke of Cheviot and a penniless Peer, sells his estate to the unseen American Helen Winter, daughter of the gangster-owner of Colossal Pictures. Don settles the deal with Leonora Hayden, Helen's secretary (really Helen in disguise), and then sails off for an America holiday with his sister-in-law, Virginia and younger brother, Lord William. On board he meets, falls in love and proposes to Honey Wortle, a fame-seeking film extra en route for Hollywood with her Cockney mother. But, confusingly, because Don saw the "H.W." initials on her luggage he believes she is Helen Winter. Once they get to California they are met by the real Helen Winter who orders Honey's arrest on a charge of impersonation. To save Honey, Don pretends his proposal was a joke, but then Helen says she wishes to marry Don. When he refuses she proves herself a true gangster's daughter and shoots him in jealous fury. He returns to England.

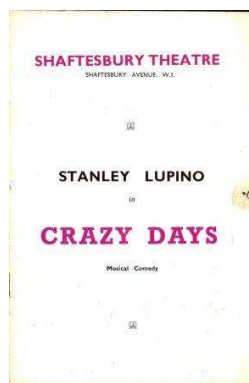
Two years later Don, now recovered, returns to California, where Honey is the top star of Colossal Pictures. Don joins her and soon becomes a film star himself. Now very wealthy, they decide to retire and return to England and get married. Jealous Helen arranges for Helen to be kidnapped from the train back to New York but jealous Otto Fresch, a dissolute and vengeful actor whose career has been eclipsed by Honey, arranges for the train to be wrecked while crossing a viaduct. Honey is dangerously injured. However, finally back at home, Don and Honey, happily recovered and united, and no longer in the film business, and settle down to a happy married life.



Photo by Angus McBean

Dorothy Dickson & Walter Crisham

Notes: It was now expected that an Ivor Novello show at Drury Lane would feature something spectacular in the scenery department: Glamorous Night had a shipwreck, Careless Rapture had an earthquake. This show had a magnificent train-crash. And to add to the novelty, Ivor Novello played two roles – the handsome hero, Don, and the villain, Otto Fresch. Because this was Coronation Year – not King Edward VIII as originally intended, but the Coronation of King George VI – the patriotic song "Rose of England" was a major hit.



CRAZY DAYS

London run: Shaftesbury, September 14th (78 Performances)

Music: Billy Mayerl

Lyrics: Desmond Carter & Frank Eyton

Book: Stanley Lupino & Arty Ash

Director: Stanley Lupino

Choreographer: Joan Davis

Musical Director: Billy Mayerl

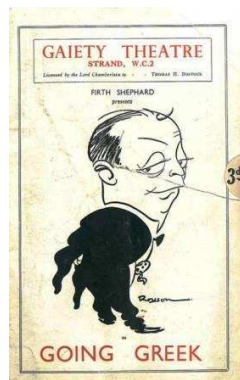
Producer: Laddie Cliff

Cast: Stanley Lupino (*Bertie Barnes*), Leo Franklyn (*James Hooker*), Wyn Weaver (*Cedric*), Fred Conyngham (*Jack Crawford*), Molly Fisher (*Dolly*), Marjorie Browne (*Lady Mary*)

Songs: Nice People, Swing Clean, Stranger in a Cup of Tea, You're Not too Bad Yourself, We'll Sink or Swim, Hail Murgatroyde, Came the Dawn, When a Fat Man Passes By, Spring, Do, Love Was Born.

Story: Theatre producer Bertie Barnes is desperate to impress James Hooker a potential backer. He "borrows" Mooreland Manor while the real owner, Cedric Weeval is away, persuades two of his actors, Jack Crawford and Dolly Delroy to pretend to be a Duke and the parlour-maid and invites James to come and meet the Duke. But strange things happen: the house seems to be haunted; the fake Duke is so convincing that a genuine society girl, Lady Mary Drew, falls in love with him; two crooks arrive, in search of the money they believe is hidden somewhere in the house; and then Cedric, the real owner of the house, turns up to add to the mayhem.

Notes: The show had done its pre-London try-out at Streatham, and Laddie Cliff was struck with pleurisy. He was replaced with Leo Franklyn for the opening run at the Shaftesbury. The show failed to take off with the public, not helped by the absence of Laddie Cliff, and lasted just three months, closing on November 20th. Just two weeks later Laddie Cliff died – deeply missed as one the country's best loved comedians and one of London's most enterprising producers.



GOING GREEK

London run: Gaiety, September 16th (303 Performances)

Music & Lyrics: Lerner, Goodheart & Hoffman

Book: Guy Bolton, Fred Thompson & Douglas Furber

Director: Leslie Henson & Herbert Bryan

Choreographer: Jack Donohue

Ballet sequence: Hedley Briggs

Musical Director: Debroy Somers

Producer: Leslie Henson

Cast: Leslie Henson (*Alexandros*), Fred Emney (*Pallas*), Richard Hearne (*Mogolini*),

Roy Royston (*Leander*), Mary Lawson (*Pomono*), Louise Browne (*Iris*)

Songs: Is There Anyone More Wonderful than You?, The Sheep Were in the Meadow, You've Got to Hand It to the Bandit, A Little Co-operation from You, Love Came and Swept Me off my Feet

Story: Alexandros Saggapopolous and Pallas Pollicapillos are a pair of incompetent Greek banditti, appropriately dressed in Greek pleats (though Pallas's includes a monocle and a top-hat). They have kidnapped the broken down opera singer Mogolini and are demanding a ransom. However, no ransom has been paid and so many years have passed that Mogolini is now attached to his life with the "boys". Suddenly they learn that Mogolini has inherited some valuable bonds, but disaster has struck: Mogolini is lost in the water, presumed drowned, and now they have nothing to ransom. So Alexandros decides to disguise himself as the opera singer in order to get the money. But the real Mogolini turns up, alive after all, and needs to be persuaded that in all their interests he should pretend to be a ghost. Meantime a love story involves Leander, a dashing young army officer, long engaged to Pallas's daughter, Pomono, but now in love with ballet dancer, Iris Carew. All is sorted out when Alexandros weds Pomono, and Leander gets his dancer.

Notes: The show was still packing them in the following June – but Leslie Henson was taken ill and forced to leave the cast – and that was sufficient to kill its London chances. It went out on tour with George Clarke replacing and later with Fred Kitchen Jr. and had a successful and prolonged touring life.



Leslie Henson. Richard Hearne
& Fred Emney

TAKE IT EASY

London run: Palace, September 23rd (4 performances)
Music, Lyrics & Book: Herman & Sammy Timberg and Barbara Blair.
Director: Frank Collins

Revised version: Palace, October 14th (16 performances)
New dialogue: Desmond Carter & Gene Gerrard
Additional songs: René Thompson
Director: Robert Nesbitt
Choreographer: Charles Brooks

Cast: Conway Dixon (*John Marsden*), Patricia Burke (*Ruth*),
 Herman Timberg (*Danny Waring*), Russ Brown (*Bob Scott*),
 Judy Kelly (*Vivien Gabriella*), Barbara Blair (*Snooney*)
Cast replacements: Gene Gerrard (*Danny*), Lorna Hubbard (*Ruth*),
 Hal Thompson (*Bob Scott*)

Songs: Oh How That Affects Me!, The Hit of the Show

Story: Millionaire John Marsden has a daughter, Ruth, who wants to go on the stage. To humour her, he suggests staging a “friends only” performance in their mansion house, and engages Danny Waring and Bob Scott, established producers of musicals for the radio, to come and direct the show. In rehearsals Ruth falls in love with both these men, finding it hard to choose between the charm and good looks of the one, and the fun and good nature of the other. Others in the story are John Marsden’s gold-digging protégée, Vivien Gabriella, but much of the story revolves around the radio and vaudeville acts of the authors themselves.

Notes: This was the work of Herman Timberg and Barbara Blair, two Americans well established as radio and vaudeville performers in New York. Barbara Blair was especially well known to USA listeners for her radio-comedy character “Snooney”. The skimpy story and pasted-in scenes of a vaudeville nature were hated by the critics, who overwhelmingly condemned it as one of the worst shows of all time. It closed immediately, but then re-opened ten days later as a twice-nightly entertainment, with new songs, new dialogue and a new performer, Gene Gerrard and some other cast changes. It then came off just as quickly.



Gene Gerrard



Photo by Stage Photo Co

Ian Maclean, Bobby Howes, Cicely Courtneidge & David Burns

HIDE AND SEEK

London run: Hippodrome, October 14th
 (204 performances)

Music & Lyrics: Vivian Ellis, Lerner,
 Goodheart & Hoffman

Book: Guy Bolton, Fred Thompson
 & Douglas Furber

Director- Choreographer: Jack Hulbert

Musical Director: Lew Stone

Producer: Lee Ephraim & Moss Empires

Cast: Bobbie Howes (*Tommy/Mike*),
 Cicely Courtneidge (*Sally/Mabel*), Patricia Burke,
 David Burns, Arthur Gomez, Ian Maclean,
 Morton Lowater, Terry Brogden, Guy Spaul, Sheelagh Young

Songs: She’s My Lovely, In the Hustle Bustle of Spring, I’m Happy When You’re Happy, I Struck it Lucky, Whisper Sweet Nothings, Pins and Winkles, Versatility, Time Marches On, Mabel, I Follow the Bride

Story: At the opening of the story Tommy and Sally are performers in an open-air Pierrot show at Seahaven, dreaming of big-time success, whilst coping with thunderstorms and tram noises. Flashbacks take the show back to 1890 with Tommy becoming Mike, his own father, and Sally becoming his love, Mabel. The flashback scenes involve American gangsters, an Epsom inn on Derby Day where Mike is a jockey who wins some worthless horseless-carriage shares, a cabaret in New York where Mabel is the star and he the waiter, and a ranch in Montana – but finally back in England, where the once worthless shares now turn out to be worth a fortune, and they are able to produce a super-pierrot show in a luxury building with a roof.

THE LAUGHING CAVALIER

London run: Adelphi, October 19th (38 performances)

Music: Wainwright Morgan

Book & Lyrics: Reginald Arkell & Stafford Byrne

Director: William Mollison

Choreographer: Hedley Briggs

Musical Director: Ernest Irving

Cast: Arthur Margetson (*Don Juan*), John Garrick (*Franz Hals*), Irene Eisinger (*Lysbeth*), Nora Swinburne (*Maryka*), Charles Heslop (*Burgomaster*), Viola Tree (*Burgomaster's wife*).

Songs: You Are Perfection

Story: Spanish troops arrive in Haarlem and the ladies of town flock to these military charmers. One of the officers is a magnificently handsome Don Juan, who commissions local artists Franz Hals to paint his portrait. Mistaking Lysbeth, Hals's young wife, for his daughter, the cavalier makes love to her. When he discovers his mistake he nobly turns away from her at the Guildhall ball given by the Burgomaster and his wife, and pursues romance with Maryka, another lady. The following morning he forgets this nobility and asks Lysbeth to run away with him. She, mystified and remembering his previous conduct refuses and remains faithful to her husband. This explains the half smile on the face of the Laughing Cavalier, captured by Franz Hals, even though he never knows its true reason.

Notes: With some beautiful scenes re-creating Flemish paintings, Dutch songs, Dutch dances, dancing cavaliers, and even lute solos, this was a lavish treat for the eye and ear, but with such a thin plot that it failed to hold an audience and came off within five weeks.



John Garrick



Photo by Stage Photo Co

Wylie Watson, Bertha Belmore & Sydney Howard

nice partner in Mr Simmons's business. In order to add a bit of glamour to Chester, Mr Simmons invents a torrid romance going on between Chester and the famous film star Letty Lythe. However, things get complicated when Letty Lythe arrives in town, finds out about this story, and decides to play along with it since it will be good publicity for her latest film. But her real fiancé, the prize-fighter Donald Swift, not knowing it is all a publicity stunt, is roused to jealous fury and is out to get Chester. Much farcical to-ing and fro-ing results until, of course, it all ends happily with the right couples marrying each other.

Notes: Based on "The Whole Town's Talking" by John Emerson and Anita Loos. This had the distinction of having extracts performed on the newly-invented television service but even so failed to run more than two months. With a change of cast and a title shortened to "Oh Letty!" it undertook a tour, but again, did not last very long.

OH! YOU LETTY

London run: Palace, December 8th (71 performances)

Music: Paul Sharon

Book & Lyrics: Geoffrey Kerr, Bert Lee, Clifford Grey

Director: Campbell Gullan

Choreographer: Philip Buchel & Dimitri Vladimiroff

Musical Director: Joseph Tunbridge

Cast: Sydney Howard (*Mr Simmons*), Bertha Belmore (*Mrs Simmons*), Patricia Leonard (*Louise*), Edward Molloy (*Roger Shields*), Wylie Watson (*Chester Binney*), Phyllis Stanley (*Letty Lythe*), Robert Adair (*Donald Swift*).

Songs: That's the Song I Sing, Benjamin and Tabitha, It's a Star, Pensacola, I'm Going to Buy Myself a Soapbox, Why Did You Take it Away?, Wait until the Sun Shines

Story: Mr and Mrs Simmons have a daughter, Louise, whose heart is set on marrying Roger Shields, a popular crooner. Her parents would rather she married sensible Chester Binney, the somewhat weedy but thoroughly



The Company doing "The Lambeth Walk"



ME AND MY GIRL

London run: Victoria Palace, December 16th
(Closed September 2nd 1939; Re-opened September 25th 1939
Closed June 29th 1940 – Total 1,646 performances)

Music: Noel Gay

Book & Lyrics: L. Arthur Rose & Douglas Furber

Director: Lupino Lane

Choreographer: Fred Leslie

Musical Director: George Windeatt

Producer: Lupino Lane & Jack Eggar

Cast: Lupino Lane (*Bill Snibson*),
Teddie St Denis (*Sally Smith*),
Doris Rogers (*Duchess*),

George Graves (*Sir John*), Wallace Lupino (*Parchester*),
Betty Frankiss (*Lady Jacqueline*)

Songs: Me & My Girl, A Bright Little Girl Like Me, Once You Lose Your Heart, The Lambeth Walk, The Girl I Left Behind Me, Don't Be Silly Sally

Story: Bill Snibson, a Lambeth cockney, turns out to be the long-lost 17th Baron and 8th Viscount of Hareford. Despite temptations of the grand life at Hareford Hall, the gold-digging advances of Lady Jacqueline, and the scheming of the formidable Duchess, Bill wants to give it all up and return to his Lambeth sweetheart, Sally Smith. Sally pretends she no longer loves Bill – since she does not want to stand in the way of his new-found wealth – but thanks to the efforts of the Sir John and Parchester, the family solicitor, Sally and Bill are reunited and all ends happily for the new Lord and Lady Snibson.

Notes: The original 1937 production the Victoria Palace starred Lupino Lane and was a short show with just nine songs, playing twice-nightly. It was revived twice during the war, and was twice closed down because its theatres suffered bomb damage. A film version was made in 1939 starring Lupino Lane, Sally Gray and Seymour Hicks.



Lupino Lane

SET TO MUSIC

London run: Richmond, February 14th (2 weeks)

Music & Lyrics: Eric Spear

Book: Beatrix Thomson

Director: Beatrix Thomson

Cast: Andrew Osborn (*William Smith*), Emma Trenchman (*Wanda Smith*), Geoffrey Denys (*Reggie*), Wyn Richmond (*Elsie*), Paul Blake (*Roley*), Joan Pereira (*Julie*), Elizabeth Greenhill (*Maddalena*), Frank Drew (*Tino*)

Story: William Smith, eligible bachelor and Wanda Smith, wealthy wife of a penniless society husband, turn up at a hotel in Como, Italy only to find the luxury suite of rooms has been double-booked in the name of Smith – even though they are not related and have never met before. Initially annoyed, they decide to make do – the suite is large enough for them to occupy, jointly and respectably as long as no one finds out.

However things get complicated when Reggie (penniless husband), Elsie (would-be bride of William's), and Roley Gould (gossip-columnist for a scandal sheet) all turn up unexpectedly. With Julie, the hotel padrone, Maddalena, an indiscreet maid, and Tino the waiter adding to the problems there is much to-ing, fro-ing and slamming of doors before everything is sorted out.

Notes: The original one week run was extended following excellent notices. Eric Spear (1908-1966) was a jobbing composer writing mostly for film background music. However in 1960 he wrote a theme called "Lancashire Blues" and sold it to Granada TV for a £6 "buy-out" fee. Fifty years and more later it is still broadcast several times a week (it's the theme music of "Coronation Street")

OPERETTE

London run: His Majesty's March 16th (133 performances)



Photo by George Dallison

Peggy Wood & Griffith Jones



OPERETTE

London run: His Majesty's March 16th (133 performances)

Music & Lyrics: Noel Coward

Book: Noel Coward

Director: Noel Coward

Musical Director: Benjamin Frankel

Cast: Fritzi Massary (*Liesl Haren*), Peggy Wood (*Rozanne Grey*), Griffith Jones (*Nigel Vaynham*), Irene Vanbrugh (*Countess of Messiter*), Edward Cooper (*Eddie Gosling*), Winifred Davis (*Decima Drury*), Hugh French (*Lord Elderly*), Ross Landon (*Lord Borrowmere*), John Gattrell (*Lord Sickert*), Kenneth Carten (*Lord Camp*), J. Grant Anderson, Gladys Henson, Muriel Barron, Max Oldaker, Phyllis Monkman

Songs: Pom-pom, Countess Mitzi, Dearest love, Foolish Virgins, The Stately Homes of England, Where are the Songs we Sung?, The island of Bollamazoo, Sing for joy, My dear Miss Dale

Story: Set backstage in 1906 at the Jubilee Theatre, the story tells of Liesl Haren, a fading Viennese star who is in London to appear in the operetta "The Model Maid" (which will be a show within the show). One of the chorus girls, Rozanne Grey, has fallen in love with Nigel Vaynham, a nobleman serving in the army, but Nigel's mother, the Countess of Messiter, urges Rozanne to end the socially unacceptable relationship. Liesl also warns her that marriage at this point in her career will be a serious handicap. But Rozanne ignores all advice, and sees the older singer's career fade as her own career rises to the leading role and to stardom. However, Rozanne finally rejects the idea of marriage and returns to the folds of her fellow performers, whilst Nigel returns to his life in the army, accepting that marriage to an actress would be a social disaster for him. Other backstage characters include comedian Eddie Gosling, Decima Drury living her stage role as a Duchess far too grandly for her colleagues, and four performers in the roles of Lord Elderly, Lord Borrowmere, Lord Sickert and Lord Camp.

Notes: This was intended as Noel Coward's follow-up to the middle-Europe type of nostalgia which had made his earlier "Bitter Sweet" such a hit. With 35 named parts and a large chorus, together with some lavish set pieces it was a big show, first tried out on February 17th 1938 at the Manchester Opera House prior to its London launch. However, it was not a success as far as the West End was concerned, and came off after just 132 performances

WILD OATS

London run: Prince's, April 13th (260 performances)

Music: Noel Gay

Book: Douglas Furber

Director: Herbert Bryan

Choreographer: Jack Donohue

Musical Director: John Borelli

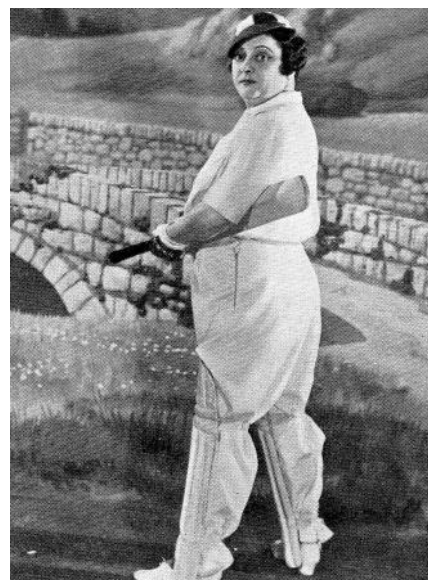
Producer: Firth Shephard

Cast: Sydney Howard (*Samuel*), Arthur Riscoe (*Willie*), Vera Pearce (*Maria Cloppit*), Josephine Houston (*Vivienne*), Jack Donohue (*Val*), Frances Marsden (*Vicky*)

Songs: Throwing the Torch Away, Love Doesn't Die, If I Can't Sing I've Got to Dance, A Lovely Game for Girls, Vive l'Amour

Story: Samuel, Willie and their mother Maria Cloppitt are three members of the same Northern family who strike lucky and win the football pools. They splash out on holidays in London, Paris and the Tyrol, accompanied on some of their journey by Vivienne, a cabaret singer, and by Val and Vicky, a dance double-act met en route. In London they are in an illegal night-club which gets raided, and the boys have to disguise themselves as elderly spinsters in order to escape the police; at the Folies Bergere Maria gets to perform a ballet with the girls; in the Tyrol the boys get into lederhosen and a slapping routine; and in Africa they are press-ganged into the Foreign Legion, and only get away when Mum heads an army of rescuing chorus girls. When all the money is gone they return to Yorkshire and run the pub which Maria was canny enough to buy before they set out on their extravagant spending spree.

Notes: This was as much a revue as a musical – with three comic performers and a series of sketches staged in different countries and different settings. It was, however, very popular, running seven months in town before undertaking a successful provincial tour.



Vera Pearce

Photo by Stage Photo Co

NO SKY SO BLUE

London run: Savoy, June 8th (40 performances)

Music: Edward Horan

Lyrics: Ian Grant

Book: Henry C. James

Director: Henry Kendall

Musical Director: Sidney Williams

Cast: Alan Napier (*Boris Rachinoff*), Aimé Simon-Gerard/Steve Geray (*Paul Ravel*), Lea Seidl (*Adèle*), Cyril Raymond (*Sir Charles Berkeley*), Gertrude Niesen (*Countess Shirley Petkoff*), Edmon Ryan (*Teddy K. Wing*)

Songs: Love's Another Song, Alone with my Dreams, Lonely Heart, In Paree it's Love, Rhythm is my Romeo, What is Romance? (Later additions: When Women Interfere, Let's Find a Day when there's Nothing On)

Story: At a Geneva Peace Conference delegates are trying to resolve a dispute between Russia and France over ownership of a remote Antarctic island. Relationships between Boris Rachinoff (Russia) and Paul Ravel (France) are even more fraught since Adèle, Boris's new wife, is Paul's ex-wife – and Paul is claiming her Reno divorce was illegal. Sir Charles Berkeley, the British chairman, has a complicated job: Paul is currently having an affair with Countess Shirley Petkoff (an American cabaret star, married to a Count), but she leaves him for an American delegate, her old flame, Teddy K. Wing. Meantime Adèle falls head over heels in love with Sir Charles himself. Then a shock disclosure reveals the island is, indisputably, American property and has been for the past twenty years. The newly partnered ladies go off with their new loves, leaving the Russian and French husbands to go and argue about something else.

Notes: This was a satire on the current political situation, clearly mocking Germany's territorial demands in Europe and Britain's would-be role as an arbitrator. But after its very cool first night reception a large number of changes were made to the show: a great deal of the political satire was cut, Aimé Simon-Gerard was replaced with comic-actor Steve Geray, who was given two new songs. However, in spite of all these changes, and the cast offering to take a wages cut, the show managed no more than a five week run.

THE SUN NEVER SETS

London run: Drury Lane, June 9th (35 performances)

Music: Vivian Ellis, Cole Porter & Kenneth Leslie-Smith

Book: Pat Wallace & Guy Bolton

Based on stories by: Edgar Wallace

Director: Basil Dean & Richard Llewellyn

Cast: Stewart Granger (*Captain Hamilton*), Leslie Banks (*Sanders*), Henry Oscar (*Abdul Hafiz*), Charles Farrell (*Joe Hooling*), Todd Duncan (*Bosambo*), Edna Best (*Diana Fergusson*), Wally Patch (*Sgt. Hopkins*), Mackenzie Ward (*Lt. Tibbets*), Adelaide Hall (*Fitema*)



Leslie Banks & Stewart Granger

Songs: The Sun Never Sets (*Vivian Ellis*), River God (*Cole Porter*), My Love is Like the River, Drums (*Kenneth Leslie-Smith*)

Story: Captain Hamilton has been sent from the Colonial Office to Africa to deal with a complaint against Mr Commissioner Sanders. The complainants are the evil Abdul Hafiz and the drunken slaver Joe Hooling. As Hamilton arrives and temporarily replaces Sanders, Sanders learns from Bosambo, King of the Ochori tribe, that Hafiz is secretly plotting a rising of the dreaded Leopard Men. Hamilton is suddenly kidnapped by the Leopard Men, so Sanders has to act on his own initiative. The daring airwoman Diana Ferguson, making a re-fuelling landing on her round-the-world flight attempt, crashes in the jungle with the faithful Sgt. Hopkins who accompanied her. Sanders goes to rescue her, finding Diana, Hamilton and Hopkins chained up before the ruined temple of the Moon Goddess, being taunted by the head Leopard Man and Leopard Woman, but Sanders too is captured. Luckily the jolly Lt. Tibbets arrives in the nick of time, blows up the temple and rescues them, for a happy ending.

Notes: A very spectacular show, with dancers, drummers, and over one hundred Africans recruited as extras, this was a gung-ho play with music, based on the "Sanders of the River" stories by Edgar Wallace. The songs were a kind of "pick'n'mix" from various composers, with a lot of "authentic" African music interspersed. Featuring an aeroplane crashing and a jungle temple being blown up, it was a surprising flop, closing on July 9th after four and a half weeks and 35 performances.

MARITZA

London run: Palace, July 9th (68 performances)

Music: Emmerich Kalman

Lyrics: Arthur Stanley

English version: Robert Layer-Parker

Additional scenes: Frank Eyton

Director: Robert Nesbitt

Musical Director: George Walter

Cast: Mara Losseff (*Countess Maritza*),
John Garrick (*Bela Torok*),
Patricia Leonard (*Countess Lisa*),
Nancy Brown (*Manya*),
Douglas Byng (*Prince Zoupan*),
Shaun Glenville (*Baron Populescu*),
Hilda Esty Marsh (*Baroness Populescu*).

Songs: Fortune's a Fickle Jade, Vienna So Gay, When I Hear Gipsy Music, Play Gipsy, I Must Have Everything Hungarian, I'm the Pest from Budapest, Sister Mine, Mating Time, Ne Mine Dear Love, I Must Be Dreaming, Is it Really Goodbye, Harvest Home, You Fell for Me, A Spot of Nonsense with Mitzi



Story: Countess Maritza returns to her castle after a long absence and finds a man who gives his name as Bela Torok is acting as the steward of her estate. He refuses to sing with the gipsy chorus bidding her welcome, and then she discovers him in an intimate moment of endearment with the Countess Lisa. In a moment of pique and misunderstanding she dismisses him (not knowing that Lisa is his sister and that he is an impoverished nobleman). When he later rejects the money owing to him from the profits he has made on the estate, Maritza recognises his innate nobility and gradually falls in love with him and wants to marry him, in spite of his lowly status. Eventually the truth comes out: the Baroness Populescu reveals the real identity of Bela Torok – he is the Count Tassilio – and announces that he heir to an even grander estate than Maritza's. Other characters in the story are Manya, a gipsy fortune teller, Prince Zoupan and Baron Populescu – a pair of comic noblemen.



Notes: First produced in Vienna on February 28th 1924, this was a long-awaited London premiere. With the Bernhard Monshin Zigeuner Band on stage, some highly colourful gipsy dances, an elegant ball scene, and the inevitable csardas, this was a spectacular glamorous show, capturing the need for escapism in a world that was becoming politically more and more worrying with the rise of the Nazi power in Europe. (The leader of the pit orchestra was Alfredo Campoli, who would later become a renowned classical violinist and famed concert performer). Sadly it did not catch on with the public and came off after 68 performances, with losses exceeding £16,000.

*Hubert Marischka & Dorothea Wieck
in the original 1932 film version*

THE FLEET'S LIT UP

London run: Hippodrome, August 17th
(199 performances)

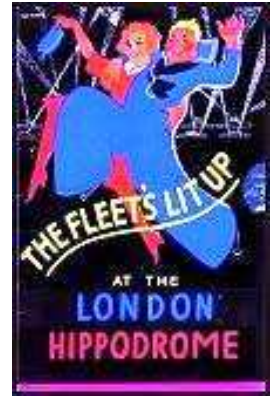
Music & Lyrics: Vivian Ellis

Book: Guy Bolton, Fred Thompson
& Bert Lee

Director: George Black & Charles Henry

Producer: George Black & Moss Empires Ltd

Cast: Stanley Lupino (*Horatio Roper*),
Frances Day (*Polly Brown*),
Ralph Reader (*Jack Prentice*),
Adele Dixon (*Mary Read/Ranee of Zabalon*),
Enid Lowe, Arthur Rigby, Arthur Gomez.



Songs: They've a Way of Doing it in the Navy, Little Miss Go-As-You-Please, Guess it Must be the Spring, How do you do Mr Right?, 'Tis 'Tisn't 'Tis, Tired of it All, I Took the Wrong Turning, Somebody Started to Love Me

Story: Horatio Roper is an Admiralty clerk, Polly Brown is a saucy nursemaid, Jack Prentice is a Lieutenant in the Navy, and all three start out at the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens, from where they visit the Seahorses Night Club. At the club they are involved in a dream-sequence flashback to 1738, where their good ship "Seahorse" is in battle with a pirate ship headed by the pirate queen, Mary Read. After this they are cruising in the "Seahorse" only to be kidnapped by the Ranee of Zabalon and carried off to her palace. Other scenes involve a ballet in a newspaper office, a cabaret sequence, and a finale depicting the Spithead review.

Notes: "Every known ingredient has been thrown into the Irish stew of this story, but the pace maintained throughout is so fast and expert, the comic interludes so broad, the music so loud, the glare of the costumes and décor so dazzling, that boredom never sets in." (Theatre World). More a pantomime for grown-ups than a musical, this was a great popular success.



Photos by Baron



Left: Enid Lowe & Stanley Lupino;

Right: Adele Dixon and the Pirates



Photo by Stage Photo Co

Fred Emney, Leslie Henson & Richard Hearne

RUNNING RIOT

London run: Gaiety, August 31st (207 performances)

Music & Lyrics: Vivian Ellis

Book: Douglas Furber

Director: Leslie Henson & Herbert Bryan

Choreographer: Jack Donohue

Musical Director: Debroy Somers

Cast: Roy Roystone (*Ricky Vane*), Richard Caldicott (*José Regalo*), Louise Browne (*Betty Browne*), Rosalind Atkinson (*Mrs Dott*), Leslie Henson (*Cornelius Crumpet*), Fred Emney (*Charlie Coe*), Richard Hearne (*Montgomery Burkinshaw*), Gavin Gordon (*Black Dan*), John E. Coyle (*Hoo Flong/Manuel Palooka*)

Songs: Tell Your Fortune, When Love Knocks at the Door, Pom Pom Toolerooley, Dancing with the Canterbury Bells, Take Your Partners for the Waltz, Wind on the Heath.

Story: Film stars Ricky Vane and José Regalo, filming in Mrs Dott's mansion, both fall in love with Betty Browne, currently employed as one of Mrs Dott's maids. Also in the film are Cornelius Crumpet, Charlie Coe and Montgomery Burkinshaw, three old-time fairground performers. José, in typical Latin style, decides to win Betty by force and kidnaps her. With Ricky in full rescue pursuit, aided by the three fairground fellows, the chase leads through Black Dan's gipsy camp, and the opium den of Hoo Flong in Chinatown and a series of farcical adventures involving a genuine clash of swords with Manuel Palooka, the jack-booted foreign film director. Eventually all comes to an appropriately happy ending, Ricky recovers his Betty – though the whole kidnap scheme was nothing more than a publicity stunt to aid her career.

Notes: There were two very notable things about this production: firstly, Richard Hearne's show-stealing Lancers act, which became part of his stage and TV act for the rest of his career as the famous "Mr Pastry"; and secondly, this was the very last show performed at the Gaiety Theatre. The last night of "Running Riot" was February 25th 1939 – after which the Gaiety closed forever and was demolished as part of the road-widening scheme in the Aldwych. (This scheme also involved the demolition of the Lyceum Theatre. The Gaiety succumbed and was demolished, but the threat and then the outbreak of war put a halt to the road plans and fortunately the Lyceum escaped the same fate.)

PAPRIKA

London run: His Majesty's, September 15th (11 performances)

Music: George Posford & Bernard Grün

Book: Eric Maschwitz

Director: Leontine Sagan

Choreographer: Joan Davis

Musical Director: Walford Hyden

Cast: Anthony Eustrel (*Michael Herriot*), Margaret Withers (*Mrs Herriot*), Barbara Bory (*Rozsi*), Austin Trevor (*Count Ferenc*), Stella Arbenina (*Empress Elisabeth*), Ivor Bernard (*Doctor Banyai*), Lance Fairfax (*Abbé Liszt*), Malcolm Keen (*Duke of Firth*), Jerrold Robertshaw (*Sir George Warburton*), Helen Haye (*Mrs Townsend*), Carol Lynne (*Susan Townsend*)

Songs: A Victorian Ball, Home is the Harvest of Grape and Grain, Child of Hungary, Just Like a Gypsy Band, Magyar Melody, Mine Alone, Theresa of Tokay, My Heart Belongs To Budapest, Duel at Dawn, A Tandem In the Park, I Lost My Love, Paprika

Story: Michael Herriot, a young Englishman of good family fails to propose to the girl his dominating Grandmother, Mrs Herriot, has chosen for him. Instead he goes off on holiday to Hungary where he falls in love with Rozsi, a young gypsy violinist and actress. She is being courted by Count Ferenc, but he is given short shrift now that an English stranger has appeared. Rozsi moves from her village to Budapest where she makes a successful hit on the stage in "Theresa of Tokay", and receives the congratulations of the Empress Elisabeth on the terrace of the Royal Palace and praise from Doctor Banyai and the Abbé Franz Liszt. The Count challenges Michael to a duel, where Michael wins but also manages, with regret, to kill the Count. He takes Rozsi back with him to London, but she fails to fit in with the Kensington aristocracy, including the Duke of Firth, Sir George Warburton, Mrs Townsend and her daughter, Susan. Rozsi shames his family when she exuberantly snatches the baton from a bandmaster in Hyde Park and conducts the csarda herself. Being snubbed by Michael's elderly relatives, she decides to flee back to her own country. At the last minute Michael jumps into the train as it leaves Charing Cross station, and they both return to Hungary and a happy life.

Notes: This was intended to be a follow-up to the big success of "Balalaika", and was preceded with a great deal of publicity "hype": £3,000 spent on a revolving stage, 800 costumes, a 29 piece orchestra in the pit and an onstage band, and "hundreds of auditions" in London, Paris, Prague and Budapest to find the perfect leading lady. It was a dreadful flop – "Three hours of banal words and trite music" (The Stage). It closed after nine days and eleven performances, but very shortly afterwards it was announced a completely revised and re-written version would be staged in Manchester followed by Glasgow for a Christmas season, and then return to London early in the New Year.

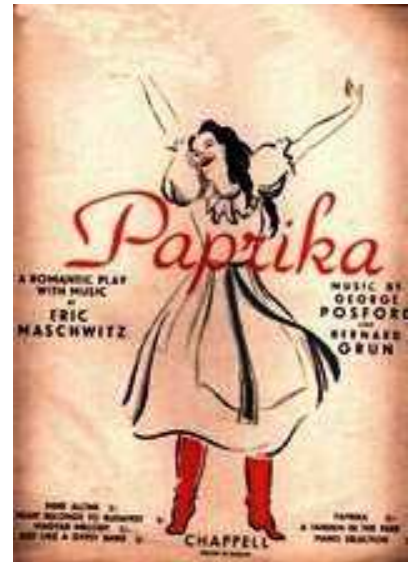


Photo by Bert Wilson

AN ELEPHANT IN ARCADY

London run: Kingsway, October 5th (85 performances)

Music: Various adapted Ernest Irving

Book & Lyrics: Eleanor & Herbert Farjeon

Director: Stephen Thomas

Musical Director: Ernest Irving.

Cast: Frederick Ranalow (*Count Pomposo*), Geoffrey Dunn (*Ortensio*), Irene Eisinger (*Florinda*), Hazel Jennings (*Bettina*), Edmund Donleavy (*Gandolfo*), Eric Starling (*Lelio*), Percy Parsons (*Bertoldo*), Scott Russell (*Rocco*).

Notes: In the olive grove of Count Pomposo of Pisa, young honest Ortensio, a gentleman of the city, eventually wins the heart of Florinda, the Count's daughter, by passing himself off as the man in charge of the elephant – a novelty and something of a sensation in 15th century Italy. The delightful story involves Bettina, a pretty young milliner, who is the innamorata of Gandolfo, Lelio, Bertoldo and Rocco, four gallants of the city. This pastiche of Arcadian operetta uses the music of composers including Mozart, Pergolesi and other classical composers. It ran for ten and a half weeks and was generally accepted as a delightful piece of whimsy.

BOBBY GET YOUR GUN

London run: Adelphi, October 7th (92 performances)

Music: Jack Waller & Joseph Tunbridge

Lyrics: Clifford Grey, Bert Lee & Desmond Carter

Book: Guy Bolton, Fred Thompson & Bert Lee

Director: William Mollison

Choreographer: Freddie Carpenter

Musical Director: Joseph Tunbridge

Producer: Jack Waller

Cast: Bobby Howes (*Bobby Lockwood*), Wylie Watson (*Pettick*), Bertha Belmore (*Aunt Prunella*), Gertrude Niesen (*Lupe*), Diana Churchill (*Rita*), David Burns (*Flash Tomkins*), Max Oldaker, Carl Bernard, The Four Franks.

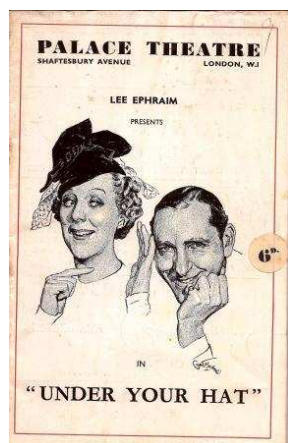


Bobby Howes

Songs: Veni Vidi Swing It Baby, Somewhere in the World, Partners, The Penguin Parade, La Cumparsita

Story: Bobby Lockwood is the presumed heir to the Earldom of Lockwood, but to prove his claim he must produce his birth certificate. Since Bobby's father was a gangster in Cuba, that is where the birth certificate will be – hence Bobby and his valet, Pettick, together with his Aunt Prunella, journey to Havana to retrieve this vital document. Once in Cuba Bobby meets Lupe, the gangster's moll, a cabaret performer who leads them all in the Conga dance, and Bobby falls in love with Rita, the wine waitress at the Santa Margherita Inn (who inevitably by the end of the show will become the new Countess of Lockwood!). However, the birth certificate has already been stolen by the gangster Flash Tomkins, in pursuit of whom Bobby and Pettick end up on board the Ile de Martinique, where to escape detection they pretend to be penguins and frighten off a gunman by pretending to be ghosts. With the birth certificate finally in his possession, Bobby is back in his new stately home where he gives "an inimitable representation of a mad peer mounting an invisible horse" before the whole show ends with a grand wedding scene.

Notes: It was possible that by now the tried-and-tested formula of the Howes-Watson-Belmore partnership was beginning to run out of steam. Although the performers themselves were welcomed back into the West End, the material itself came in for criticism, and the show came off on New Year's Eve, less than three months later.



UNDER YOUR HAT

London run: Palace, November 24th

Closed: September 2nd 1939

Re-opened: October 31st 1939 (Total 512 performances)

Music & Lyrics: Vivian Ellis

Book: Archie Menzies, Arthur Macrae & Jack Hulbert

Director: Jack Hulbert

Choreographer: Jack Hulbert & Philip Buchel

Ballets: John Byron

Musical Director: Lew Stone

Cast: Jack Hulbert (*Jack Millet*), Cicely Courtneidge (*Kay Porter*), Leonora Corbett (*Carol Markoff*), Frank Cellier (*Boris Vladimir*), Peter Haddon (*George*), Madeleine Gibson (*Valerie Fay*), Marie Narelle (*Mrs Sheepshanks*)

Songs: Hat Ballet, Rise Above It, They're Wearing Them This Way Now, Together Again, Cook's Ballet, La Dance c'est moi, I've Lost My Way, If You Want to Dance, Hostesses of the Air, The Empire Depends On You, Crocodile on Parade, Keep it Under Your Hat

Story: Jack Millet and Kay Porter are two film stars who find themselves suddenly called upon by the Foreign Office to track down Carol Markoff and Boris Vladimir, two foreign spies who have stolen a marvellous carburettor which is going to make all the difference to the British Air Force. They will be assisted by George and Valerie Fay, a society hostess and her ineffable partner. Thus starts a hide and seek chase through places including the south of France, a girls' school, film studios and on board an airplane, and a series of adventures requiring Kay to don a number of disguises, including a petite French maid, a stout and elderly tourist and an aeronautical mechanic with moustache. In the course of her adventures she serves as a cocktail waitress mixing a cocktail which includes everything including a goldfish, and dances a waltz with a severe attack of hiccups. Other characters include Mrs Colonel Sheepshanks

Notes: This very successful show ran to packed houses for ten months and was forced to close along with all London theatres when war was declared on September 3rd 1939. A month later it re-opened at the Grand Theatre Blackpool and then returned to London at the end of October. It closed again on April 13th 1940 due to the Blitz.



Photo by Stage Photo Co

Jack Hulbert & Cicely Courtneidge

MAGYAR MELODY

London run: His Majesty's, January 20th (105 performances)

Music: George Posford & Bernard Grün

Lyrics: Harold Purcell & Eric Maschwitz

Book: Eric Maschwitz, Fred Thompson & Guy Bolton

Director William Mollison

Choreographer: Joan Davis & Cleo Nordi

Musical Director: Walford Hyden

Cast Changes: Roger Treville (*Michael Herriot*),
Binnie Hale (*Rozsi*), Arthur Margetson (*Count Ferenc*),
Lawrence Anderson (*Duke of Firth*),
Barbara Spicer (*Mrs Townsend*),
Anne Allan (*Susan Townsend*)

From the original cast:

Stella Arbenina (*Empress Elisabeth*),

Characters Cut: *Mrs Herriot*, *Doctor Banyai*, *Abbé Liszt*,
Sir George Warburton

Songs: Home is the Harvest, My Song is Born, Magyar Melody,
Boy Meets Girl, Just Like a Gipsy Band, Empress's Anthem,
Café Continental, Never Bring Mamma!, My Heart Belongs to
Budapest,
No Married Men Need Apply, Mine Alone, A Truly Tyrolean
Band, The Waltz I Would Rather Forget,
Shot Gun Wedding, Day Dream

Story: The story remained very similar to the original "Paprika", except that Roszi is now just an Hungarian actress (her violin solos have been cut!), and she does not return to London with Michael. Most of the action now takes place in Hungary, with very little staged in London. Michael is informed of the death of his uncle, the Duke of Firth and is obliged immediately to return to England, with no time to explain to Roszi. Count Ferenc, entrusted to deliver the farewell message and explanation, fails to do so and consequently Roszi believes she has been abandoned.

Notes: There has been some major re-casting, and some major-rewriting as well as the addition of some extra songs. Because of Eric Maschwitz's BBC connections, he arranged for a large extract of the show to be broadcast on the radio and then on March 27th 1939 pulled off a spectacular publicity coup: "Magyar Melody" became the very first musical to be shown on British television, broadcast directly from the theatre and running the whole evening – three and a half hours with the interval. But even this didn't help, and the show closed on April 22nd, after 105 performances.



Roger Treville & Binnie Hale

Photo by Bert Wilson, Manchester



The original artwork, 1910

Photo by Bert Wilson, Manchester



Photo by Angus McBean

Ivor Novello & Mary Ellis

meet, fall in love, and run away to live together, leaving behind Rudi's infatuated admirer Grete and Maria's boyfriend, Prince Charles Metterling. Three years later Grete comes back into his life – now a star of the English musical theatre – and jokingly reminds him that he promised never to marry anyone else until she had the chance to reject his proposal. In jest he proposes to her, but is accidentally overheard by Maria, who not realising the situation, and not hearing the rejection, immediately returns to Vienna, where she will finally marry Prince Charles. In 1926 they meet again and discover that they are still in love, but they decide to separate for the sake of their son, who mistakenly believes the Prince to be his real father. Their paths finally cross again in 1938, following the German "Anschluss" with Austria. Rudi has been arrested for opposing the Nazi regime, but Maria manages to get him released.

Notes: The original production had opened at Drury Lane in March 1939, and was forced to close after 187 performances when war was declared in September of that year.

1st Revival: Following a provincial tour, it returned to the Adelphi Theatre in London in March 1942, and ran for 969 performances, again forced to close because of increased bombing activity.

2nd Revival: It undertook yet another provincial tour, returning for the third time to the Casino Theatre in March 1947 for 96 performances, followed by yet another tour. All in all the show had run almost consecutively for ten years.

Mary Ellis (on stairs) with
Roma Beaumont & Ivor Novello

THE DANCING YEARS

London run: Drury Lane, March 23rd
(187 performances –
ended on outbreak of war)

Music: Ivor Novello

Lyrics: Christopher Hassall

Director: Leontine Sagan

Choreographer: Freddie Carpenter

Musical Director: Charles Prentice

Cast: Ivor Novello (*Rudi Kleber*),
Mary Ellis (*Maria Zeigler*),
Roma Beaumont (*Grete Schöne*),
Olive Gilbert (*Cäcile Kurt*),
Peter Graves (*Franzl*),
Anthony Nicholla (*Prince Charles*)

Songs: Waltz of My Heart,
I Can Give you the Starlight,
My Dearest Dear,
Wings of Sleep,
My Life Belongs to You,
Leap Year Waltz,
Primrose,
Lorelei

Story: The story begins in 1911 at an inn outside Vienna where poor Rudi Kleber and operetta star Maria Ziegler



Photo by Angus McBean

THE DESERT SONG (3rd Revival)

London run: Garrick Theatre, June 29th (75 performances – ended on outbreak of war)

Music: Sigmund Romberg

Book & Lyrics: Otto Harbach, Frank Mandel & Oscar Hammerstein II

Director: Frederick G. Lloyd

Musical Director: Albert Rouse

Cast: Bruce Carfax (*Pierre Birabeau*), Doris Francis (*Margot Bonvalet*), Alexander Cameron (*Bennie Kidd*), Greta Buchanan (*Azuri*), Rhys Thomas (*Sid el Kar*), Warwick Ashton (*Capt Paul Fontaine*), Kathleen Fraser (*Clementina*), Phyllis Bourke (*Susan*)

Original London run: Drury Lane, 1927

First revival: Alhambra, June 1931

Second revival: Coliseum, September 1936

SITTING PRETTY

London run: Prince's Theatre, August 17th (15 performances – ended on outbreak of War)

Music: Manning Sherwin

Book & Lyrics: Douglas Furber

Director: Herbert Bryan

Choreographer: Jack Donohue

Musical Director: John Borelli

Cast: Sydney Howard (*Wilberforce*), Arthur Riscoe (*Jeremiah*), Vera Pearce (*Clementina Tuttle*), Patricia Burke (*Mary Pugh*), Jack Donohue (*Jimmy Gay*), Guy Fane (*Mr Pugh*)

Songs: It'll Take a Little Time, Two Gun Flo

Story: Wilberforce, Jeremiah and their mother Clementina Tuttle will inherit a lot of money from a well-intentioned relative provided they can all hold down a proper job for at least a month. The two men take a job at a posh hotel as cocktail waiter and cook, and when that falls through they end up disguised as lady shop assistants and part of a sultan's harem, and further jobs in the Arctic and in the tropics. Mother ends up working as a singer in a Wild West saloon bar. With all three working in the Wild West they fortunately hit lucky with a gold strike and are able to return to a wealthy life back home without having to worry about the inheritance

Notes: This was as a kind of successor to "Wild Oats" – which had been the hit show of the previous year at



the Prince's - using the same three stars with the same kind of story in its revue form – three comic performers and a series of vaguely related comedy sketches. It looked as if it would settle down to be another hit for the trio, but it was forced to close after its second week because of the outbreak of war. It was not revived.



Tonie Lupino, Eric Fawcett, George Gee
& Marjorie Sandford

RUNAWAY LOVE

London run: Saville, November 3rd (195 performances)

Music: Billy Mayerl

Lyrics: Frank Eyton

Book: Barry Lupino & Frank Eyton

Director: Barry Lupino & Frank Eyton

Choreographer: Fred A. Leslie

Musical Director: Billy Mayerl

Cast: Wyn Weaver (*Eustace Prendergast*),
Tonie Lupino (*Molly*), George Gee (*Peter Fenton*),
Eric Fawcett (*Jim Teesdale*),
Marjorie Sandford (*Betty Plunkett*), Barry Lupino (*Trott*),
Esma Cannon (*Elizabeth*),
Duncan Sim (*Donald MacTavish*).

Songs: Nice to Know, Don't Speak to Me of Love, Didn't Your Mother Tell You? You Know Me I Know You, We Can't Do the Things we did Before, Like a Cat with a Mouse, What a Jolly Little Honeymoon.

Story: Eustace Prendergast is adamant that his daughter, Molly, shall not marry Peter Fenton. A similar problem faces Peter's friend, Jim Teesdale, forbidden to marry Betty Plunkett. To solve the problem both pairs get married secretly – and to add to the numbers Peter's valet, Trott and the maid Elizabeth also get spliced. All three couples rush off for their secret honeymoon in Scotland. Eustace is horrified on two counts: firstly he has been thwarted, but secondly he has discovered that

the parson who married them was a phoney. His rush is now to prevent all three couples from consummating their union in a sinful manner! Fortunately a series of mishaps have prevented the couples from actually getting into bed, so propriety is maintained, and then, it turns out they are staying in the Scottish residence of a parson, and, under Scottish law, because they have informed the parson they are three married couples, that means they are legally married (at least in Scotland).

Notes: This show had played several weeks touring before coming into London (it had reached Streatham Hill by the middle of August) but then was forced off the road because of the outbreak of war. During the short break the show was re-jigged: Peter and Jim were now in RAF uniforms, and Eustace was portrayed as an air-raid warden. Much of the business was slanted towards wartime propaganda. The show ran twice-nightly until the Blitz forced it away from London and into the provinces.

WHO'S TAKING LIBERTY?

London run: Whitehall Theatre, December 6th (54 performances)

Music: Mischa Spoliansky

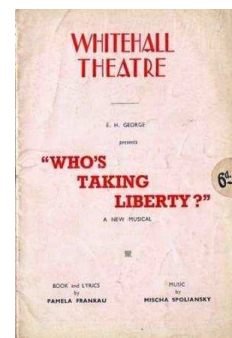
Book & Lyrics: Pamela Frankau

Director: Leslie French

Choreographer: Wendy Toye

Musical Director: Muir Matheson

Cast: Dorothy Hyson (*Liberty*), Reginald Purcell (*Gretchen*),
Frederick Burtwell (*Katinka*), Margaretta Scott (*Prince Charming*),
Warren Jenkins (*Neutralus*), Gertrude Musgrove (*Observa*),
Leslie French (*Stage Hand*), Michael Wilding (*Evil Spirit*)



Notes: This was peculiar wartime effort: Liberty is an ordinary young girl (Cinderella type) persecuted by her sisters Gretchen and Katinka (Ugly Sisters type of German and Russian character). Prince Charming appeared with a Neville Chamberlain type umbrella, whilst two characters called Neutralus and Observa sang a song about sitting on the fence. A Stage-hand wandered in and out of the action providing some comic business in the midst of a lot of heavy-handed rhyming couplets. A young Michael Wilding appeared as a kind of Demon King. This lasted through the Christmas period and up to the end of January, but was too ploddingly satirical to gain any real success.

SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND

London run: Lyric, December 26th (24 performances)

Music: Cole Porter & Nat D. Ayer

Book: Douglas Furber, Claude Hulbert & Will Hay

Director: Douglas Furber

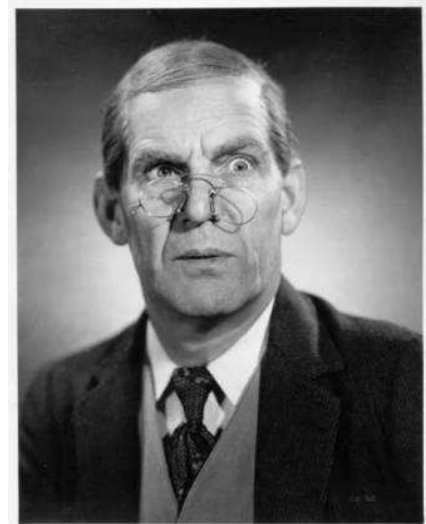
Choreographer: Alan Shires

Cast: Will Hay (*Joshua Tiddles*), Claude Hulbert (*Basil Bird*), Marie Lohr (*Pansy Bird*), Richard Caldicot (*Colonel*), Robb Wilton Jr (*Sam*), Diana Ward (*Delia*), Joan Glynne (*Joan*), & Guests artists: Nat D. Ayer, Teddy Green, Evelyn Darvell & Alan Shires.

Songs: (*By Nat Ayer*) If You Were the Only Girl in the World, Oh You Beautiful Doll, Blow Up Balloons with your Troubles and Make then go Pop with a Pin. (*Cole Porter*: various songs in the cabaret)

Story: Joshua Tiddles, J.P. and Joan, his ward, now share a mansion with Basil Bird – the son of Pansy Bird, who in years gone by was the love of Joshua's life. Basil, being hard up, wants Joshua to propose again to Pansy to solve their financial problems – though the slim young Pansy of the old days is now an altogether different proposition. However, the mansion is suddenly over-run with activity: a colonel arrives to say mansion is requisitioned for military; Sam, a theatre producer, arrives with Delia, his star attraction, to stage a big show for local evacuees; and Pansy returns with her evacuees, demanding educational facilities are provided. Joshua becomes a teacher, muddling every known fact; Basil becomes an A.R.P. man; the cabaret is joined by Teddy Green and his band, and the old performer Nat D. Ayer as a visiting guest star – and - somewhere in the plot - Pansy is suspected of being a German spy.

Notes: This was a revue, a bit of a pantomime, a collection of famous sketches (the Will Hay's schoolroom, etc.) and a series of "turns" from established variety performers very loosely wrapped together round a very thin plot. It had been on a provincial tour and ran for two weeks as the Christmas attraction at the Lyric, playing twice daily, and three times on Thursday and Saturday – before returning to its tour.



Will Hay