

# “I’ll Never Know Exactly Who Did What”: Broadway Composers as Musical Collaborators

DOMINIC MCHUGH

In late December 1963, when Jerry Herman’s new Broadway musical *Hello, Dolly!* was experiencing trouble in previews before its official opening in New York, its producer David Merrick decided to call in some help from another composer-lyricist, Bob Merrill.<sup>1</sup> Herman later revealed that he had not been consulted about this decision before Merrill arrived on the scene; when Merrill himself realized this, he “turned ashen.”<sup>2</sup> But Merrick stood his ground, and Merrill helped to create two new numbers, “Motherhood March” and “Elegance,” as well as making a number of contributions to the book (script) and staging.<sup>3</sup> Herman is quoted by his biographer Stephen Citron as saying that he had been given “the first eight bars of ‘Elegance’ and [the] opening lines”<sup>4</sup> by Merrill, and as freely admitting that the lyric of “Motherhood March” “was mostly Bob Merrill’s idea.”<sup>5</sup> Merrill’s papers at the Library of Congress bear out this story, numerous handwritten pages of notes on the staging, as well as lyric sketches for these two songs, having survived to document his involvement.<sup>6</sup>

Also extant in the collection is a letter to Merrill from the show’s director, Gower Champion, thanking him for his input. Champion writes that he

I extend my thanks to the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust for their financial support for this project. I am also grateful to my parents and to Danielle Birkett, Larry Blank, Geoffrey Block, Mark Eden Horowitz, and Hannah Robbins for their suggestions, and to the various estates for giving permission to reproduce some of the manuscripts, namely Emily Altman and David Grossberg (Lerner and Loewe), Ted Chapin (Rodgers and Hammerstein), Jo Loesser and Joseph Weiss (Frank Loesser), Paul McKibbins (Wright and Forrest), and Roberta Staats (Cole Porter).

1. Jerry Herman was the composer-lyricist of *Milk and Honey* (1961), *Hello, Dolly!* (1964), *Mame* (1966), *Dear World* (1969), *Mack and Mabel* (1974), *The Grand Tour* (1979), and *La cage aux folles* (1983). Bob Merrill was the composer-lyricist of several successful pop songs (such as “How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?”) and Broadway musicals (including *New Girl in Town* (1957), *Take Me Along* (1959), and *Carnival!* (1961)), and the lyricist of two successful musicals with music by Jule Styne, *Funny Girl* (1964) and *Sugar* (1972).

2. Citron, *Jerry Herman*, 94.

3. *Ibid.*, 95–97.

4. *Ibid.*, 95.

5. *Ibid.*, 96.

6. Bob Merrill Collection (Library of Congress), box 4 (no folder numbers given).

“just wanted to let [Merrill] know” that his contribution to *Dolly* “did not go unnoticed.” The letter continues, “I’ll never know exactly who did what on ‘Motherhood March,’ but it helps to maintain an antic mood in the first act where it was much needed. As for ‘Elegance,’ it has proven the perfect curtain-raiser for the second-act and, speaking selfishly, it was great fun to stage.” Finally, Champion adds in parenthesis that, together with Herman and the show’s musical director, he had “fiddled around with” “Elegance” but hoped Merrill would agree “that the end justifies, etc. It works, and that’s the main point.”<sup>7</sup> *Hello, Dolly!* became a smash hit, running for the better part of a decade and winning a record-breaking ten Tony Awards. Few were aware of Merrill’s input until the publication of Citron’s book. Herman did not include either “Elegance” or “Motherhood March” in his collection of lyrics published in 2003,<sup>8</sup> and the latter song was dropped from the show’s 1969 movie version.

Two closely related aspects of Champion’s comments shed light on the compositional culture of the Broadway musical of the postwar period. First, musicals were normally created by multiple “authors” in collaboration: in the present example, the uncredited Merrill provided some material and the named production team (as a group) “fiddled around with” one of the numbers after his departure. Secondly, their texts evolved through creative processes leading to performance events, rather than having been conceived as fixed “works” emanating from a single authority. It was common at this time both on Broadway and in Hollywood for writers to help each other without credit, the main task being to get the show on stage or on screen (with permanence only a secondary concern, if it was a concern at all), and Champion’s letter nicely encapsulates this state of affairs: Merrill had come in to help the team, and whatever form the assistance had taken, it had worked.

Despite the predominantly collaborative nature of this creative environment, the musicological literature on the Broadway repertory has to date largely centered on the composer, as Elizabeth Wells has noted.<sup>9</sup> In the field of popular music studies, consideration of the question of authorial control has produced a range of interesting results. Noting that generic conventions shape the attribution of authority, Freya Jarman-Ivens summarizes, “The author in music operates very differently according to the kind of music being discussed: it is Beethoven’s symphony, but Elvis’s ‘Jailhouse Rock,’ and jazz standards are another question altogether.”<sup>10</sup> Other studies have shown

7. Letter from Gower Champion to Bob Merrill, January 22, 1964, Merrill Collection, box

4. Peter Howard was the show’s musical director.

8. Herman and Bloom, *Jerry Herman: The Lyrics*.

9. See Wells, review of *Jerome Kern* et al.

10. Jarman-Ivens’s article explores the “referential presence” of the Carpenters’ recording of the song “Superstar” in subsequent performances by other artists, even though theirs was not the first; nor were they the writers of the song: Jarman-Ivens, “You’re Not Really T/here.”

that the authorial relationship between the writers and performers of popular song is blurred in almost every case, and that discussion of authorship in this field is often misleadingly framed in legal terms (since the writer rather than the performer of the song is usually granted the royalties).<sup>11</sup> By contrast, the Broadway literature has often reinforced the importance of the composer. The very title of Yale University Press's "Broadway Masters" series implies that the composers are the "master geniuses" behind the shows, in that six of the series's seven volumes are about composers. (The seventh deals with the composer-lyricist team Kander and Ebb.)<sup>12</sup> Oxford University Press's equivalent series, "Broadway Legacies," has a more liberal focus that includes two choreographers (volumes on Agnes de Mille and Bob Fosse have been announced), but even here only one volume devoted to a lyricist alone, Dorothy Fields, has appeared so far. As Wells points out, the attempt to canonize certain composers can prove problematic.<sup>13</sup>

Crucially for this discussion, Lovensheimer has underlined the relevance of Foucault's notion of the "author-function" to the musical theater canon in the grouping of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals, for example.<sup>14</sup> For Foucault, the presence of the author's name is "functional in that it serves as a means of classification."<sup>15</sup> But in a practical sense the Broadway composer also plays a fundamental, though not solitary, role in the process of producing scores, a role that has gone somewhat uninterrogated in the literature. We still know comparatively little about how such composers went about creating songs, how they transmitted them to their publishers, and their relationships with their arrangers and orchestrators, even though these issues are key to what it meant to be a "Broadway composer," particularly

11. Negus writes, "In the study of popular music the crediting and acknowledging of authorship has usually been framed and given focus by legal disputes about copyright and plagiarism. Yet in these disputes it is rare to find critical reflections about social influence moving outwards and connecting with discussions about authorship in other disciplines: music criticism and music analysis frequently reduce the issues to stylistic influence, or the similarities between two texts, ignoring broader contextual issues": Negus, "Authorship," 608. Straw makes a similar point: "The problem of authorship in popular music has normally been reduced to one of the relationship between songwriter and song": Straw, "Authorship," 201. David J. Gunkel puts an interesting spin on the issue in an article on "mashups," which are "assembled from prefabricated materials that are plundered from the recordings of others." Nevertheless, the person who combines the preexisting materials usually assumes the role of auteur of the new text. Gunkel, "What Does It Matter?," 72.

12. See Block, *Richard Rodgers*; Snelson, *Andrew Lloyd Webber*; Banfield, *Jerome Kern*; Everett, *Sigmund Romberg*; Riis, *Frank Loesser*; Leve, *Kander and Ebb*; and Starr, *George Gershwin*.

13. She notes, for instance, the habit of several volumes on Broadway composers to "invok[e] the great German masters," and adds, "All the authors are trying to find, it seems, the relationship between 'Broadway' and 'Masters' in this Broadway Masters series": Wells, review of *Jerome Kern* et al, 168.

14. Lovensheimer, "Texts and Authors," 26–27.

15. Quoted in Burke, *Authorship*, 234.

during the so-called “Golden Age” of the genre in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The tendency of most existing studies of this repertory is to use published scores as the sole basis for analyses, even though these frequently have a loose relationship to the activities of the composers (many of whom could not read or write music very well) or to actual performances (in that changes have always been made to musicals during the run of performances).<sup>16</sup>

Of course published scores are useful and valid bases for analysis, and they are sometimes all that is available. Yet despite the exponential growth of research on the genre there is still a wealth of overlooked manuscript material in archives such as the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library that reveals the temporal aspect of the creation of Broadway scores as well as the complexity of the process. To date, only a few scholars have considered how this kind of material might be exploited, and in most cases the study of the sources tends to reaffirm the composer as a lone artist.<sup>17</sup> Yet the production of scores for Broadway musicals is nearly always a collaborative process, and the manuscripts reveal a wide spectrum of models in terms of authorial control. At one end of the spectrum are composers such as Irving Berlin, who always used an amanuensis to write down his songs, while at the other are those such as Kurt Weill, who fully orchestrated a great deal of his theater music. But between these extremes most composers of the Golden Age established their own methods of producing and disseminating their scores.

In this article I examine the manuscripts of several major Broadway composers of the mid-twentieth century in order to reveal the wide spectrum of approaches to creating musical theater scores in this period. These case studies suggest a range of models: a composer’s work might be conditioned by limited musical literacy, by indifference, or by time constraints or

16. *Hello, Dolly!* again provides two convenient examples. Although the show was written with Ethel Merman in mind she turned down the role, which then went to Carol Channing. The musical went on to be a smash success, and for the last three months of performances in 1970 Merman agreed to play Dolly for a limited run. To mark the occasion Herman added two songs for her, “Love, Look in My Window” and “World, Take Me Back.” See Kirle, *Unfinished Show Business*, 33. Prior to this, the song “Come and Be My Butterfly” had been replaced by a polka contest sometime during the Broadway run; the first published edition of the vocal score (Edwin H. Morris, 1964) includes this number (“No. 15: Come and Be My Butterfly,” on pages 152–59), whereas subsequent editions have the polka replacement (“No. 15: Polka,” also on pages 152–59).

17. Geoffrey Block’s survey of the repertory, *Enchanted Evenings*, problematizes the issue by consulting primary source material, an approach he has also pursued in a study of Frank Loesser’s sketchbooks for *The Most Happy Fella*. See also Stephen Banfield’s volumes on Sondheim and Kern, Jeffrey Magee’s on Berlin, Nigel Simeone’s on *West Side Story*, Tim Carter’s on *Oklahoma!*, and Bruce d. McClung’s on *Lady in the Dark*, all of which account for the respective composers’ creative strategies and show how this can be a fruitful method of inquiry. This is, nonetheless, a limited group relative to the vast quantity of surviving sources for this repertory.

other practical considerations. In all cases, the composer's purpose was to get a show on the stage as one of a team of musical collaborators, and the archival documents provide evidence of their varying processes, in terms of both creation and dissemination. The case studies have been chosen in order to demonstrate compelling examples of individual approaches to the practical element of composing for Broadway. Richard Rodgers (1902–79), for instance, had a business-like approach to writing down his music, almost always creating fair copies of his songs in piano-vocal scores for his arrangers and orchestrators to develop. This allowed him to control the melodic and harmonic content, and he employed this as a fixed method for most of his career. Cole Porter (1891–1964) provides a useful point of comparison, in that although he was as musically literate as Rodgers he routinely used an amanuensis to create his scores. In some instances he wrote out more complete scores for certain numbers, and he engaged closely in the publication of his songs, but it is clear that he regularly collaborated when it came to writing down his music. Distinct from the other case studies, Frank Loesser (1910–69) initially wrote down very little of his music, as when creating *Guys and Dolls* (1950), but his ambitions led to the complex score for his three-act musical *The Most Happy Fella* (1956), which was developed in sixteen sketchbooks over several years.<sup>18</sup> Yet the sources for his final hit, *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* (1961), reveal that even at this late stage in his career Loesser wrote down each song in fragments, passing these compositional ideas to an arranger to be worked up into complete musical numbers. The compositional activities of Frederick Loewe (1901–88) are scrutinized here to show the complexity of his extensive collaboration with his main arranger, Trude Rittmann. Finally, the team of Robert Wright (1914–2005) and George Forrest (1915–99), jointly credited as composer-lyricists though the sources reveal a clear division of labor, is included as a curious example of a different model. Although they wrote a few original musicals they are best remembered for writing songs based on the music of art-music composers (in the case of *Magdalena* directly collaborating with Villa-Lobos). Their re-authoring of music by Borodin into the musical *Kismet* is a particularly useful example of the practical role of the composer on Broadway in this period.<sup>19</sup> Taken together these five case studies will help to shatter traditional views of the Broadway composer, no longer to be seen as a lone artist but as a musical collaborator at the center of the process of score production.

18. See Block, "Frank Loesser's Sketchbooks."

19. In addition to these, I also consulted the papers of Harold Rome, boxes 1 and 2 (Library of Congress), Arthur Schwartz (Library of Congress and Wisconsin Historical Society), Meredith Willson (Juilliard School of Music), Hugh Martin (Library of Congress), Bob Merrill (Library of Congress), Irving Berlin (Library of Congress), Jerry Ross (Wisconsin Historical Society) and Stephen Sondheim (Wisconsin Historical Society).

## Richard Rodgers: Conception and Control

Richard Rodgers's Broadway career was both long and distinguished: he wrote more than forty Broadway musicals in almost six decades.<sup>20</sup> Fruitful collaborations with the lyricists Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II meant that between about 1925 and 1960 Rodgers had few equals and no superiors, at least in terms of commercial success. Rodgers and Hammerstein were particularly successful with *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Carousel* (1945), *South Pacific* (1949), *The King and I* (1951), *Flower Drum Song* (1958), and *The Sound of Music* (1959), though they also had their fair share of disappointments (notably *Allegro* (1947), *Me and Juliet* (1953), and *Pipe Dream* (1955)). After Hammerstein's death in 1960 Rodgers wrote only five more stage musicals, with a range of lyricists (including himself) and with mixed results,<sup>21</sup> but his work in general has endured far beyond that of most of his contemporaries. In spite of this status, very little has been written about Rodgers's working methods,<sup>22</sup> which is surprising given the rich material available: the Library of Congress's Richard Rodgers Collection includes manuscripts for most of Rodgers's musicals, in some cases complete sets.<sup>23</sup>

That little has been written about his manuscripts can be easily explained from a brief glance at the fair copies of the songs from the Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals, which make up the bulk of the Library of Congress collection. Most of Rodgers's own fair copies closely match the readily available published piano-vocal scores of these shows.<sup>24</sup> Leaving aside small discrepancies, such as articulation markings or dynamics, the majority of the fair copies do not provide significant new material. It is true that few actually account for multiple verses of a single song, but on a musical level the copyist's work was very straightforward and scarcely creative. For the scholars who have consulted the manuscripts this feature must have been off-putting; it is almost disappointing to note how closely the fair copies match the published

20. For a list of Rodgers's Broadway musicals, see Block, *Richard Rodgers*, 257–59.

21. The musicals are *No Strings* (lyrics by Rodgers, 1962), *Do I Hear a Waltz?* (lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, 1965), *Two by Two* (lyrics by Martin Charnin, 1970), *Rex* (lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, 1976), and *I Remember Mama* (lyrics by Martin Charnin and Raymond Jessel, 1979).

22. Geoffrey Block and Tim Carter briefly make reference to Rodgers's autograph scores in their monographs on Rodgers and *Oklahoma!* respectively: see Block, *Richard Rodgers*, 62, 139, 145, for instance, and Carter, *Oklahoma!*, 109–27. See also Block on Rodgers in chapters 5 and 9 of *Enchanted Evenings*.

23. The finding aid for the ca. 2,700 items can be read online at [http://findingaids.loc.gov/db/search/xq/searchMfer02.xq?\\_id=loc.music.eadmus.mu002002&\\_faSection=overview&\\_faSubsection=did&\\_dmdid=](http://findingaids.loc.gov/db/search/xq/searchMfer02.xq?_id=loc.music.eadmus.mu002002&_faSection=overview&_faSubsection=did&_dmdid=) (accessed October 9, 2013).

24. A few of the fair copies are in copyists' hands: one manuscript of the "Sixteen Going On Seventeen" reprise from *The Sound of Music*, for instance, is in the hand of Trude Rittmann (Richard Rodgers Collection (Library of Congress), box 15, folder 30), as is a two-page score marked "End of Scene Three: Fav. Things & Maria" (box 15, folder 20).

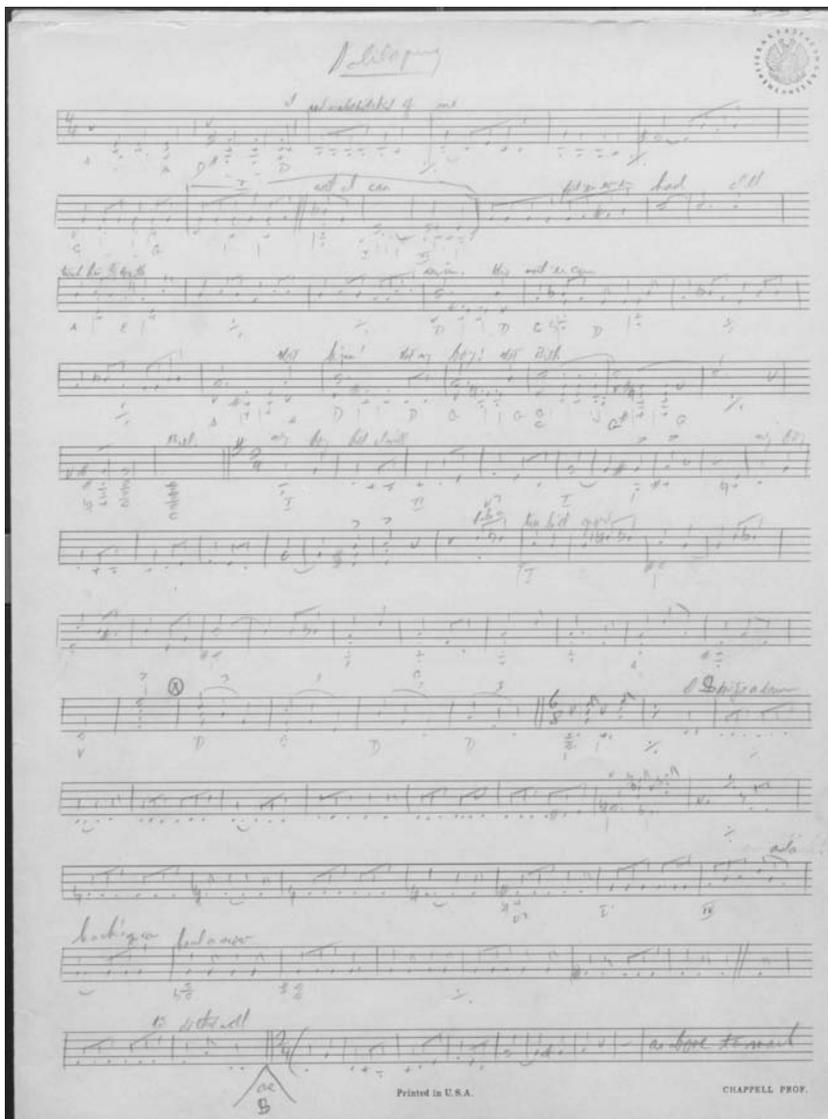
scores, rather than revealing discarded versions, alternate lyrics, or erased melodic lines.

At the same time, however, we might regard this similarity as impressive. Rodgers's fair copies contain not just the melody and basic harmony for his songs, but also contrapuntal devices, accompaniment figures, and melodic "fills" as well. Rodgers was very clear about what he wanted to be transmitted to the orchestra pit and stage, and his principal orchestrators for his musicals with Hammerstein—Robert Russell Bennett and Don Walker—were unusually (though not slavishly) faithful to these fair copies in creating their orchestrations. To give three useful examples: the arpeggiated accompaniment for "If I Loved You" from *Carousel*, the triplet figures on the final beats of alternate bars in "I Have Dreamed" from *The King and I*, and the quirky seven-bar melodic figure between each refrain of "So Long, Farewell" from *The Sound of Music* are all clearly present in Rodgers's manuscripts. They form part of his conception of the songs and are of his invention.

For many of his songs, especially the mature ones, some sort of sketch material has also survived. This offers an insight into the composer's workshop, giving as clear an indication as one could hope for of Rodgers's compositional process. One of the most important of these sketches is that for Billy Bigelow's "Soliloquy" from *Carousel* (see Fig. 1).<sup>25</sup> Joseph Swain has observed that the song is important for "its elaborate form, changing textures, and its ability to reflect a number of emotional changes."<sup>26</sup> Extraordinarily given this complexity, Rodgers managed to sketch almost the entire number on only two sides of manuscript paper, mapping the whole thing out musically and harmonically. (The "My little girl" passage is written separately at the bottom of the second page, but the material is mostly there.) As is typical of his sketches, only the melodic line is given and harmony is usually indicated by Roman numerals, though occasional contrapuntal movement (such as the chromatic tenor line at "Like a tree he'll grow, with his head held high") is also written in. The distinctive brooding introductory chords in the opening two bars are present, Rodgers indicating the bass notes here with letters. There are even a few important accents next to dramatic chords. Only fragments of the lyric are written on the score, but it is clear that the music is a setting of the words, rather than that the words have been added later. This explains, perhaps, how Rodgers managed to sketch the number so quickly: much of the structure was bound to the lyric and therefore "inherited" from Hammerstein, whose role in the process, though not addressed here, is obviously significant.

25. Rodgers Collection, box 3, folder 24.

26. Swain, *Broadway Musical*, 120.



**Figure 1** “Soliloquy,” autograph sketch, from *Carousel*, music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Richard Rodgers Collection, Library of Congress. Courtesy of Rodgers & Hammerstein: An Imagem Company, [www.rnh.com](http://www.rnh.com). Used by permission. This figure appears in color in the online version of the *Journal*.

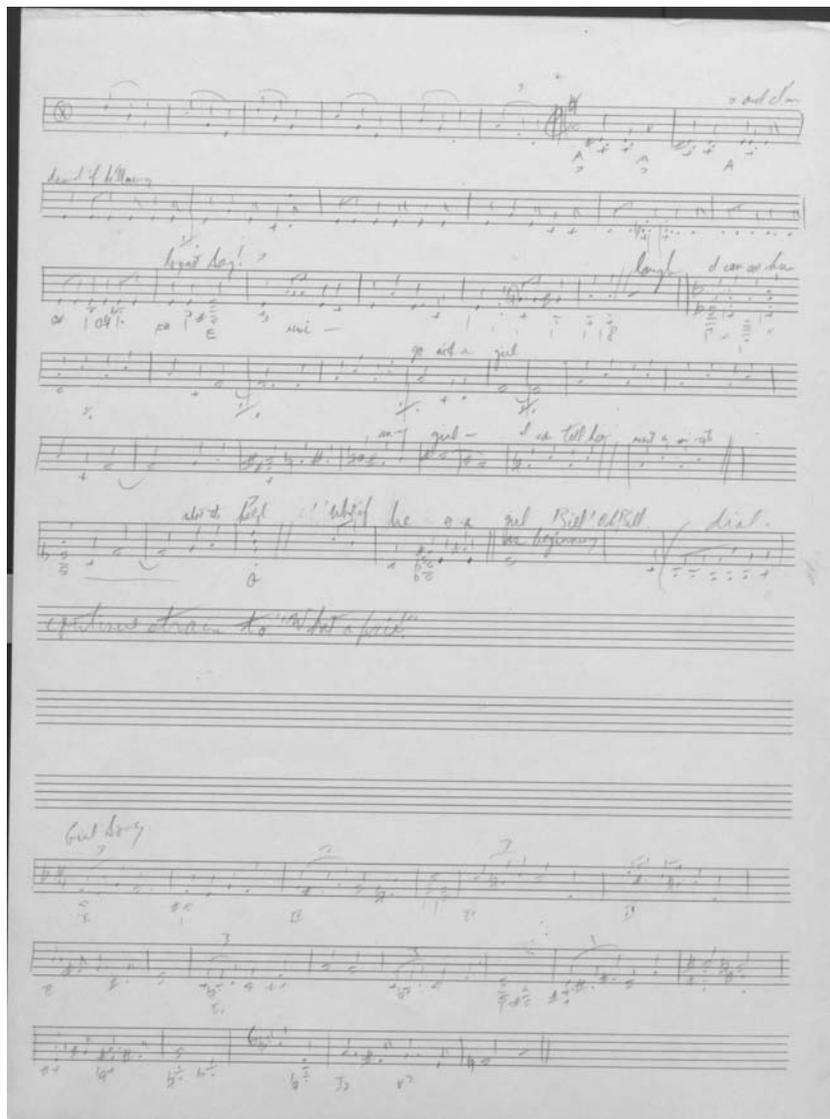


Figure 1 continued.

Other than the final few bars of the piece, much of the musical material is present in this first sketch. Rodgers's process meant developing the score from its inception to the moment of its orchestration by being specific, if also economical, in the fair copies that he himself made of each song. This is the

case for “Soliloquy”: a fair copy was made in which the few ambiguities in the sketch were cleared up, many tempo markings were indicated, and most of the full harmonies were realized. Other distinctive features of the piece, such as the little sighing motif between the first two phrases of the opening section and the fanfare between phrases of the “My boy, Bill!” section, are also present in the fair copy. Walker’s orchestration of the number develops the score further, however:<sup>27</sup> much more articulation is added, the dynamic range is greatly expanded, and tempo markings are developed (for example, Rodgers’s “Allegretto” at the start of the “I’ll teach him to wrassle” section is changed to “Più mosso” to facilitate the large-scale gradual increase of dramatic pressure). All of this is in addition to the orchestrator’s most obvious and important job: to add color through instrumentation.

In this, Rodgers appears to have had little input, though of course it is possible that the issue was discussed in person or via correspondence that has not survived. (One exception is “The Prince Is Giving a Ball” from the TV musical *Cinderella*, where the composer’s manuscript indicates trumpet fanfares, but this is clearly a special case.)<sup>28</sup> It is more likely, though, that Rodgers regarded his role in the process as extending only from the sketch to the fair copy, handing over at that point to orchestrators whom he trusted to be reasonably faithful to the melodic, harmonic, and contrapuntal outline he had provided. While this was itself a form of authorial control—it is obvious from his choices of personnel that he never hired people who might, for example, change his melodic fills between phrases or impose too actively on the counterpoint—he clearly viewed his orchestrators as trusted collaborators, and collaboration was an assumed part of his procedure. Indeed, certain aspects of Rodgers’s scores were entirely handed over to others: the overtures and entr’actes, for instance, tended to be devised by the orchestrator, sometimes following a routine laid out by an arranger. In the Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals a major exception to this is, again, *Carousel*. The “Carousel Waltz” that opens the show and acts as both overture and pantomime to the first scene was sketched in piano score (unusually for Rodgers) and then revised as a fair copy by the composer.<sup>29</sup>

Rodgers’s dance numbers, too, were usually laid out in piano score by a dance arranger, based on melodic material from other numbers in the show; an example is the “Ländler” from *The Sound of Music*, clearly in the hand of Trude Rittmann (though it is derived from “The Lonely Goatherd”).<sup>30</sup>

27. Walker’s full scores for *Carousel* are in boxes 26–28 of the Rodgers Collection.

28. Rodgers Collection, box 4, folder 8.

29. The five-page sketch is titled “Liliom”; the thirteen-page fair copy is called simply “Carousel”: Rodgers Collection, box 3, folder 17.

30. Rodgers Collection, box 15, folder 24.

In these cases Rodgers was presumably happy to delegate on the grounds that his music often still provided the foundation of what was being performed.<sup>31</sup> Not all the dance music in his shows was conceived by others, though: the Library of Congress’s collection indicates that, for instance, “The Chinese March” from the early Rodgers and Hart musical *The Chinese Lantern* (1922)<sup>32</sup> and “The March of the Siamese Children” from *The King and I*<sup>33</sup> were both composed by Rodgers. The sketches for *The Sound of Music* also reveal that Rodgers composed the (admittedly unremarkable) counterpoint to the melody of “Maria” for the “Wedding Processional” number, rather than leaving it to an arranger.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, Rodgers sketched at least some of the material used in the distinctive “Slaughter on Tenth Avenue” and “Princess Zenobia” ballets from *On Your Toes* (1936).<sup>35</sup> The decision to write some of these numbers and not others is not entirely haphazard, either: most of the above are special moments, musically, in their respective shows, whereas *The Sound of Music*’s “Ländler,” for instance, is a generic diegetic number that probably did not require the Rodgers hallmark, hence he could pass it to Rittmann. The main songs, however, were always closely controlled by Rodgers. Another vivid example of his creative process is the sketch of “Sixteen Going On Seventeen” from *The Sound of Music* (see Fig. 2): at the top of the page Rodgers sketches out the rhythm of the line “Better beware, be canny and careful” before adding pitches below. Again, the song’s harmonies are mostly indicated with Roman numerals, but the more complex counterpoint of the third phrase (the so-called “middle eight”) is written out in greater detail.

Rodgers’s achievement and input were misunderstood and underestimated in his lifetime, as can be seen from the following comment by Gervase Hughes: “Outstanding collaborators have been Oscar Hammerstein II (the librettist), Richard Rodgers (1904–) [*sic*]<sup>36</sup> who provides the tunes, and the less well publicised Albert Sirmay who ‘edits’ them. The Rodgers-Sirmay share has been inconsistent in taste and quality.”<sup>37</sup> In fact, Sirmay’s role in this instance had nothing to do with the Broadway productions: he simply edited the piano-vocal scores for publication, and Rittmann, not Sirmay, is credited with the piano reduction for the published score of *The Sound of*

31. Carter discusses Rodgers’s ambiguous input into the *Oklahoma!* dream ballet in *Oklahoma!*, 123–27.

32. Rodgers Collection, box 3, folder 28.

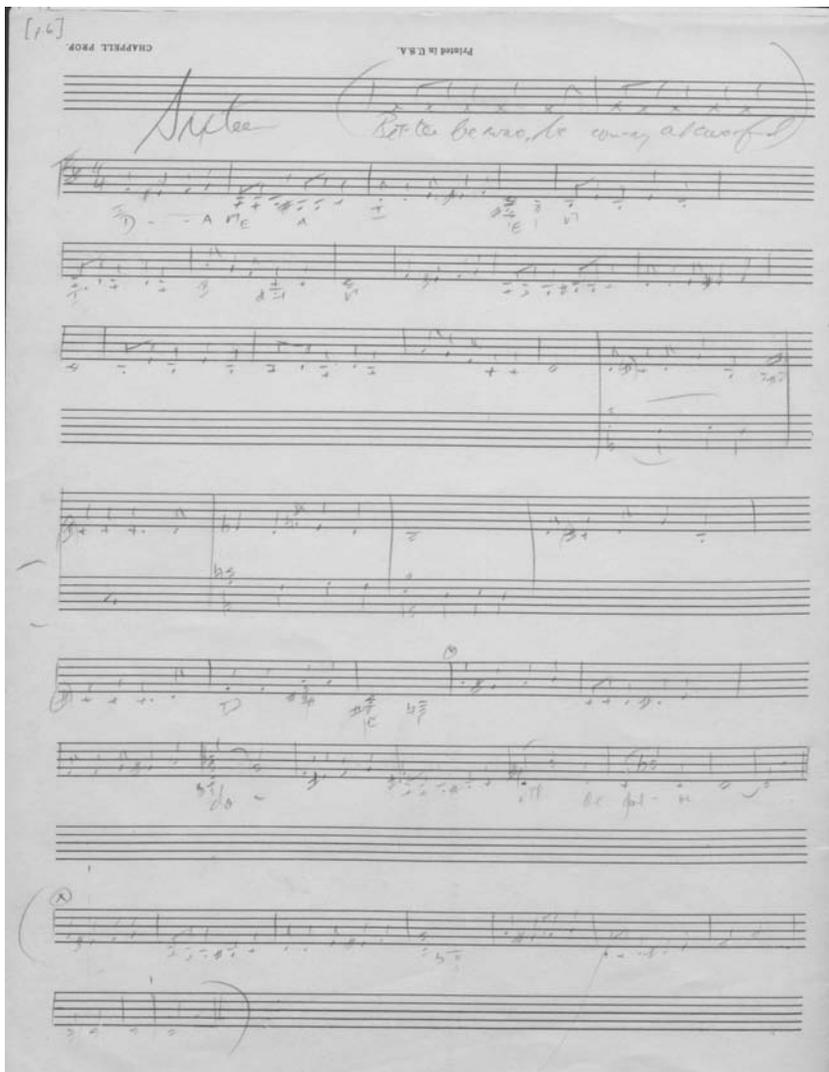
33. The three-page sketch and two-page fair copy are in the Rodgers Collection, box 9, folder 22.

34. Rodgers Collection, box 15, folder 34, p. 11.

35. The single page of sketches for the “Zenobia” ballet is in box 12, folder 18, of the Rodgers Collection, and the six-page sketch for the “Slaughter” number can be found in box 12, folder 19. Geoffrey Block has discussed the importance of Rodgers’s engagement with the ballet music in this show in a brief but useful passage of *Enchanted Evenings*, 98–99.

36. Rodgers was born in 1902.

37. Hughes, *Composers of Operetta*, 248.



**Figure 2** “Sixteen Going On Seventeen,” autograph sketch, from *The Sound of Music*, music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Richard Rodgers Collection, Library of Congress. Courtesy of Rodgers & Hammerstein: An Imagem Company, [www.rnh.com](http://www.rnh.com). Used by permission. This figure appears in color in the online version of the **Journal**.

*Music*.<sup>38</sup> Hughes denigrates Rodgers’s role because he reads the “work” only through the published piano-vocal score—which was prepared after the fact

38. Rodgers, *Sound of Music*, 1. As noted above, Sirmay’s job would not have been a substantial one: it would have involved paying attention to details such as articulation markings, rather than composing new accompaniments.

by an editor and was not the physical text to be used on Broadway—and therefore implies that Sirmay was in some way the brains behind the project. Yet Rodgers's input into the performance text was significant, as we have seen, and once he had established his compositional process (sketch and detailed fair copy) in the mid-1920s he scarcely wavered from it,<sup>39</sup> maintaining his own form of authorial control throughout his career.

### Cole Porter: Dictation and Transcription

Cole Porter's status within the Broadway repertory, like that of Rodgers, is indisputable. His first Broadway musical, *See America First*, was premiered in 1916 and his last, *Silk Stockings*, in 1955; he wrote more than two dozen stage musicals over four decades. Most of Porter's material, however, unlike that of Rodgers, is familiar only through pop musicians' cover versions of the songs from these scores, rather than in its original context; *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948) is his only Broadway show to be regularly revived with anything like its original text.<sup>40</sup> Little has been written about Porter's working methods. In his case, mapping the process is more complicated for two reasons. First, as Porter wrote both music and lyrics for nearly all his songs (that is, he was his own collaborator) his priorities and methods are not always clear.<sup>41</sup> Secondly, the condition of Porter's manuscripts is inconsistent and sporadic, so there is no paper trail of the sort there is for Rodgers's compositional process. What has survived is housed mainly in two collections, one at Yale University and the other at the Library of Congress. The latter alone includes roughly 2,700 items, with perhaps twice as many at Yale (though some of these are only duplicates). Yet between the two collections the number of autograph music manuscripts (including sketch material) of Porter's professional songs is comparatively small. By contrast, hundreds of lyric sketches—to choose just one other category of source—have survived, as well as numerous copyists' scores annotated to some degree by Porter.

In the only significant engagement with these sources to date, Matthew Shaftel rightly points to the problems of relying on a published piano-vocal score as an "Urtext," and also shows that Porter engaged with the publication process very closely, obviously caring deeply about the transmission of his music to the public in this medium.<sup>42</sup> In terms of creative process,

39. The manuscripts for *The Chinese Lantern* (Rodgers Collection, box 3, folder 28) are not at all neat and do not show the same systematic approach, but by *Simple Simon* (1930) (box 15) the layout and procedure of the fair copies is exactly the same as for the (much later) Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals.

40. Even *Kiss Me, Kate* is now often revived in a revised version based on the 1999 Broadway revival.

41. This problem has been discussed as an example of "melopoetics" in Banfield, "Sondheim," 138.

42. Shaftel, "From Inspiration to Archive."

however, Shaftel asserts that Porter is a unique case to an extent that is arguably overstated. He writes,

Many composers of the era would submit a melody and basic chord progressions to the publisher, where a copyist and an editor would fill in the accompaniment and refine the harmonizations while preparing a fair copy for the engraver. . . . Cole Porter, on the other hand, submitted completed piano-vocal scores that were then carefully and faithfully transcribed by the copyist, as can be seen from a comparison of the copyist's or published scores to the few available manuscripts.

He also quotes a letter from Porter to Sirmay in which Porter returns the proofs of two of his songs, commenting, "Oh God! How it bored me. Two more proofs have just arrived, and as soon as I can bear to, I shall correct them and return them to you." Shaftel rightly uses this as evidence of the "painstaking care" with which Porter "examined his songs."<sup>43</sup>

Yet it would be wrong to deny that Porter collaborated with others on the music of his songs, not least because, even if he made changes to Sirmay's proofs, the very presence of Sirmay shows that others formed part of Porter's working method. A letter from Porter to Richard Lewine, the producer of his final work (the TV musical *Aladdin*), includes the following comment: "Alex Steinert has arrived and we start on Monday to write out the tunes I have written."<sup>44</sup> In this instance, at least, Porter expected Steinert to transcribe his music, presumably from his dictation (why else would Steinert come in person?), and there is no reason to believe that this was unusual for him. Producing scores was a collaborative process for Porter, and we should not assume that an autograph fair copy must once have existed for each of his songs simply because a few fair copies of songs in his own hand have survived. Although there can be little doubt that a number of Porter materials will be rediscovered in years to come, perhaps even some fair copies, there is no evidence that a huge body of musical material in Porter's hand ever existed. Indeed, perhaps the quantity and condition of the manuscripts in fact tell us that he did not normally produce fair copies of his songs.

The important part played in Porter's career by his main amanuensis, copyist and publisher Albert Sirmay, has been noted before:

Sirmay faithfully took down the melodies as Cole dictated them. "You know," said Sirmay, "Cole was a highly educated musician. So he helped himself by dictating. He was a left-handed writer and it was not easy for him to write down music. But he gave me everything worked out to perfection. Occasionally I corrected a bar or two that I disliked, but I was an intimate advisor."<sup>45</sup>

43. Ibid., 320.

44. Letter from Cole Porter to Richard Lewine, Richard Lewine Papers (New York Public Library), box 1.

45. McBrien, *Cole Porter*, 151.

Sirmay’s comment on the significance of Porter’s left-handedness is probably irrelevant, but the broad emphasis of the passage is confirmed by the sources. Even a brief examination of Porter’s papers confirms Sirmay’s participation: there are fair copies of numerous numbers, from the late 1920s to the end of Porter’s professional career in the 1950s, in Sirmay’s hand.<sup>46</sup> A good example is the waltz opening to act 2 of *Around the World* (1946), the “musical extravaganza” that Porter wrote with Orson Welles. The show contained only a few songs, but there was a significant amount of underscoring in the piece, mostly based on themes not found in the big numbers. A glance at this score makes it immediately obvious why Sirmay, rather than Porter, wrote it out: the fast waltz material is highly repetitive, and from page 3 the first theme is developed into a second, similar theme using syncopation, making the score quite long. It is possible, of course, that Porter had previously written out the music and Sirmay copied it neatly, but the layout (for example, with numbers in place of repeated bars) is clearly aimed at use by a copyist or orchestrator, and there would have been no need for Sirmay to make a new copy of a fair copy had Porter written one out. Rather, it is likely that Sirmay wrote to Porter’s dictation to spare him a laborious task.

By the same token, many of the known Porter autographs are haphazard, in the sense that there is no consistency in the types of scores that have survived. For example, “I Am Ashamed That Women Are So Simple” is one of the least well known numbers from *Kiss Me, Kate*, yet there is an autograph lead sheet (melody line) of the number at the Library of Congress (see Fig. 3). Its existence could be used to suggest that it was normal for Porter to write lead sheets for his songs and that the rest have simply been lost; but equally, it could be a special case. That this is the only song from *Kate* based closely on an extended passage of Shakespeare might explain a different working method for the number: Porter was setting someone else’s words, in a quasi-recitative style, so he may have wanted to create a reference copy of his setting rather than dictate it to his arranger from memory.<sup>47</sup> It is obvious from the condition of this manuscript that it is a fair copy written out at the end of the creative process—by which time Porter had decided which portion of the speech to use—and is therefore not especially revelatory in terms of score development. The sources for “The Red Blues” from *Silk Stockings* are also intriguing. The Library of Congress Porter collection has a three-page autograph outline of the number, with only melody and lyric, as well as a one-page copyist’s score of the song’s refrain, including a piano part; the latter is a working score and has been corrected in various places,

46. My thanks to Hannah Robbins for assisting my investigation of Sirmay’s role in Porter’s career.

47. Geoffrey Block notes that Kate’s speech is abbreviated from *Shrew* in his chapter on *Kate*: Block, *Enchanted Evenings*, 226.

I Am Ashamed That Women Are So Simple.

Andante

I am ashamed that women are so simple, To  
offer war, when they should kneel for peace; Or  
seek for rule, supremacy, and sway, When they are  
bound to serve, love and o-bey, Why  
are our bodies soft and weak and smooth, Un-  
apt to toil and trouble in the world, But  
that our soft conditions and our hearts, Should well a-  
gree with our ex-ter-nal parts, So  
military wife, hold your temper and meekly put  
your hand in the sole of your hus-band's foot: In  
token of which duty, if he please My hand is

**Figure 3** “I Am Ashamed That Women Are So Simple,” autograph lead sheet, from *Kiss Me, Kate*, music and lyrics by Cole Porter. Cole Porter Collection, Library of Congress. Reproduced by permission of the Cole Porter Trust. This figure appears in color in the online version of the *Journal*.

though it is roughly an accurate copy of a single refrain of the song, unlike the Porter outline.<sup>48</sup> Putting these sources together, it is tempting to say

48. “The Red Blues,” autograph sketch and arranger’s sketch, Cole Porter Collection (Library of Congress), box 22, folder 3.

that Porter wrote a rough sketch and handed it on to a copyist to work out, and in turn that this represents his normal working method. In reality, though, the progress from the Porter sketch to the copyist score is not linear, since the Porter sketch is different in numerous respects from the copyist’s version, and Porter may have decided to write down his initial ideas for the number because of its unusual, quirky harmonies. (Although these are not written out, they are implied by the shape of the melody.)<sup>49</sup>

Porter’s compositional process was gradually established over the early years of his career. Most of the songs from *See America First*, his first Broadway musical, survive in his own hand.<sup>50</sup> The manuscripts are comparatively detailed in terms of routines, although the music is only in piano-vocal score format; Porter apparently never fancied himself as an orchestrator, though he learned orchestration as a student in Paris. (The Yale collection includes his orchestration of a piano piece by Schumann.)<sup>51</sup> There is also a folder of sketches and fragments,<sup>52</sup> and overall the quantity of autograph fair copies suggests that, at this point, Porter felt the need to produce fully written-out piano-vocal scores. This proves Porter’s solid musical literacy, though it does not prove that it was always his method. The surviving autograph material from later in his career is scarce: in the Library of Congress collection, for instance, we see only a sketch for a song from *Gay Divorce* (1932), another for one from *You Never Know* (1938), rough material for three songs from *Panama Hattie* (1940), a couple of sketches for numbers from *Kiss Me, Kate*, two manuscripts from *Out of This World* (1950), and the “Red Blues” three-page holograph draft lead sheet mentioned above.

Though larger, the Yale collection shows a similar pattern, with more autograph material from earlier in his career than from later. It is also useful on account of the rich sketch material available. When he wrote down music himself Porter usually sketched out the melody only, indicating chords or harmonies where they seemed important, and he presumably used these sketches as the basis of what he played for his amanuenses. These sketches complement his autograph lyric drafts, which are extensive for many of his mature Broadway musicals, a considerable number including rhythmic sketches above the words. Figure 4, for instance, illustrates how the rhythm and barring for a particular song—“The Perfume of Love” from *Silk Stockings*—were written above the lyric, evidence of the songwriter’s collaboration with himself.<sup>53</sup> These annotated lyric sketches from the Library of Congress indicate that the words often came first, providing inspiration for

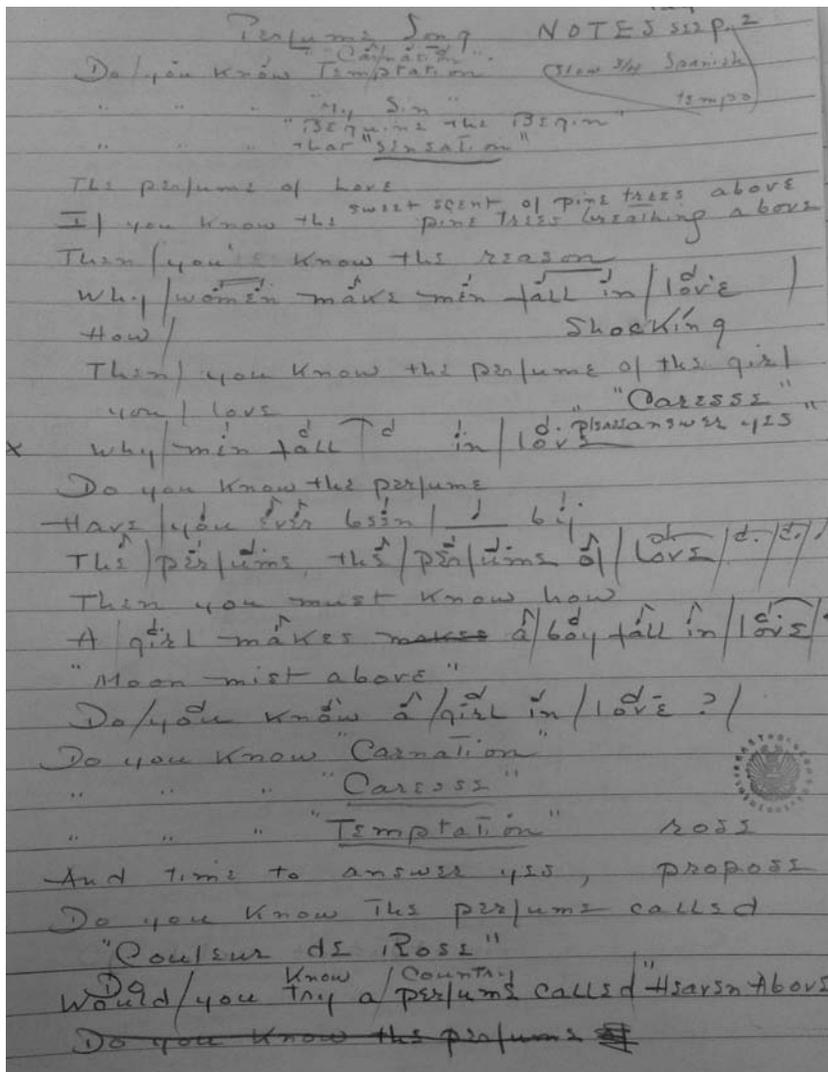
49. It has been alleged that the number is by Don Walker, the show’s orchestrator, but the sources of the Porter Collection (Library of Congress) do not confirm his participation: Suskin, *Show Tunes*, 128.

50. Porter Collection (Library of Congress), box 2.

51. Porter Collection (Yale University Library), box 2, folder 7.

52. Porter Collection (Library of Congress), box 2, folder 15.

53. The lyric sheet is in the Porter Collection (Library of Congress), box 24, folder 3.



**Figure 4** “The Perfume of Love,” autograph lyric sketch with rhythmic annotations, from *Silk Stockings*, music and lyrics by Cole Porter. Cole Porter Collection, Library of Congress. Reproduced by permission of the Cole Porter Trust. This figure appears in color in the online version of the *Journal*.

the melody and then the harmony; but some of the Yale melodic sketches also include lyric sketches elsewhere on the same page, hinting that music and lyrics were sometimes developed in tandem.<sup>54</sup> One of the Yale sketches

54. Porter Collection (Yale University Library), sketches, box 46, folder 290.

is just four bars long and is headed “A good length for a first phrase”; another is an “Accompaniment for a Rhumba”; a few others, on Waldorf Astoria notepaper, are simple melodic fragments dated 1941–42.

In all these cases, the sketches are obviously practical documents, drafted when Porter had the ideas. From the point of view of transmission, though, the process of score production for Porter did not always mean writing out a fair copy; crucially, however, he was capable of notating his music and of reading notated music, even when he did not relish the effort (as is clear from his letter to Sirmay quoted above). Whereas Rodgers evidently liked to produce a complete fair copy, Porter seems to have written down music mainly when he needed to; it makes sense that there are various sketches of songs written on a European tour in the 1950s, for instance, when an amanuensis or copyist would not have been as easily accessible to help him make a document of the score.<sup>55</sup>

### Frank Loesser: An Evolving Approach

By comparison with the focus and prolific output of Porter and Rodgers, Frank Loesser’s career followed an unusual course. He completed a small number of stage musicals (only six) but their quality was consistently high, *Where’s Charley?* (1948), *Guys and Dolls* (1950), *The Most Happy Fella* (1956), and *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* (1961) marking notable successes.<sup>56</sup> He also wrote popular songs (“What Are You Doing New Year’s Eve?,” “Baby, It’s Cold Outside”) and the score for the Danny Kaye movie *Hans Christian Andersen* (1952). Over time Loesser started his own music publishing business and helped to promote the careers of younger composers, rather than simply pursuing his own work as a writer. He published hit songs such as “Cry Me a River” (Arthur Hamilton) and “Unchained Melody” (Alex North and Hy Zaret), as well as musicals by Robert Wright and George Forrest (*Kismet*), Meredith Willson (*The Music Man*), and Richard Adler and Jerry Ross (*The Pajama Game* and *Damn Yankees*).<sup>57</sup> Loesser is often rumored to have contributed to some of these musicals. For instance, John Raitt—the original star of *The Pajama Game*—alleges that Loesser wrote two of the show’s songs.<sup>58</sup> Quite what this means

55. These sketches are in the Porter Collection (Yale University Library), box 47, folder 291.

56. The others are *Greenwillow* (1960) and *Pleasures and Palaces* (1965). He also started work on a seventh show, *Señor Discretion Himself*, which was completed and premiered after his death.

57. See chapter 12 of Susan Loesser’s book *A Most Remarkable Fella*, esp. 223–28, for more information. Thomas Riis also explains this relationship in *Frank Loesser*, 242–45.

58. See “John Raitt Remembers *The Pajama Game*,” accessed January 15, 2014, <http://www.mkstage.com/pajamagame/raitt%20remembers.htm>.

is difficult to gauge given the lack of documentary evidence: there is nothing relevant in Loesser's papers in New York, and neither Ross's papers (at Madison, Wisconsin) nor Adler's (at the Library of Congress) contain very much material from their two major shows. But surviving correspondence between Loesser and Meredith Willson relating to the musical *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* (1960)<sup>59</sup> indicates that Loesser at least made suggestions to other writers, again opening up our understanding of the complex process of writing Broadway musicals.

With respect to his own shows, too, the question of Loesser's compositional method is fascinating. Three published sources address the question of his musical literacy in strikingly disparate ways. The first was written on the brink of Loesser's mega-hit success with *Guys and Dolls*. His half brother, Arthur, was himself a composer, pianist, and scholar, and the author of an article describing Loesser's compositional understanding. Evidently, "Frank showed an interest in music at an early age" and improvised on the piano from the age of six. However, Arthur continues,

Several attempts were made to teach Frank the notes, but it was hard for him to connect this purely mental discipline with the musical impulse, and he never learned them while at home. In fact, he never took proper music lessons in his life. He claims now that, if necessary, he can decipher notes on a page. But probably it is not often necessary.<sup>60</sup>

From this we may tentatively conclude that Loesser had an innate musical instinct but was reluctant to engage with notation. On the other hand, the relationship between the two brothers was (by Arthur's own admission) not close, so it is possible that the comments on Frank's childhood behavior are more reliable than the description of his musical literacy at the time of writing, especially given the patronizing attitude exhibited toward Frank's endeavors throughout Arthur's article.

From a different member of his family comes a second source of information. Susan Loesser, Frank's daughter, wrote a book about her father's life and career that deals with three aspects of his musical literacy. First, she confirms her father's musical abilities as a child. She relates that he "had little patience for lessons of any kind,"<sup>61</sup> and hence had no formal musical training

59. A nine-page letter from Loesser to Willson makes numerous suggestions about the show, some of them concerning dialogue. This is one of several extant letters from Loesser to Willson on various projects (not including *The Music Man*, however). The Willson Papers are housed at the Great American Songbook Initiative in Carmel, Indiana, but as of this writing there is no finalized finding aid, hence no box/folder numbers are cited. There is also extensive correspondence between Willson and Loesser in the files of the Frank Loesser Enterprises office, again unprocessed.

60. Loesser, "My Brother Frank," 218.

61. Loesser, *Most Remarkable Fella*, 8.

in childhood; nevertheless, Frank’s father described him even at the age of four as “developing more and more into a musical genius.”<sup>62</sup> Secondly, she recounts how Loesser acquired his first “musical secretary” in the form of Milton DeLugg, a talented musician whom Loesser met during his time in the RPU (Radio Productions Unit) in the Second World War. According to DeLugg, Loesser “always had an idea of the melody in his head,” but

couldn’t notate it at all—not for many years. He’d plunk a little bit out on the piano and sing it to me. I would sit and write down what he was singing. And then we’d discuss maybe changing a chord—because when you first start writing, you write the world’s simplest chords. And sometimes we’d even change the melodies a little bit.<sup>63</sup>

Once more, we can see how authorship is apparently blurred in this period of Loesser’s career (the mid-1940s), even though the anecdote is vague. Finally, Susan Loesser reveals how Abba Bogin, who acted as Loesser’s musical secretary on *The Most Happy Fella*, reported that “Frank had a very slow, labored way of writing,” and that when his music was played back to him he would sometimes realize he had not quite written what he intended.<sup>64</sup> Again, the impression is not of someone who was particularly musically sophisticated in terms of notation and scores.

A third source is quite different in tenor. Geoffrey Block’s 1989 article on *The Most Happy Fella* remains the most detailed and important study of the manuscripts of any musical, presenting a fascinating discussion of the sixteen sketchbooks that document Loesser’s gradual development of the show over several years.<sup>65</sup> The article includes transcriptions of portions of the sketchbooks, illustrating Loesser’s compositional processes for this score with unprecedented clarity and in remarkable detail. Most of the songs appear in the sketchbooks, and they are all in Loesser’s hand. They represent working manuscripts rather than fair copies, and reveal a large-scale vision for the piece, though he did not orchestrate it. He also seems not to have fitted the score together in its entirety, instead passing the completed bits of material over to the production’s music team.<sup>66</sup> As a project, however, *The Most Happy Fella* is *sui generis*, completely unlike anything else written for the Broadway stage, and Loesser’s working methods for it cannot be taken as typical of the way he worked on other shows.

62. *Ibid.*, 10.

63. *Ibid.*, 47.

64. *Ibid.*, 154–55.

65. Block, “Frank Loesser’s Sketchbooks.”

66. Susan Loesser describes how the show’s musical director and his assistant, Herb Greene and Abba Bogin, had to copy and splice “little bits of tape for weeks,” in order to stick the different pieces of the mammoth score together: Loesser, *Most Remarkable Fella*, 154.

Indeed, an examination of Loesser's other manuscripts indicates that his way of creating and controlling material changed drastically between his first major hit, *Guys and Dolls* in 1950, and his last, *How to Succeed* in 1961. For *Guys and Dolls* almost nothing has survived in Loesser's hand in terms of music; instead, there are several versions of a range of songs in the hands of various copyists. For instance, there are fair copies of "Fugue for Tinhorns," "Sue Me," and "Traveling Light" (a cut song) in the distinctive hand of Helmy Kresa, best known as Irving Berlin's longtime amanuensis and arranger. Similarly, the manuscript materials for the movie *Variety Girl* and the earlier Broadway show *Where's Charley?* are mostly in the hand of the arranger Gerry Dolin rather than Loesser. By contrast, from *Hans Christian Andersen* onward there are numerous manuscripts, including fair copies, in Loesser's hand. Block implies that the *Guys and Dolls* autographs have been lost,<sup>67</sup> but, as in Porter's case, an alternative reading of the significance of the missing sources is possible, namely that they never existed.

To undertake a three-act "musical with a lot of music,"<sup>68</sup> as he described *The Most Happy Fella*, must have been a huge task for Loesser. Block's authoritative discussion of the sixteen sketchbooks for the show—which, at 383 pages, must far outweigh the volume of autograph musical material for almost any other musical from the same period of Broadway history<sup>69</sup>—reveals that the piece's gestation extended from December 1952 to March 1956.<sup>70</sup> The type of complexity he was aiming for clearly required a deep level of authorial control, far beyond that for, for instance, *Guys and Dolls*, which does not have the same number of through-sung scenes or the number of thematic transformations observed by Block.<sup>71</sup> It would actually be remarkable, therefore, if Loesser had not finally taken steps to develop his musical literacy, since from childhood until at least the mid-1940s he is said to have had limited reading skills. Though anecdotal, this impression is confirmed by the absence of Loesser manuscripts for the period prior to the composition of *Hans Christian Andersen* and *Happy Fella*, which he worked on in tandem. Having committed to this special project Loesser clearly produced a wealth of manuscript material, reflecting the need to craft the music more closely.

From there, it was not merely *Happy Fella* that benefited from the change of approach. The manuscript sources for *How to Succeed*, a quirky musical comedy quite different in tone from *Happy Fella*, are almost equally rich,

67. Block, *Enchanted Evenings*, 237.

68. Quoted in Block, "Frank Loesser's Sketchbooks," 60.

69. The only similar type of document I have found is Harold Rome's single sketchbook for his musical *Fanny* (1954), which was also an ambitious work. I was not able to view the manuscripts of either Weill and Bernstein, nor Jerome Moross's extensive material for *The Golden Apple* (1954) at Columbia University, but Loesser's *Fella* is clearly a rather unusual example.

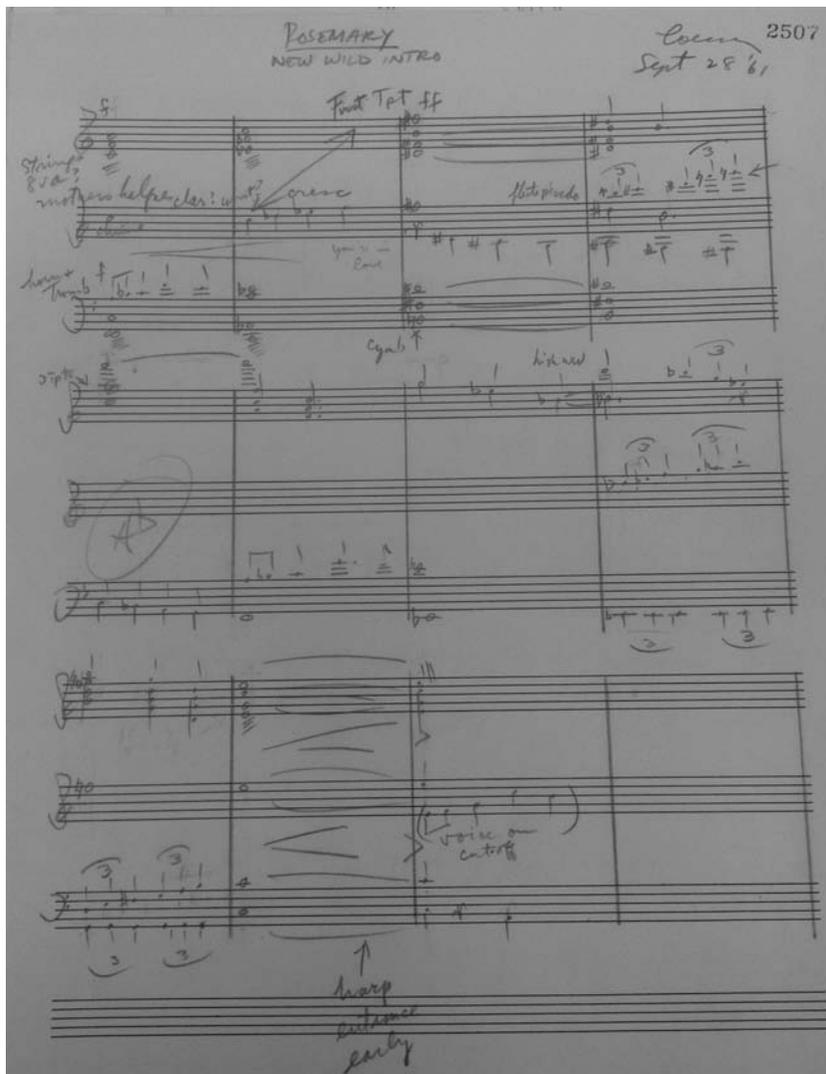
70. Block, "Frank Loesser's Sketchbooks," 61.

71. See, for instance, *ibid.*, 76, for the genesis of "Song of a Summer Night."

which perhaps helps to explain the score's distinctive character. For instance, there are over twenty pages of Loesser's sketches for "A Secretary Is Not a Toy," eight pages for "Brotherhood of Man," ten for "Coffee Break," twelve for "Rosemary," twelve for "Company Man" (cut song), and so on.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, these figures do not include the equally rich piles of lyric manuscripts that exist for most of these songs, which show the degree to which Loesser went on refining what he had written, and thereby further enhance our understanding of the genesis of the piece. There is also an intriguing folder of "miscellaneous underscoring," containing eighteen sketches for non-song moments in the score, including "Television Announcement," "Necktie Cue," and "Ethereal Grandeur." Common to all these autographs is an amount of detail in relation to counterpoint, articulation, and in some cases even instrumentation, showing the extent to which Loesser was engaging with aspects of the score, though most of the pages are incomplete and contain only fragments. There are no totally complete autograph fair copies, but the score's particular flavor can reasonably be credited to Loesser's detailed construction.

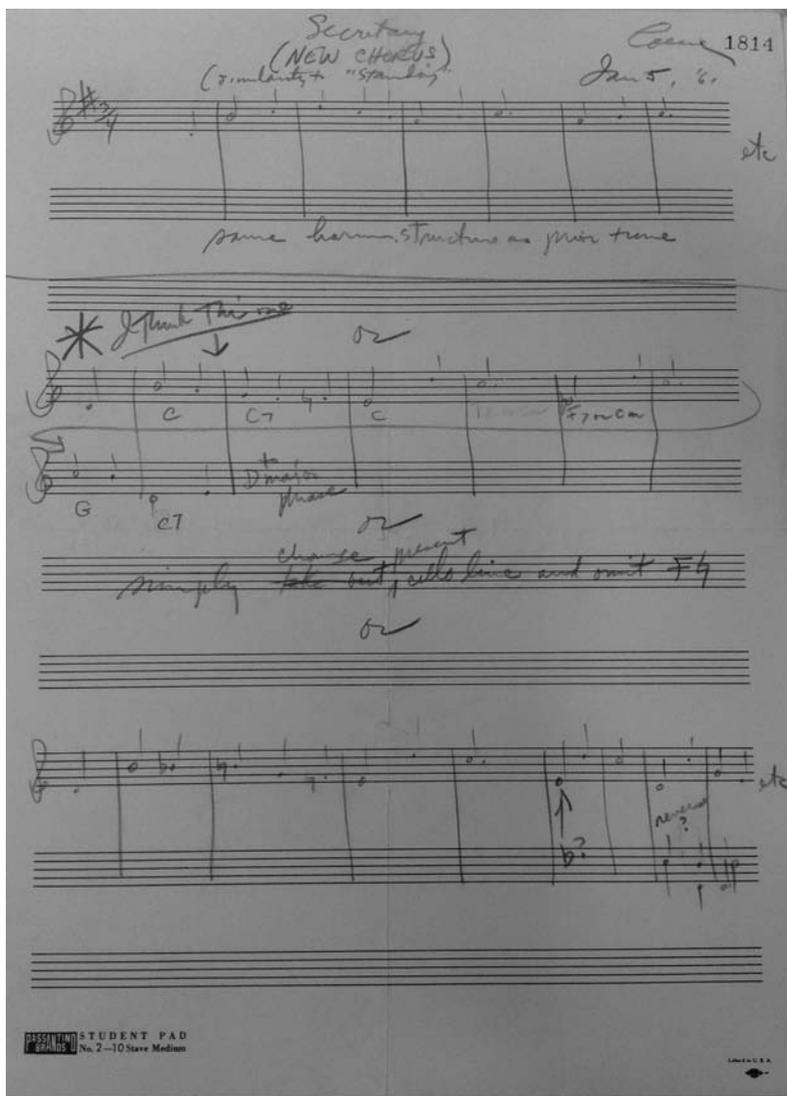
Then again, there is also a large amount of working material for this show in the hand of Elliot Lawrence, the musical director. Piano-vocal scores of varying levels of detail have survived for all the songs from *How to Succeed* mentioned above, making for an interesting if broad point of comparison with Loesser's input, as follows: there are twelve pages in Lawrence's hand for "A Secretary Is Not a Toy," fourteen for "Brotherhood of Man," forty-three for "Coffee Break," thirteen for "Rosemary," and fifteen for "Company Man." Evidently, Lawrence pieced together Loesser's material in many cases, and turned the fragments into complete fair copies. It should be emphasized, however, that the fragments are often very detailed, showing that although the act of making the manuscripts coherent was assigned to someone else, Loesser himself had a clear vision of what he wanted. His process is evident from the three illustrations here. Figure 5 reveals how Loesser provided his arranger with a map of what the final score was to contain: he even indicates details of instrumentation for the first trumpet (top line), the flute and piccolo (second line), and the cymbal. Figure 6 provides new material for the chorus of "A Secretary Is Not a Toy." Here Loesser's thought processes are vividly apparent: at the top is an abandoned fragment of melody, while underneath are three options for the new chorus, the first of which (marked "I think this one") was eventually used. This type of fragmentary development of song material is present in many of Loesser's working manuscripts. Finally, Figure 7 shows Loesser's engagement with the arrangement process for the number "It's Been a Long Day": a possible vocal arrangement for the trio, in "hillbilly parallels," is followed by

72. The *How to Succeed* manuscripts are in the Frank Loesser Papers (New York Public Library), JPB 84-6.



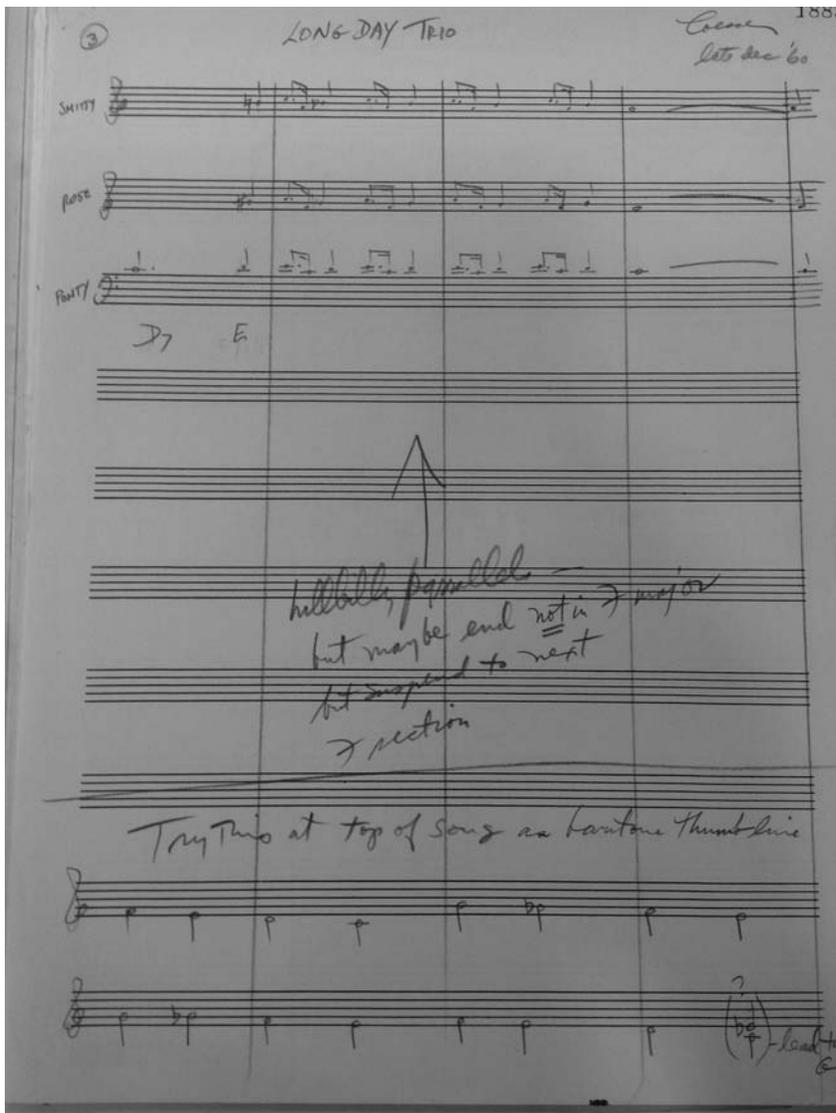
**Figure 5** “Rosemary,” autograph sketch, from *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*, music and lyrics by Frank Loesser. Frank Loesser Papers, New York Public Library. © 1961, 1962 (renewed) Frank Music Corp. All rights reserved. Used by permission. This figure appears in color in the online version of the **Journal**.

a suggested “baritone thumblin’” to be developed as an ostinato figure at the beginning of the song. In each of these sources Loesser’s development of his music is both inventively sophisticated and startlingly incomplete, relying on the collaboration of his arranger to produce a practical score. Thus, while



**Figure 6** "A Secretary Is Not a Toy," autograph sketch, from *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*, music and lyrics by Frank Loesser. Frank Loesser Papers, New York Public Library. © 1961, 1962 (renewed) Frank Music Corp. All rights reserved. Used by permission. This figure appears in color in the online version of the **Journal**.

Rodgers tended to write complete fair copies of at least a basic verse and chorus of his songs, and Porter used an amanuensis but threw his energy into correcting publication proofs, Loesser's compositional procedure evolved from using an amanuensis almost exclusively for generating his scores (that is,



**Figure 7** “It’s Been a Long Day,” autograph sketch, from *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*, music and lyrics by Frank Loesser. Frank Loesser Papers, New York Public Library. © 1961, 1962 (renewed) Frank Music Corp. All rights reserved. Used by permission. This figure appears in color in the online version of the **Journal**.

pre-*Happy Fella*) to creating detailed fragments of music that were then put together by an assistant, presumably using the structures provided by Loesser’s typed lyric sheets as a guide.

## Frederick Loewe: Collaborating with the Arranger

Frederick Loewe’s career, like that of Loesser, followed an unusual path. Though he lived until his late eighties he wrote only seven Broadway musicals—*What’s Up?* (1943), *The Day before Spring* (1945), *Brigadoon* (1947), *Paint Your Wagon* (1951), *My Fair Lady* (1956), *Camelot* (1960), and *Gigi* (1973)—all with lyricist Alan Jay Lerner; six of them were written between 1943 and 1960, and to varying degrees all their musicals from *Brigadoon* onward have endured. He also wrote a musical with Harold Rome, *Saints and Sinners* (1953), which has never been performed.<sup>73</sup> Prior to the Lerner collaboration Loewe trained in composition and performance in Germany, writing the operettas *Salute to Spring* (1937) and *Great Lady* (1938) following his move to America. After *Camelot* he went into retirement, but briefly returned to write the score for the film *The Little Prince* (released in 1974) and some new material for the stage version of the 1958 movie *Gigi*. Despite the variety of these activities, the reception of Loewe’s work has emphasized either art music or operetta as his true *métier*.<sup>74</sup> In his autobiography, for example, Lerner referred to Loewe as “a real composer,” continuing,

[H]e writes every note himself, even indicating in the piano part the instrumentation he desires, and the orchestrator then “orchestrates” it. This is also true of the dance music. A dance arranger will sit with the choreographer and, using the composer’s themes, arrange the music according to the choreographer’s needs. The “arrangement” is then orchestrated. Fritz, however, regarded that arrangement as a sketch and, using it as a guide, composed the dance music from beginning to end. This would then be “orchestrated.”<sup>75</sup>

Loewe was clearly keen to encourage this image of the all-powerful, “classical” composer, and Lerner happily bought into it.

Yet Loewe mainly worked as a composer of Broadway shows, and the sources prove that he operated within the industry’s standard framework of arrangers and orchestrators. This suggests that we need to reexamine his approach to creating musicals with a fresh perspective, rather than assume that he worked almost like an opera composer. Many of Loewe’s manuscripts are housed at the Library of Congress in the Frederick Loewe Collection, though a number of others were sold at auction in 1999 and passed into private hands, most notably sketches and fair copies of songs from *Gigi*, *Saints and Sinners*, and *Camelot*, including some cut material. The Loewe Collection was compiled from several sources: an initial gift from Loewe himself in the 1960s, mostly consisting of fair copies of the principal songs from

73. See McHugh, *Loverly*, 14–16, for further details of this brief collaboration.

74. Richard Traubner, for instance, was keen to suggest that he “had a classical background”: Traubner, *Operetta*, 407.

75. Lerner, *Street Where I Live*, 91–92.

*Brigadoon*, *Camelot*, and *My Fair Lady*; manuscripts for *The Day before Spring*, *My Fair Lady* (mainly cut songs), *Great Lady*, *Brigadoon*, and *Paint Your Wagon*, bought by the library at the 1999 auction; and a further donation, also from 1999, from a friend of Loewe's, which included miscellaneous unidentified sketches and scraps, some of which have since been shown to belong to the genesis of *My Fair Lady*.<sup>76</sup> These sources are augmented by the Warner-Chappell Collection at the Library of Congress, which contains over a dozen boxes of manuscripts for *My Fair Lady*, including a few in Loewe's hand and many in Trude Rittmann's hand, and five boxes of *Paint Your Wagon* scores, again with a number of Rittmann's arrangements.

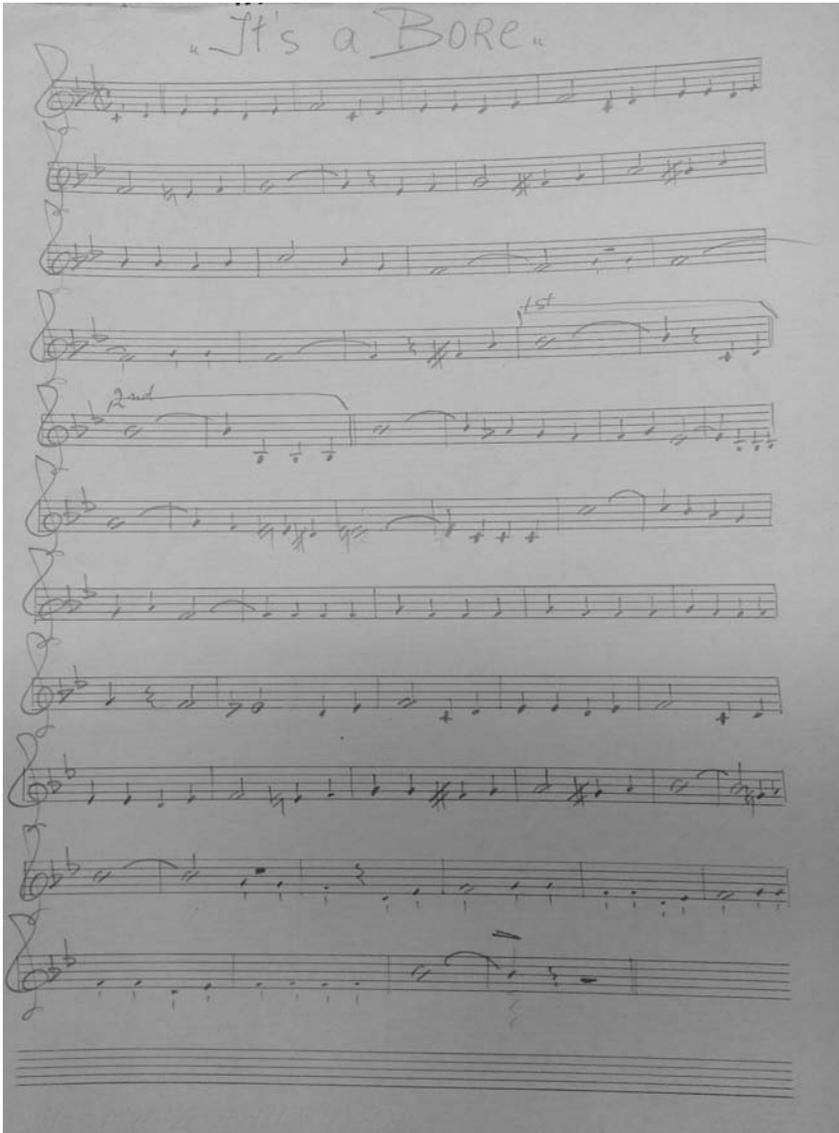
Loewe's general method of working seems to have resembled that of Rodgers, in the sense that he provided fair copies of the basic piano-vocal material for many of his songs but did not write out multiple verses. He was much less systematic than Rodgers, though, and the manuscripts are less neat and often incomplete. Again, process and practicalities are revealed by the sources: a complete melody for "It's a Bore" from *Gigi*, found in the Lerner Collection at the Library of Congress, is neatly written but has no harmony or lyrics, supporting Lerner's account of their creative process (see Fig. 8).<sup>77</sup> In addition, Loewe seems to have shared Porter's dislike of writing music out, as was disclosed in an interview by Trude Rittmann, his regular dance arranger,<sup>78</sup> and which is reflected in his large, often awkward handwriting. Whereas Rodgers tended to rule lines down the page and "prepare" the manuscript paper neatly before starting the fair copy, Loewe created bar lines as he went along. On page 4 of the fair copy of "Why Can't the English?" from *My Fair Lady*, for instance, the top three systems all contain four bars but none are aligned.<sup>79</sup> Like Rodgers, Loewe tended to include in the fair copies a reasonable level of detail regarding articulation, tempo, and dynamics: in "Why Can't the English?" for example, the last page alone indicates dynamic contrasts between the sung bars (*forte*) and orchestral outbursts (*fortissimo*), slurs on each statement of the word "English," and a crescendo to *sforzando* in the last three bars. Interestingly, although the general impact of these markings is observed in the orchestration and in the published vocal score, in the case of the dynamics the specifics are quite different: *forte* is changed to *mezzo-forte* at measure 143 and to *piano* at

76. See McHugh, *Loverly*, ch. 4. Information on the provenance of the Loewe Collection comes from the library's onsite finding aid prepared by Mark Eden Horowitz, August 2001.

77. According to Lerner, Loewe would improvise a melody based on a title with Lerner in the room and then write out the melody for Lerner to refer to when writing the lyrics retrospectively: Lerner, *Street Where I Live*, 65–66.

78. Rittmann, interview with Elliot J. Cohen. My thanks to Mr. Cohen for sharing his interview with me.

79. Frederick Loewe Collection (Library of Congress), box 5, folder 26.



**Figure 8** "It's a Bore," autograph melodic sketch, from *Gigi*, music by Frederick Loewe, lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner. Alan Jay Lerner Collection, Library of Congress. © 1957, 1975 (renewed) Chappell & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Alfred Music. This figure appears in color in the online version of the **Journal**.

measure 147, while the crescendo now begins only in the penultimate bar.<sup>80</sup> The gestures are therefore much more pronounced. This means that although Loewe was obviously capable of writing music down, and had an advanced understanding of expressive markings, his attitude to the fair copy was much less meticulous than that of Rodgers.

A further reflection of this may be found in his intriguing collaboration with Trude Rittmann. Although credited only as “dance arranger,” she was demonstrably far more engaged in the compositional process than the title suggests. Much of a fair copy of the title song of *Gigi* acquired by the Library of Congress in 2013, for instance, is in Rittmann’s hand. In the verse (pages 1–12) the piano part, clefs, and tempo indications are all written by Rittmann, while the vocal line, lyric, and only a couple of other markings are by Loewe. The whole refrain (pages 13–18), meanwhile, is in Rittmann’s hand, with no intervention by Loewe. Curiously, Rittmann is not normally credited with participation in the production of the 1958 movie, yet a photograph of Lerner and Loewe around the piano with Leslie Caron taken during rehearsals for *Gigi* shows a manuscript for “The Parisians” in Rittmann’s hand on the music stand.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, her handwriting is to be found among the papers for all Loewe’s musicals from *Brigadoon* (1947) onward. These include a two-page manuscript of “Sh!” and annotations on a mechanical copy of “Muchee Good World” (“Transpose 1st refrain 1 tone down (F maj.), then, as is,” she notes), both cut songs from *Paint Your Wagon*,<sup>82</sup> and fair copies of the complete songs for *The Little Prince*, only one page of which is in Loewe’s hand.<sup>83</sup> Her participation in the writing of *My Fair Lady* is more unusual, however. In Loewe’s fair copy of “You Did It” almost all of the piano part is in Rittmann’s hand, together with numerous annotations and expressive markings.<sup>84</sup> Loewe seems to have written out most of the melody and lyric, but the finer details of this complex number were Rittmann’s; this is also the case for the fair copy of “How Can I Wait?” from *Paint Your Wagon* (see Fig. 9). Similarly, no Loewe manuscript material exists for the “Opening” music of *My Fair Lady*, only several pages in Rittmann’s hand.<sup>85</sup> She also wrote all the music for the show’s “Decorating Eliza” ballet, loosely based on several of Loewe’s songs.<sup>86</sup>

Clearly this was a close relationship, and in contrast to Loesser, who wrote out more of his scores as the years passed, Loewe seems to have trusted Rittmann increasingly after *Brigadoon*. Earlier in his career he wrote

80. Loewe, *My Fair Lady*, 23.

81. The photograph appears in numerous books, including Jablonski, *Alan Jay Lerner*, preceding page 109.

82. Loewe Collection, box 6, folders 11, 13.

83. Loewe Collection, box 4, folder 22.

84. Loewe Collection, box 5, folder 31.

85. Loewe Collection, box 5, folder 17.

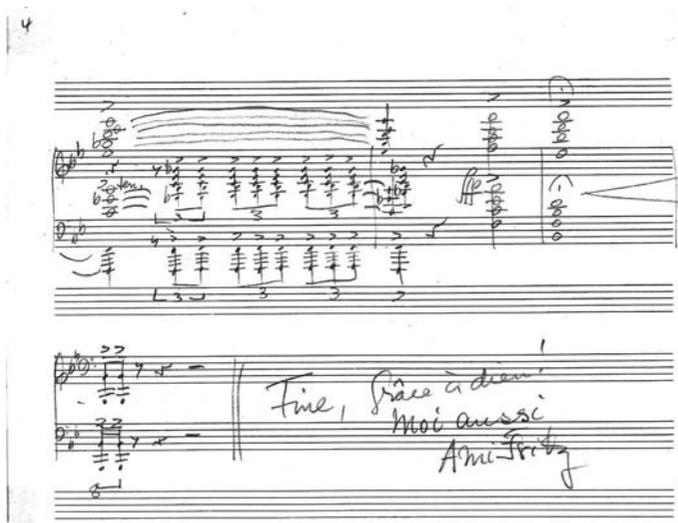
86. The ballet was ultimately cut; see McHugh, *Loverly*, 105, 109.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the song "How Can I Wait?". At the top left, there is a handwritten note "1 Whole tone down" with an arrow pointing to the key signature. The title "How Can I Wait" is written in large, cursive letters. The score is written on four systems of music. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment includes various musical notations such as clefs, dynamics (e.g., *p*), and articulation marks. There are also some circled numbers (1 and 2) in the piano part. The handwriting is in dark ink on aged paper.

**Figure 9** “How Can I Wait?,” fair copy in the hands of Loewe (title, lyric, and melodic line) and Trude Rittmann (piano accompaniment, clefs, dynamics, and annotation), from *Paint Your Wagon*, music by Frederick Loewe, lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner. Frederick Loewe Collection, Library of Congress. © 1951 (renewed) by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe. Publication and allied rights assigned to Chappell & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Alfred Music. This figure appears in color in the online version of the *Journal*.

out his music in much greater detail: for his second Broadway musical, *The Day before Spring*, the extensive (thirteen-page) manuscript of “Peter Reads the Book” includes basic information about his desired instrumentation (strings and harp) and a complete piano part.<sup>87</sup> In contrast, a brief manuscript

87. Loewe Collection, box 3, folder 17.



**Figure 10** “Finale,” arranger’s score in the hand of Trude Rittmann, with comment (“Moi aussi Ami Fritz”) in Loewe’s hand, from *My Fair Lady*, music by Frederick Loewe, lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner. Warner-Chappell Collection, Library of Congress. © 1956 (renewed) Chappell & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Alfred Music.

of the closing bars of *My Fair Lady* in Rittmann’s hand ends with the note, “Fine, grâce à dieu!” under which Loewe added, “Moi aussi, Ami Fritz,” indicating that he had read and approved of her work (see Fig. 10).<sup>88</sup> Here, an educated and musically literate composer was happy to cede the broad workings of his music to a trusted collaborator, but he examined every bar before it went into a show. In this way he could oversee the production of his scores in great detail without having to write them all out himself, an activity he did not enjoy. This both questions and confirms the common image of Loewe as an “elevated” composer: the scarcity of autograph material confounds expectations of a composer of art music, yet a full understanding of his relationship with Rittmann—and of the relationship between her manuscripts within the compositional process—would have to acknowledge his extensive control over what was performed.

### Wright and Forrest: The Composer-Musicologists

The Broadway musicals of Robert Wright and George Forrest offer a rather different perspective on authorial status. Over a long and varied career they created the scores for over a dozen stage musicals as well as literally hundreds

88. See McHugh, *Loverly*, 149, for further discussion of this manuscript.

of songs for film and television.<sup>89</sup> They are best known for musicals that use the work of composers of art music or operetta as the basis for popular songs. *Kismet* (1953), based on the music of Borodin, is the most familiar of these, but their output also includes *Song of Norway* (1944, based on Grieg), *Gypsy Lady* (1947, based on Victor Herbert), *Anya* (1965, based on Rachmaninov), and *Dumas and Son* (1967, based on Saint-Saëns). In addition, they wrote original music and lyrics for a few musicals (including *Kean*, 1961), while for *Magdalena* (1948) they developed the music of Villa-Lobos in collaboration with the composer.

On the surface it would appear that much of Wright and Forrest’s career followed a fixed formula, and that the bulk of their output consisted simply of fitting words to preexisting music. Yet on further inspection their scores present a range of perspectives on creative processes and the musical. Their first major success, for instance, *Song of Norway*, not only used the music of Grieg as the basis for the score, but its book was also *about* Grieg.<sup>90</sup> This made the construction of the score unusual: art music was employed in this situation not merely for its relative exoticism (in the context of Broadway), for its familiarity (because at least some people would already know the music), or out of convenience, but because it heightened the ability of the show’s score to connect to its subject (a composer).<sup>91</sup> The plot also brought about some interesting scenarios: Wright and Forrest later recalled that the show’s “raison d’être and finale” was “a ballet danced to the Grieg A minor concerto, with Grieg composing at the piano.”<sup>92</sup> Many years later, they explained how they developed their ideas for the piece: “[W]e had our own musical vision of the possibilities: if the ‘A minor Concerto’ danced was to be the Finale, could we not write a sung prologue based on the Concerto themes that would lay the foundations of the story?”<sup>93</sup> In addition, they also commented on the specific process of creating a hit song out of art music:

[Lester and Curran, the producers,] secretly longed for a bona fide “popular” song, one that could be danced to, whistled, hummed and, with luck, make it to the “Hit Parade.” Appreciating their concern, we explained that—in Grieg—without drastic, total recomposition, we knew no melodic material that

89. *The Wright & Forrest Songbook*, 6–10, gives a useful overview of the team’s output, which includes *Spring in Brazil* (1945), *The Great Waltz* (1949), *The Carefree Heart* (1957), *The Love Doctor* (1959), and *Grand Hotel* (1989, a reworking of an earlier show called *At the Grand*, 1958), in addition to the musicals mentioned here.

90. In this the show had an important precedent in Donnelly and Romberg’s *Blossom Time* (1921), a work based on the life and music of Franz Schubert, as well as in *The Great Waltz* (1935, book by Morris Hart and lyrics by Desmond Carter), based on the life and music of the Strauss family.

91. Ironically, the original intention was to make the show about Hans Christian Andersen, but its producers were in competition for this idea with Samuel Goldwyn, who went on to make it as a film with a score by Frank Loesser; see Traubner, *Operetta*, 428.

92. Wright and Forrest, *Song of Norway*, CD liner notes.

93. *Ibid.*

could provide such a song. Our solution: could we extract from, for instance, the harmonic structure of Grieg's rhythmic piano march "Wedding Day in Troldhaugen" a series of notes that would sound like Grieg and still make a "pop" song for the '40s? Providence smiled. Somehow we succeeded, called it "Strange Music," and every singer from Kate Smith to Bing Crosby recorded it.<sup>94</sup>

It is fascinating to see that creating a number that could be extracted and treated like a commercial thirty-two-bar song indeed entailed a different approach from writing song material that worked within the context of a libretto. More broadly, adapting music for a new medium involved numerous processes:

interweaving melodies, elongating phrases, concising [*sic*], changing tempi and time signatures, re-harmonizing, even when essential for a different dramatic effect, writing some of what we call "glue," brief transitory passages, original music by us in the Grieg idiom, that made the score "stick" together and flow seamlessly from one phrase into another.<sup>95</sup>

Indeed, this type of musical evidently required expertise to bridge the gap between the original composition and the new one. Wright and Forrest confessed to finding these musicals more difficult to write than their totally original scores:

Adaptation is, at least as we do it, discouragingly difficult and incredibly time-consuming. For us, it requires months of study, consideration and indexing of every available composition a composer has written. We have never ourselves chosen to adapt anybody—nor will we. All our adaptations have been the ideas of and commissions from others.<sup>96</sup>

The last comment is especially telling, since it suggests ambivalence on Wright and Forrest's part rather than a desire to craft new music from an existing work. The Broadway playbill for *Song of Norway* even listed the original sources of each number, as if to make clear that they fully respected the source composer, not least because the show was about him and this gesture perhaps enhanced the perception of the "authenticity" of the piece.<sup>97</sup>

Yet because *Kismet* is their most enduring work it seems to have influenced the long-term reception of the team, precluding an appreciation of their overall output. Although the show was very popular in the 1950s it received a dissenting review in the *New York Times* ("It has been assembled from a storehouse of spare parts"), while the critic for the *Herald Tribune*

94. Ibid.

95. Wright and Forrest, *Magdalena*, CD liner notes, 8.

96. Wright and Forrest, "Kismet: Wright and Forrest Commentary," in *Kismet*, CD liner notes.

97. "The sources of Grieg's music were carefully noted in the *Playbill*": Traubner, *Operetta*, 428.

was even more damning: "It seems to me that Robert Wright and George Forrest have been fairly conscienceless about that Borodin score . . . respecting its quality whenever it suits them and chucking it for downbeat when things get desperate."<sup>98</sup> It tends to have been critiqued even more viciously in recent years: when English National Opera revived it in 2007, British critic Anthony Holden described it as an "unlicensed pillaging and downgrading of themes by a Russian composer intent on disowning coarse Western influences."<sup>99</sup> Holden here is unequivocal in his judgment as to the effect of this kind of musical transition on the original source, not least because of Borodin's negativity toward Western art music, not to mention commercial music.<sup>100</sup>

In fact, Wright and Forrest were modest on the issue of taking ownership of *Kismet* specifically. They explained that their billing as composers of the show was the result of intervention from their mentor:

The late Frank Loesser, who with *Kismet* became our life-long friend and publisher, insisted our credit for it *must* be "Music and Lyrics by" because, as he correctly pointed out, at least two numbers, "Rhymes Have I" and "Rahadlakum," contain not a note of Borodin, most of the others had essential passages composed by us without which they could not be sung as songs, and only two, "Sands of Time" and "Night of My Nights," were virtually lyricised as Borodin had written them. But this is a matter for musicologists, not for us.<sup>101</sup>

From their point of view, at least, the score was not intended to be offensive to Borodin, and at the same time their authorship of the music is more extensive than appears at first glance, since most of the original sources were extensively reworked and some of the music was completely new. Intriguingly, after the show's pre-Broadway premiere but before its New York opening *Variety* reported that MGM was considering making a movie of the *Kismet* story, with music by Arthur Schwartz and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, though the idea was quickly abandoned. The journalist noted that, since Borodin's music was in the public domain, Lerner and Schwartz could theoretically craft a completely different *Kismet* musical based on the same music. "However, the adaptors, producer and backers of the stage production will get no return from the screen edition, which will have the same basic story and possibly some of the same score,"<sup>102</sup> it was reported. This in effect promotes the idea

98. Quoted in Suskin, *Opening Night on Broadway*, 364–66.

99. Quoted in Wright, *West End Broadway*, 109.

100. The only notable voice to have come out in praise of Wright and Forrest in more recent times is Ethan Mordden in *Coming Up Roses: The Broadway Musical in the 1950s*. Mordden's admiration for the piece as a star vehicle for Alfred Drake is unusual in terms of the general literature on the work, however, and his description of it as "indestructible" (87) is in contrast to its dire reception at the time of the English National Opera production, for example.

101. Wright and Forrest, "Kismet: Wright and Forrest Commentary," in *Kismet*, CD liner notes.

102. "Legitimate: 'Kismet' to Pix."

of Wright and Forrest's authorship of the *Kismet* score: by writing this piece, they had created something new. Their approach is akin to what Richard Beaudoin and Joseph Moore have called "transdialection," a process by which "a transcriber reexpresses a work in a different musical dialect."<sup>103</sup> This understanding of "musical borrowing" facilitates an appreciation for the reexpressed work, rather than seeing it as a pale reflection.

Indeed, even if Wright and Forrest did not particularly want to write these kinds of musicals, the end product was the result of diligent research rather than laziness or passivity. When they were commissioned to write *Magdalena* they were told they could "write lyrics and adapt the music of Heitor Villa-Lobos for a stage musical in the manner in which they had adapted the music of Edvard Grieg for *Song of Norway*."<sup>104</sup> They obsessed over his music, scrutinizing it like musicologists: "We leapt to our task: assembling, studying, analyzing, indexing, exploring the several hundred published Villa-Lobos compositions available in the U.S.A. . . . We spent afternoons and evenings singing and playing Villa-Lobos, steeping our eyes, ears, fingers, instincts and senses in his fascinating idioms."<sup>105</sup> They also had a specific process for identifying the works they wanted to use: they created "notebooks of indexed Villa-Lobos—our 'X' system. 5 X's = an absolute must. 4 X's, a 'desired' must. 3 X's, music we would *like* to draw upon. 2 X's and 1 X indicated that, despite musical interest and quality, we questioned the appeal, with or without lyrics, to American ears."<sup>106</sup> Though their perception of "American ears" is slightly obscure, this statement is significant in providing evidence that they were crafting the material for a particular purpose.

In the end, however, Villa-Lobos had misunderstood the situation, and believed he was simply to compose the score for *Magdalena* afresh. Unlike their musicals based on existing music by composers who were no longer living, *Magdalena* was to have music by a living composer, who in the event managed to persuade Wright and Forrest to collaborate:

[He said,] "Can't we compose the operetta together? Use your 'X' books, play and sing me what you want—and how you want to use it. If I control the copyright I give it to you and we re-compose it together. If I can't deliver the copyright, I will write you an original piece in the same style you will like even better. Come . . . sit on the left and right of Villa-Lobos. Let us make *Magdalena* music together."<sup>107</sup>

The end of this quotation is especially evocative of the way the compositional circumstances of *Magdalena* (alone) turned Wright and Forrest into

103. Beaudoin and Moore, "Conceiving Musical Transdialection," 106.

104. Wright and Forrest, *Magdalena*, CD liner notes, 7.

105. *Ibid.*, 7.

106. *Ibid.*, 8.

107. *Ibid.*

the servants of the god-like composer, sitting at his left and right. Yet their role both as lyricists and as adapters who knew how to create song material out of other genres meant that Wright and Forrest were important collaborators on this work. It is curious, therefore, that Thomas George Caracas Garcia's lengthy article on the piece scarcely mentions Wright and Forrest; though Villa-Lobos orchestrated the piece, Wright and Forrest's role in selecting and working on the form of the musical numbers was vital.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, the reverse of the published song sheets from the show specifically credited them with "creating the pattern for the musical numbers and writing the lyrics."<sup>109</sup>

Wright and Forrest's papers are housed at the Library of Congress, though not all of them have been processed as of this writing. The processed portion is relatively small (seven boxes), but contains handwritten manuscript material for several of their major musicals; the unprocessed portion is large (seventy boxes), and consists of everything from sketches, scripts, and drafts to published sheet music and correspondence. Most important of all, the unprocessed collection includes stacks of published sheet music by Rachmaninov, Borodin, Villa-Lobos, and the other composers on whose works Wright and Forrest based their musicals, annotated mostly by Forrest, who wrote and adapted the music for their shows. There are numerous compositions by Rachmaninov, for example, with Forrest's notes on the front cover: on the Thirteen Preludes, op. 32, he has highlighted Prelude no. 5 as a "good tune"; nos. 9 and 10 of the op. 23 Preludes are also "good tunes"; the piano Serenade is marked "Usable"; and a copy of the two-piano arrangement of the Symphonic Dances, op. 45, is annotated "Great waltz theme, p. 34."<sup>110</sup> In a few instances the scores themselves reveal some of the writers' creative processes. On page 45 of the Symphonic Dances, at "Tempo precedente," Forrest notes, "Choral, operatic, dance interlude material (possible narrative by principals . . .)"; the chord structures of the slow movement of the Second Piano Concerto are noted directly on the score, presumably as the basis for turning it into a song; and on the score of Variation no. 18 of the *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, Forrest has put brackets over the portions of the variation that could form a musical number, on top of which Wright has then written suggested lyrics. There is a similar group of published scores by Villa-Lobos for *Magdalena* that correspond to Wright and Forrest's description of their method, complete with their "X system" as described above.

108. Garcia, "American Views."

109. Wright, Forrest, and Villa-Lobos, "Magdalena" song sheet (published 1948).

110. These and other published compositions by Rachmaninov are found in box 45 of the unprocessed Wright and Forrest Collection, Library of Congress. Also of interest are numerous annotated published compositions by Saint-Saëns, used as the basis for *Dumas and Son*, found in box 17, while equivalent material by Grieg (for *Song of Norway*) is found in box 25.

A good example of this type of source is Wright and Forrest's annotated score for Borodin's song "Fleurs d'amour" in a French translation by Paul Collin. Here, the division of labor between Wright and Forrest is especially vivid: certain bars and notes are crossed out by Forrest, and some of the lyrics are drafted in capital letters by Wright. Other lyric ideas are more roughly suggested on the second system (by Wright), and on the top line Forrest suggests an embellishment to the accompaniment pattern.<sup>111</sup> One of Forrest's annotations implies that it might have been intended for the song "Baubles, Bangles and Beads," but eventually the material was reworked for *Kismet* as a short verse to "Stranger in Paradise," with triplets in 2/4 time instead of quarter notes in 3/4 time.

For their musicals based on the music of others this selection and initial drafting process was the first step toward the creation of the work. It was followed by another unconventional practice, whereby Wright and Forrest wrote out fair copies of the majority of their songs in tandem. Whereas in the music manuscripts of equivalent partnerships—such as Rodgers and Hammerstein or Lerner and Loewe—both music and lyrics are in the hand of the composer only, most of the Wright and Forrest manuscripts reveal that Forrest would write out the music (including dynamics, tempo, and other performance directions) and Wright would add the title, characters, and lyrics to the same score. This can be seen from the rich selection of manuscripts available for *Kismet*, consisting of over sixty pages of handwritten material. Forrest wrote in a large, rather awkward hand, with large note heads and clefs; the manuscripts are not at all fluent. By contrast, Wright's lyrics are smooth, neat, and almost all in capital letters.

Their manuscript for "And This Is My Beloved" provides a useful example of the status of their autograph texts.<sup>112</sup> There is no introduction, but the first forty-two bars of the vocal parts are written out. It is clearly a working manuscript, since it is incomplete and contains numerous erasures and changes. Even though the music is derived from the third movement of Borodin's Second String Quartet the manuscript is quite basic; the first eight bars include a sparse accompaniment, with several harmonies that were later changed, and much of the rest of the manuscript contains no accompaniment at all. Forrest's main task seems to have been to work out how the voices of the four characters (the Poet, Marsinah, the Caliph, and the Wazir) would be distributed throughout the number, while Wright's was to add the lyrics. At the song's climax ("All that can stir"), only the lines of Marsinah and the Caliph are present: the more complex counterpoint of the other characters is missing (see Fig. 11). At the close of the quartet section of the number (Marsinah sings a solo refrain after the other characters exit) the music stops, and a note by Forrest reads,

111. The document is found in box 38 of the unprocessed Wright and Forrest Collection.

112. Wright and Forrest Collection, processed collection, box 8.

10 bars underscore  
 Marsinah—8 bars  
 Caliph and Marsinah—in canon—8 bars (Caliph begins)  
 next 6 as before  
 next 2 in unison  
 triplets in 3rds  
 next phrase unison [repeated twice]  
 high finish

These and other markings by Forrest on many of the *Kismet* manuscripts suggest that he knew what he wanted as composer but did not always go to the same lengths as Rodgers in creating finalized fair copies. As in the case of Loewe and Rittmann, Forrest relied on the close participation of his arrangers, especially Arthur Kay, orchestrator of much of Wright and Forrest's work, and the manuscripts frequently contain directions to Kay. "The Three Princes of Ababu," for example, contains instrumental details (such as flute, piccolo, and xylophone in m. 1); "Oasis" is marked "wrong keys" at the top; "Night of My Nights" has "four bars intro" written in a different hand at the bottom of the first page; and, most interesting of all, the top of "My Magic Lamp" reads, "in C with harmonies following Borodin more closely" (see Fig. 12). That one of the other manuscripts ("Night of My Nights") is labeled "lead sheet" on its front cover reinforces the idea that the manuscripts mostly represent outlines for an arranger's reference rather than completed work. For "Was I Wazir," however—liberally adapted from the fourth movement of Borodin's First String Quartet—the manuscript is much more complete, almost a fair copy, and broadly resembles the version in the published score (including the swift glissandi in m. 1). This suggests that when a song was a close adaptation the arranger might have expected to play more of a role in completing the accompaniment figures (on the basis of Borodin's preexisting music) than when Wright and Forrest were simply writing a new or almost-new song. More evidence is needed to complete the picture in terms of Wright and Forrest's authorial control over their work as a whole, but even the *Kismet* manuscripts show the extent and limitations of the team's musical literacy, with signs of collaboration with their arrangers. They knew broadly what they wanted, but the more complex accompaniments were written by another (or by several others). In the case of *Kismet*, then, their role was to mediate between Borodin and the arrangers: they took pre-existing material, worked on it, and passed it forward.

Wright and Forrest's final musical, *Grand Hotel*, was a reworking of their earlier flop *At the Grand*, which had featured all-original music. By the time it finally reached Broadway, however, there were several interpolations by a completely new composer-lyricist, Maury Yeston. This adds yet another category to the unusual oeuvre of Wright and Forrest, which includes musicals written by the team alone, a musical written in collaboration with an art-



in C with harmonies following Broadway more closely.

MY MAGIC LAMP obs. treatment <sup>file</sup> 2 r (1 Oct. lower)

I HAVE A MAG-IC OF MY OWN TO TELL I KNOW A SPECIAL SORT OF

SUR-CE-RY MY MAG-IC LAMP WORD

CAN DO MORE THAN A-LAD-DINS, IS N<sup>o</sup> SES-A-ME, O-PEN! WHEN TROU-BLE PUR-YET OP-EN IT

SVES WILL I USE MY MAG-IC LAMP A DOOR WHERE TREA-SURE LIES

1953 STAGE PROD'N: "KISMET" [EARLY VERSION]

Figure 12 "My Magic Lamp," draft autograph manuscript, from *Kismet*, music and lyrics by Robert Wright and George Forrest. Wright and Forrest Collection, Library of Congress. © 1954 (renewed) by Scheffel Music Corp. All rights reserved. Used by permission. This figure appears in color in the online version of the *Journal*.

music composer, musicals adapted from the works of dead art-music composers, and a musical including songs by another writer. This summary alone shows their unusual range and flexibility. Yet their close association with

*Kismet*, their biggest success, has left them with the reputation of “pillaging” the music of dead composers—almost a form of musical necrophilia. By exploring the complex process by which they contributed to these works (a process that varied from song to song, even within a single show), it is possible to see some of them rather in terms of “transdialection”—a reexpression of existing art music for a new genre.

### **Settling the Scores: Broadway Composers as Musical Collaborators**

While the layperson might regard an autograph manuscript as a testament to a composer’s genius, these case studies show that for the Broadway composer of the postwar era the production of scores was a practical and collaborative process. Though it might be tempting to construct some kind of spectrum of such composers’ authorial control in the 1940s and 1950s, ranging perhaps from “absolute creative controller” at one end to “functionalist adaptor/creator” at the other, in reality the surviving sources indicate a more complex picture that precludes neat pigeonholing of the individuals examined above. It might, however, be possible to approximate such a continuum once the manuscripts of more composers are consulted and compared.

As a group these five case studies demonstrate how the primary musical sources of this era on Broadway can be exploited. Rodgers’s music mostly survives in two types of autograph sources: rough sketches that represent his creative processes and fair copies that show the finished product. Sources for Loesser’s musicals suggest that he used an amanuensis heavily at the beginning of his career but later started to sketch out his music in greater detail, sometimes with instrumentation. The fragmentary nature of his autograph manuscripts proves, however, that even his later work had to be pieced together and developed by an arranger. Porter came to use his amanuenses and arrangers so extensively that he wrote down comparatively little of his considerable song output, yet throughout his life he was able to read music and took care over the specifics of the published versions of his songs. Loewe came from an art-music background and sometimes had details of orchestration in his head, but he collaborated with his arranger (Rittmann) on the production of many of his fair copies. Indeed, his relationship with Rittmann became so close that he could trust her to follow his instructions in the written versions of his music, though he always checked them before they were sent to be orchestrated. Wright and Forrest’s output varied significantly from project to project, sometimes redeveloping art music into popular song, sometimes writing original works, and on one occasion collaborating with an art-music composer on a show that contained both original and reused music. The numerous annotated published scores of Borodin and the

other composers whose music they adapted provide compelling evidence of the extent and complexity of this process. Yet even when working on existing music (such as that of Borodin in *Kismet*) they relied on an arranger and orchestrator to finish the job.

Different types of sources document each Broadway composer's working processes, and each type reveals new information about that composer's level of authorial control. This becomes evident after even a cursory exploration of other Broadway archival collections. Irving Berlin offers a particularly fascinating example, in that, as is well known, he was unable to read music for most of his career. As Jeffrey Magee has explained, Berlin "remained a collaborator throughout his life. . . . To create his songs, he relied on a musical secretary to write down melodies that Berlin often dictated as he paced around the room, or that he picked out on the piano."<sup>113</sup> In Berlin's case, if we want to examine a putative "autograph source" for, for example, *Annie Get Your Gun* we have to choose between items such as a fair copy of a song in the hand of Helmy Kresa (one of his amanuenses) and a scrap of paper containing part of a lyric in Berlin's own hand.<sup>114</sup> His musical invention was endless, but in terms of producing scores he almost never used musical notation to make his mark. By contrast, Hugh Martin was as notable for his vocal arrangements of other composers' musicals (most famously Rodgers's *The Boys from Syracuse* and Jule Styne's *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*) as he was for his own songs (such as those for *Meet Me in St. Louis*), a rare example of an important figure flitting between the roles of writer and arranger; and his papers at the Library of Congress reveal that for his own musicals, such as *Make a Wish*, he fulfilled both roles.<sup>115</sup> In another category, Kurt Weill normally orchestrated his own music when working on Broadway, producing the whole performance text as is conventional for composers of art music, rather than leaving it to others; yet even Weill relied on other orchestrators when time required it.<sup>116</sup> For composers who undertook most of their own orchestration, such as Weill, the critical edition is an excellent format for examining their work as authors, as is amply illustrated by the valuable

113. Magee, *Irving Berlin's American Musical Theater*, 16.

114. For instance, the Library of Congress's Irving Berlin Collection contains Kresa's fair copy of "You Can't Get a Man with a Gun" (box 37, folder 11), as well as Berlin's autograph lyric sketches for "There's No Business like Show Business" (box 37, folder 6).

115. The Hugh Martin Collection is unprocessed, but I was able to consult the boxes for *Make a Wish* and *Look Ma, I'm Dancin'*, both of which reveal Martin's extensive work on the scores for these two musicals. In the Herman Levin Papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society (box 55, folder 6) I also discovered one of Martin's autograph vocal arrangements for *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

116. For instance, Ted Royal (best known for orchestrating *Guys and Dolls*) did a small amount of work on Weill's *The Firebrand of Florence*; see Suskin, *Sound of Broadway Music*, 80. The sources for this musical are extensively discussed in Joel Galand's magisterial critical edition of the work. Suskin's book is a useful general guide to the orchestral scores of numerous Broadway shows.

published volumes of the Weill Edition, *The Firebrand of Florence* (published in 2002) and *Johnny Johnson* (2012).

In terms of the reception of these musicals the question of “who did what” is perhaps irrelevant: from a commercial point of view labels such as the “Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals” have a taxonomical value that transcends the mechanical process of writing down the music. The contribution of the named writers is indisputable, and the ability of some of these composers to thrive in a competitive commercial environment speaks for itself. But for the musicologist these underexploited primary sources offer a precious opportunity to see into the workshops of these iconic musical figures, arguably prompting us to redefine the way we think about their roles historically. In the majority of cases the archives contain invaluable records of forgotten relationships and processes, documenting not only the composers’ own creative procedures but also the assistance of an expert community of amanuenses, arrangers, copyists, and orchestrators. On this basis, we might decide to refer no longer to Broadway “composers” but rather to “composer-collaborators.”

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## Abstract

Though published vocal scores of Broadway musicals imply sole musical authorship the archives reveal a more complex picture. Five case studies illustrate different approaches to the compositional process in the 1940s

and 1950s: Richard Rodgers, who produced fair copies in piano-vocal score for each of his songs; Cole Porter, who regularly used an amanuensis but sometimes produced fair copies; Frank Loesser, who initially used an amanuensis but later in his career produced detailed fragments of music for his arrangers to turn into performance scores; Frederick Loewe, who worked closely with an arranger to produce fair copies; and Robert Wright and George Forrest, who went through a complicated process of selecting and adapting the work of composers of art music such as Borodin and Rachmaninov. Detailed study of the available manuscripts makes clear that score production was nearly always a collaborative activity on Broadway, whether it involved amanuenses, copyists, arrangers, or orchestrators. Although in each of these cases the named composer retains an authorial role, in practical terms the archives reveal them to be “collaborators” rather than “authors,” working as a member of a team to create each performance score. As such, their aims were to facilitate performance events rather than to produce fixed works.

**Keywords:** Richard Rodgers, Frederick Loewe, Frank Loesser, Forrest and Wright, Cole Porter