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A REVUE

# **The Best of Broadway**

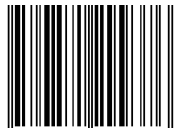
SELECTED FROM VARIOUS  
BROADWAY PRODUCTIONS

Edited by David Rogers

# The Best of Broadway

**Created by the best of the Broadway composers, lyricists and comedy skit writers. Edited by David Rogers. Cast: flexible.** A selection of the best songs and sketches from a number of Broadway revues. You'll find the work of Pulitzer Prize winners Sheldon Harnick and Jerry Bock, who also wrote *Fiddler on the Roof*. There's a bright number by Charles Strouse and Lee Adams of *Bye, Bye Birdie* fame. The gifted comedy writer Mel Brooks contributed his wild comedy satire of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, a sketch generally regarded as the high point of the fabulously successful Broadway revue *New Faces*. Another marvelous sketch, often considered Auberbach's best, is *A Song to Forget*. (A musical performer told us that she's seen copies of this revue in several New York casting offices. Probably this is because there are so many gems in it that help performers display talent.) These pieces function beautifully together. The musical revue is sometimes neglected mainly because of the difficulty in finding good material. Here that problem is solved! *Optional sets or w/curtains. Approximate running time: 2 hours, 5 minutes. Code: B04.*

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# The Best of Broadway

A revue compiled from  
high spots of Broadway revues  
Edited by DAVID ROGERS



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(THE BEST OF BROADWAY)

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## THE ART OF THE REVUE

by DAVID ROGERS

The revue is an exciting, entertaining theatrical form that requires a certain difference in approach from a musical comedy or, obviously, a straight play.

I would like to make a few suggestions here to any group undertaking this show.

To DIRECTORS: To get one minor technical thing out of the way first: Stage area is customarily divided into four parts by three curtains or three sets of curtains hung in the same approximate area. These curtains are called travelers. When all travelers are open and the full stage is used for a number it is generally called, "in four." When the traveler farthest upstage is closed, then you are "in three"; the next, "in two"; and finally, in the area in front of the first traveler, "in one." Numbers requiring little or no scenery (usually singles, duets or trios) are played in one. If a sketch is very small and the in one area large, a sketch may be played in one, but more usually, it fits in two, depending on the size of its set. It's best to keep a sketch as far downstage as possible and to play it in a bright light that is kept, as much as possible, only on the playing area. A small dance number involving few performers might be played in two or three, again depending on the size of those areas on your stage. Four is used for large production numbers. You may have only one or two curtains dividing your stage, in which case it is suggested you use the area before the theatre curtain as one. Sequence of numbers in a revue should be arranged to alternate large and small playing areas to facilitate scene-

changing, and this has been done with the running order of this revue. If you have more than one traveler in each location, use them interchangeably for variety. The major trick of the revue is pace. A revue does not have the cumulative story value of a musical comedy to carry it along and must depend on going quickly from one number to the next to retain the audience's high mood. It's a strain for the actors to make the audience laugh after they've been sitting in pitch darkness for 30 seconds, so start each number immediately after the preceding one. Don't allow bows; they slow up a show. Don't wait for anything except laughs.

To SINGERS AND DANCERS: A rhythm song or a production number plays pretty much the way it would in a musical comedy, but for a comedy number or a mood piece, you must very quickly establish the mood and your character. If you don't hit the audience immediately so that they know what you're doing at once, your number will be over before they catch on.

To THE ACTORS: A sketch is to a straight play what a cartoon is to a serious painting. Character must be quickly established in broad strokes. If the audience has to pause and wonder whom you're supposed to be, it's twice as hard to make them laugh. Most sketches require characterizations more exaggerated than those of musical comedy or straight plays but must be played truthfully and economically within these exaggerations. Although a sketch character may be a ludicrous person doing a ludicrous thing, he must believe in himself and his action to be funny to others. Keep everything sharp and bright.

This revue is composed of tried and true material. Sharp, bright delivery and an understanding of its inherent gaiety and fun can make your production a hilarious, tuneful, exciting show.

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# ACT ONE

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## THE BEST OF BROADWAY

Lyrics by David Rogers

Music by Mark Bucci

*This number was written especially for the opening of this revue. I suggest it be done on a full stage with your entire cast divided into three groups on stage when the curtain goes up. Behind these groups hide the people who do the three little vignettes. Let each group part to reveal its performer when it is time for the vignette. Once the vignettes are over, there should be some movement. If a director wants an actual dance number, that should be done after the first chorus. Then, when the dance chorus is over, close in your in one curtain and do the final dialogue and last half chorus in one, while the first sketch is set up behind the curtain. If there is no dance chorus, move down to the one area on the words "Professor, please," and close in then.*

*Costumes: For this and other group numbers, it is not necessary that everyone's clothes be identical. Indeed, I think it better if they aren't. However, there should be a basic color scheme. For instance, for this number, the men might wear blue suits and the girls, dresses varying in tone from deep blue to light; or the men might wear slacks and shirts in the same general colors as the girls'*

© by Mark Bucci and David Rogers, 1961.

*blouses and skirts. If there is to be dance movement in a number, make sure the girls' skirts are full enough to allow them to move.*

## VERSE

**BROADWAY!**  
The name has a ring to it!  
**BROADWAY!**  
The glamor they bring to it!  
The thrill of first nights  
When curtains part  
And show you Broadway's  
Theatrical Art!

GIRL 1 [*spoken*]

The Broadway theatre can do anything!

BOY 1 [*spoken*]

Like the classics!

[*Group parts, revealing man in Romeo costume.*]

ROMEO

He jests at scars, that never felt a wound! [*Turns, as though looking up to balcony, off.*] But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? [*There is a crash of glass off. ROMEO looks startled.*] It is the East and Juliet. . . . [*He obviously sees JULIET, off, all cut up.*] Ughhhh! Get her a band-aid.

MUSIC

Sting.

GIRL 2

And the wonderful modern plays on Broadway!

BOY 2

Like those searing, searching dramas of Tennessee Williams.

*[Group parts, revealing rather hysterical girl in a slip or negligee.]*

MAGGIE *[in Southern accent]*

I'm Maggie the cat! *[She scratches the air and hisses.]* I live on a hot tin roof and my feet hurt. I'm madly, wildly in love with one man. *[Trying to remember.]* You know, old what's-his-name? I spend my days drinking Coca-Cola and sniffin' oxygen and thinking about—— *[Can't remember.]* Well, I know him when I see him. The rest of the time, I work for mental health—and this is my message to you and—— *[Still can't remember his name.]*—old whatchamacallit if you see him. Support Mental Health—or I'll kill you!

MUSIC

Sting!

GIRL 3

And the brittle, sophisticated Broadway plays.

BOY 3

Where everyone's so calm and adult about romantic problems.

*[Group parts to disclose sophisticated, bored couple, preferably in evening dress, standing so close to each other they are practically nose to nose.]*

MAN

Sybil!

GIRL

Yes, Cyril?

MAN

This can't go on.

GIRL

Of course not. . . . What can't go on?

MAN

This torture. This pain.

GIRL

Are you in pain?

MAN

Agony, Ever since I've been near you.

GIRL

Do you—want a divorce?

MAN

Heavens, no! Just stop standing on my foot. [*She moves away, disclosing her foot on his. She removes it; he grabs his foot with a cry of pain.*]

MUSIC

Sting.

ALL [*sing*]

Yes, it's great in drama and romance  
But Broadway's best is song and dance.

CHORUS

A funny skit,  
A tuneful song,  
And Broadway just cannot go wrong.  
It's the best—THE BEST OF BROADWAY.

The crazy jazz,

The swingin' beat—  
You'll only find it on that street.  
It's the best—THE BEST OF BROADWAY.

That's what we're gonna do for you,  
Sit back and listen to it!  
No classic play, no modern art,  
Tonight, we're gonna revue it!

Professor, please,  
Give us the note.  
For blues we've got the antidote.  
It's the best—THE BEST OF BROADWAY!

[*Music under:*]

GIRL 4

Hey, Jim, better change. You're in the first sketch!

BOY 4

My trousers are missing—I will not sing a ballad in my underwear!

GIRL 5

I can't remember a word!

BOY 5

Hey, Louise, you'll be great tonight!

GIRL 6 [*answering him*]

Yeah? So why am I sick to my stomach?

ALL

Through every bit we do tonight  
Flashes of Broadway wit shows.  
For every skit and every song  
Were picked from Broadway's top hit shows!

So curtain up!

Away we go!

Turn on the lights!

And start the show!

Here it comes—

It's the best—

The very BEST OF BROADWAY!

## A SONG TO FORGET

by Arnold Auerbach

*This sketch was played in the New York revue, "Inside USA" by Beatrice Lillie, and anyone familiar with her deft, light and slightly mad style of playing will understand the dual part of Miss Twitchell and Lapis. An off-band approach to romance combined with earnestness about getting the composers to compose should make the sketch funny. The men are all "mad musician" types. It would probably be wiser if one did not depend on the actors to play the piano but had a phony piano on stage and let the pit pianist play the music as the actors pantomime.*

### PROLOGUE

IN ONE. *At one side of the stage a billboard on wheels displays a poster reading "Bijou Theatre. Now Playing SONG WITHOUT END. Tomorrow A SONG TO REMEMBER. Next week THE SONG OF LOVE. Coming: SONG OF SIN, SONG OF PASSION, SONG OF DESIRE, etc."]*

*As lights go up, MISS TWITCHELL enters from center of curtain. She is a gum-chewing young woman, who has never outgrown the bobby-sox mentality.]*

MISS TWITCHELL

Gee, it was a wonderful picture. So romaaaantic! Doncha love these movies about the great composers? I do. They're

© by Arnold Auerbach, 1961.



so glaaaaamorous. I've seen all of 'em—the lives of Chopin, Schumann, Rimsky and Korsakoff. . . . And you know something? Every one o' those great songwriters was inspired by some beautiful woman. She'd look in their eyes, see—and they'd get paaaaassionate. Then while they were paaaaassionate, they'd run to the piano. She always kept a piano around for that purpose. Gee, it musta been wonderful, bein' a woman like that. Imagine me—inspiring a great composer like Marlon Brando—helping Rock Hudson become an immortal. . . . Gee! [*During this she has crossed to the sign, and enraptured by this daydream, she leans against it. It pushes off, and she disappears.*]

*The curtain rises on the salon of Mme. Lapis de Lazuli in Vienna. Time: 19th Century. This being Miss Twitchell's daydream, the furniture and decor can have a crazy, cartoon quality. Piano, down right. Door to foyer, upper right. Door to other rooms, upper left. A sofa down left, and any other appropriate furniture deemed necessary.]*

AT RISE: CHOPIN is discovered, talking to the MAID.]

CHOPIN

I tell you, I must see her! At once!

MAID

But, Herr Chopin, you know that Madame Lapis de Lazuli is the most sought-after woman in Vienna. Why do you torture yourself with this hopeless love?

CHOPIN

I cannot help myself. It is—how shall I say—bigger than I am.

MAID

But Madame has so many suitors! Every composer on the Continent is your rival.

CHOPIN

No matter. I am content to be her slave. Do you know that two weeks ago I saw her at the Opera! She did not see me; but, as she passed me in the crowd, her hand brushed against mine. Since that time, Chopin has not washed his hands. For two weeks I compose only on the black keys.

*[A great hubbub of male voices outside. CHOPIN runs eagerly to the door. MME. DE LAZULI—played, of course, by MISS TWITCHELL—appears in the doorway, waving good-by to a crowd of offstage suitors. She is dressed like the Femme Fatale to end all vampires and sirens, speaks throughout with a phony German accent.]*

LAPIS *[amidst much fan-waving and blowing of kisses]*

Ach, no . . . Bitte . . . Let me go, silly boy . . . etc. *[She enters.]* Why, Freddy Chopin! How gemutlich to see you! *[To MAID.]* Schnecken. The entire Heidelberg sophomore class is outside. Send them away. But gently. Give each one a lock of my hair. *[She takes a jewel-box from a drawer.]* This box contains locks. *[Turns to CHOPIN, as MAID goes with box.]* Oh, they are so tiresome, these young shtoodenten. So many baritones! And always dueling, drinking, committing suicide! Last night at the Katzenhof, they were at my table till six o'clock, drinking beer from my slipper. I came home foaming at the feet. So, my dear, Freddy—wie geht's? Written anything lately?

CHOPIN *[flinging himself at her feet]*

Lapis, my little grace-note, how can I write when I am mad for your love?

LAPIS [*stepping casually over him*]

Bitte. Do not break your arm on my account.

CHOPIN

Heartless minx! Don't you understand? I have dried up!  
Why must you always frustrate my passion?

LAPIS

For the sake of your music, silly boy! If a composer cannot possess the woman he desires, he writes the beautiful sad songs about her. But let him once catch up with her—chopsticks!

CHOPIN

Parbleu! You make fun of me.

LAPIS

No, no. Do you remember the handsome young composer, Pierre Pasdutot? He had much talent, much promise. Also he had for me the grand passion. One mad night in a barouche, I could resist him no longer. I gave in to his passion. Today that man is a piano-tuner.

CHOPIN

Cherie—for your sake I would wind metronomes!

LAPIS

No, Freddy Chopin. To compose is your destiny. And your destiny is bigger than you.

CHOPIN

But my love for you is also bigger than I.

LAPIS [*never at a loss*]

The piano is bigger than both of us. Go, Freddy. Play!

CHOPIN

Not without some token of your love.

LAPIS

Nein, liebchen. You must forget that I exist. [*However, she manages to draw up her skirt an inch or two, so as to show a bit of ankle.*]

CHOPIN [*staring passionately*]

Mon Dieu!

LAPIS [*apparently unaware of what she is doing*]

After all, you are a genius. And I am only a woman. [*Draws up her skirt another inch.*]

CHOPIN [*panting*]

Sacre du printemps! That fair white skin!

LAPIS

And what is a woman? A mere glockenspiel in the orchestra of life. [*Shows a little more ankle.*]

CHOPIN [*laughing madly*]

A moment ago, I was a poor, miserable wretch. Now I have seen your ankle! Now I can write again! Ha-ha. Yes, I can write again. Ha-ha-ha.

LAPIS

Stop laughing and write something.

CHOPIN

My soul is on fire. My lips are burning! [*An idea dawns.*] Burning lips. That gives me an idea for a song. [*He runs to the piano and strikes up with "Polonaise," popularized as "To the End of Time." To this melody, he sings:*] I've got burning lips . . . Two big burning lips . . . How they swelter for the shelter of your kiss . . . And they're churning lips. . . .