

Broadway's Pulitzer Musicals 101: *Fiorello!* (1959)

Music by Jerry Bock & Lyrics by Sheldon Harnick

Book by Jerome Weidman & George Abbott

Act I

Setting:

New York City, shortly before World War I.

“On the Side of the Angels”

NEIL:

What a man

What a job!

All these people

Who look to us for justice—

Trust us!

What a boss to work for

What a fine upstanding man he is

I'll follow in his footsteps

And do my level best

To earn a reputation like his.

I promise I'll proudly endure

The hardships I'll share

Working with this man

On the side of the angels.

My life will be selfless and pure

Like Upton Sinclair

Working with this man

On the side of the angels.

We're marching forward,

Incorruptible, he and I

Battling with evil

Fighting till we drop

What a way to die!

So give me your tired, your poor,

And scoundrels, beware!

Here we stand in chorus

He and I and Morris

Standing firm, side by side,

On the side of the angels!

MORRIS:

What a job!

What a man!

What an office!

That line of poor and friendless—

Endless!

Call the fire department

There's another kitten up a tree

Up goes Fiorello

And everybody cheers.

But what does he use for a ladder?

Me!

Your life is an island of grief

Surrounded by woe

When you choose to work

On the side of the angels.

My hours of leisure are brief

My wages are low

Working with this man

On the side of the angels.

That bench stays crowded

It's a regular wailing wall.

Penniless and helpless

Ignorant and scared

He collects them all!

There's never a moment's relief

But this much I know

Each poor soul I see there

Could be me there.

So I stay with this man

On the side of the angels!

VARIOUS PETITIONERS:

I no wanna go to jail

Tell me what I gotta do.

I got such a lotta trouble and grief

I need relief

That's why I come to you.

MARIE:

As long as he wants me, I know

I'll always be here

Working with this man

On the side of the angels.

PETITIONERS:

I'm in trouble with the law

Don't know what it's all about

I no got a lot of money to pay

People they say you help me out.

NEIL:

Wherever he sends me, I'll go

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My duty is clear
Working with this man
On the side of the angels.

MORRIS:
Here's one more client
Who's another financial gem
I've yet to see the meek
Inheriting the earth,
But we inherit them!

PETITIONERS:
I was worried where to go,
So I talk to all my friends
Everybody say when you want the best
You go to Fiorello
Sure, they say you very smart,
But more than that,
They say you got a heart
Just like the angels.

NEIL, MORRIS, MARIE:
I know that he needs me, and so
I'll make my career
Working by his side
And proud to be allowed to
Side by side with this man
On the side of the angels.

"Politics and Poker"

FIRST HACK [spoken]:
Whaddaya say, Ben, want a hand?

BEN: No, you guys go ahead. I got too much
on my mind to play poker.

FIRST HACK [sings]: King bets.

SECOND HACK: Cost you five.
Tony, up to you.

THIRD HACK: I'm in.

FOURTH HACK: So am I

FIFTH HACK: Likewise.

FIRST HACK: Me, too.

BEN:
Gentlemen, here we are, and one thing is
clear:
We gotta pick a candidate for Congress this
year.

FIRST HACK: Big ace.

SECOND HACK: Ace bets.

THIRD HACK: You'll pay through the nose.

FOURTH HACK: I'm in.

FIFTH HACK: So am I.

FIRST HACK: Likewise.

SECOND HACK: Here goes.

FIRST HACK:
Possible straight,
Possible flush,
Nothing.

BEN:
Gentlemen, how about some names we can
use?
Some qualified Republican who's willing to
lose?

SECOND HACK:
How's about we should make Jack Riley the
guy?

THIRD HACK:
Which Riley are you thinking of Jack B. or
Jack Y.?

BEN:
I say neither one,
I never even met 'em.

FOURTH HACK:
I say:
When you got a pair of Jacks,
Bet 'em!

ALL:
Politics and poker
Politics and poker

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Shuffle up the cards

And find the joker.

Neither game's for children,

Either game is rough.

Decisions, decisions, like:

Who to pick,

How to play,

What to bet,

When to call a bluff.

BEN [spoken]: All right, now, fellas, politics or poker? Which is more important?

FIRST HACK: Pair of treys.

SECOND HACK: Bet 'em.

THIRD HACK:

Little treys,

Good as gold.

FOURTH HACK: I'll stay.

FIFTH HACK: Raise you five.

FIRST HACK: I'll call.

SECOND HACK: I'll fold.

THIRD HACK: Raise you back.

FOURTH HACK: I think you're bluffin'.

THIRD HACK: Put your money where your mouth is.

BEN:

Gentlemen, knock it off, and let's get this done.

FIFTH HACK:

Try Michael Paniaschenkowitz, I'm certain he'd run .

BEN:

Mike is out. I'm afraid he just wouldn't sell.

Nobody likes a candidate whose name they can't spell.

FIRST HACK:

How about Dave Zimmerman?

BEN:

Davie's too bright.

SECOND HACK:

What about Walt Gustafson?

BEN:

Walt died last night

THIRD HACK:

How about Frank Monahan?

FOURTH HACK:

What about George Gale?

BEN:

Frank ain't a citizen, and

George is in jail.

FIFTH HACK:

We could run Al WallensteiN.

BEN:

He's only twenty-three.

FIRST HACK:

What about Ed Peterson?

SECOND HACK:

You idiot, that's me!

ALL:

Politics and poker

Politics and poker

Playing for a pot

That's mediocre.

Politics and poker,

Running neck and neck.

If politics seems more

Predictable that's because usually you can stack the deck!

[Fiorello enters and proposes himself as the candidate to run against the one from Tammany Hall.]

BEN: Well, we got that settled.

THIRD HACK: Gimme three.

FOURTH HACK: Likewise.

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FIFTH HACK: None for me. Standing pat.

FIRST HACK: Up to you.

SECOND HACK: I'm in.

THIRD HACK: I'm out.

FOURTH HACK: I'm flat.

FIFTH HACK:

Wonder why any guy would lead with his
chin.

Don't Fiorello realize he win't gonna win?

SECOND HACK:

Ain't it obvious the
Odds are too great?

BEN:

Some guys
Always gotta try to fill an inside straight.
If they didn't, where the hell would the fun be
in the game?

ALL:

Politics and poker
Politics and poker
Makes the av'rage guy
A heavy smoker.
Bless the nominee,
And give him our regards,
And watch while he learns
That in poker and politics,
Brother, you've gotta have
That slippery haphazardous commodity
You've gotta have the cards!

"Unfair"

GIRLS:

Management's unfair, management's unfair,
Management is terribly unfair.

FIORIELLO [spoken]: Girls! Girls! That's not
the way to win! [sings]

You'd think that a human heart would break
At such a display as this
But warm-hearted men with money at stake
Can turn into heartless

Misbegotten misers
Now a strike isn't played like tic-tac-toe
And soft-spoken tactics just don't go
Ladies you've got no choice
You've got to holler and howl
In a most unladylike voice
Unfair!

GIRLS: Unfair . . .

FIORIELLO: Again—unfair!

GIRLS: Unfair!

FIORIELLO: Louder—Unfair!

GIRLS: Unfair!

FIORIELLO: Again—unfair!

GIRLS: Unfair!

FIORIELLO:

Good!
Let's put a stop
To the sweatshop
That's the disease we want to cure

Proudly we picket
The punks who pick the pockets
Of the poor hard-working poor

While we stitch, stitch, stitch
Someone's getting rich
By the sweat of his sister's brow

GIRLS: Right!

FIORIELLO:

Let's fix the wagon
of this gold-hungry dragon
Let's trim the fat
From this sacred cow!
You've got to howl at the top of your voice

GIRLS: Unfair!

FIORIELLO:

Holler and howl at the top of your voice

GIRLS: Unfair!

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FIORELLO:
Keep yelling foul at the top of your voice
Unfair!

GIRLS:
Let's put a stop to the sweatshop
Let's end the evil of the age

Fight to the finish
to win the war we're waging
For a decent living wage

Must we sew, and sew
Solely to survive
So some low so-and-so
Can thrive?
No! He'll fry in Hades i
If it's up to the ladies
Waistmaker's union
Local twenty-five!

Unfair! Unfair! Unfair! Unfair!

"The Name's LaGuardia"

FIORELLO [spoken]:
My friends, come election day put that pencil
cross next to the name of Fiorello H.
LaGuardia! L-A-G-U-A-R-D-I-A!

[sings]
Now here's another name
T-A-M-M-A-N-Y, what's that?

VOICE: Tammany?

FIORELLO:
Wrong!
The answer's tyranny
Tammany spells tyranny
Like r-a-t spells rat!

Now there's a double "M" in Tammany
And a double "L" in gall
Just like the double-dealing
Double-crossing
Double-talking
Double-dyed duplicity
Of Tammany Hall!

But you can change it all
Go use the ballot box
And cast your spell come next election day
The name's LaGuardia
L-A-G-U-A-R-D-I-A!

CROWD:
L-A-G-U-A-R-D-I-A!

[To a crowd of Italians, Fiorello sings the
same song in Italian.]

[To a crowd of Jews, he sings it in Yiddish.]

"I Love a Cop"

DORA:
Life is so complicated.

I love a cop
I love a cop

What a situation; ain't it awful?
Life is really grim . . .
I can only say that it's unlawful
How I feel towards him . . .

I love a cop
I love a cop
If I introduce him as my steady
Down at where I work,
I can hear the rumor spread already
Dora's gone berserk!

Then there's Thea . . . Oh, how gruesome!
Can you see me introduce 'em?
"You remember her—
She detested you."
"You remember him—
He arrested you!"

I'm so confused
I'm so confused
If I loved a dentist or a doctor
I'd be up on top
But I . . . love . . . a cop!

I love a cop
I love a cop
Though it wasn't easy to accept him
Now I think he's sweet

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You should hear him tell the way I swept him
Off his big flat feet.

I love a cop
I love a cop
I can see his drawbacks clear as crystal
Still I testify
Once you take away his club and pistol
Floyd won't hurt a fly.

Floyd's ambitious and he's forceful
Energetic and resourceful
I can see how far
This will carry him
If he'd get an honest job
I would marry him.

That's how it is
He's mine . . . I'm his
Little did I know when Floyd first kissed me
And I whispered, "Stop"
You can't . . . stop . . . a cop!

"Till Tomorrow"

THEA:
Twilight descends
Everything ends
Till tomorrow, tomorrow

Since we must part
Here is my heart
Till tomorrow, tomorrow

Clouds drifting by
Echo a sigh
Parting is such sweet sorrow

I'm drifting, too,
Dreaming of you
Till tomorrow comes.

COMPANY:
Twilight descends
Everything ends
Till tomorrow, tomorrow

Since we must part
Here is my heart
Till tomorrow, tomorrow

Clouds drifting by
Echo a sigh
Parting is such sweet sorrow

I'm drifting, too,
Dreaming of you
Till tomorrow comes.

"Home Again"

COMPANY:
Home again
Home again
What a day

Home again
Home again
Home again to stay.

Home again
Home again
Home to stay

Home again
Home again
In the U.S.A.

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Act II

Setting: New York City, ten years later

“When Did I Fall in Love?”

THEA:

There he goes, my congressman,
Starting his day hurrying right to a fight
There he goes, Sir Galahad,
Galloping off, riding his white Willys-Knight.

Out of the house ten seconds and I miss him
And no one's more astonished than I.
I never once pretended that I loved him
When did it start
This change of heart?

When did I fall in love?
What night
Which day
When did I first begin to feel this way

How could the moment pass
Unfelt
Ignored
Where was the blinding flash,
Where was the crashing chord

When did I fall in love
I can't recall
Not that it matters at all
It doesn't matter when, or why, or how
As long as I love him now.
When did respect first become affection
When did affection suddenly soar
What a strange and beautiful touch
That I love him so much
When I didn't before.

When did I fall in love
What night
Which day
When did I first begin to feel this way
How could the moment pass
Unfelt
Ignored
Where was the blinding flash
Where was the crashing chord

When did I fall in love
I can't recall
Not that it matters at all
I'm where I want to be
His love, his wife
Until the end of my life.

“Gentleman Jimmy”

MITZI TRAVERS (“A wonderful little actress”
hired to entertain the denizens of Tammany
Hall):

Live and let live
Love and let love
There are no finer sentiments than those

Live and let live
Love and let love
That's what Jimmy tells the world
where'er he goes

In London, in Paris
Bermuda and Rome
They love him
Just like we do at home

Who's that genial gentleman in the
Silk hat
Gray spats
Striped pants
Why that's
Gotta be him
Gentleman Jimmy

Who's that swell celebrity with the
Glad hand
Quick wit
New York's
fav'rite
That'll be him
Gentleman Jimmy

Say, Jim, we promise on voting day
We will love you in November as we do in
May
Hey!

Who's that dapper, happy-go-lucky
Son of Broadway?
We love James J. Walker.

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Why, he's as graceful as Fred Astaire
He's the man who kept the subway to a five-
cent fare
So there!

Who's that dapper, happy-go-lucky
Son of Broadway
We love James J.
'Cause under him Manhattan is just a
Syn . . . o . . . nym for
Generous . . . Gentleman . . .
James J. Walker!

"Little Tin Box"

FOURTH HACK:
Mr. "X," may we ask you a question?
It's amazing, is it not?
That the city pays you slightly less
Than fifty bucks a week
Yet you've purchased a private yacht!

BEN:
I am positive your Honor must be joking
Any working man can do what I have done.
For a month or two I simply gave up smoking
And I put my extra pennies one by one

Into a little tin box
A little tin box
That a little tin key unlocks.
There is nothing unorthodox
About a little tin box

MEN:
About a little tin box
About a little tin box
In a little tin box
A little tin box
That a little tin key unlocks

BEN:
There is honor and purity

ALL:
Lots of security
In a little tin box

FIFTH HACK: Next witness.

FIRST HACK:
Mr. "Y," we've been told you don't feel well
And we know you've lost your voice
But we wonder how you managed on the
salary you make
To acquire a new Rolls-Royce

BEN:
You're implyin' I'm a crook and I say no sir!
There is nothin' in my past I care to hide
I been taking empty bottles to the grocer
And each nickel that I got was put aside

MEN:
That he got was put aside

BEN:
Into a little tin box
A little tin box
That a little tin key unlocks
There is nothing unorthodox
About a little tin box

MEN:
About a little tin box
About a little tin box
In a little tin box
A little tin box
There's a cushion for life's rude shocks

BEN:
There is faith, hope and charity

ALL:
Hard-won prosperity
In a little tin box.

FIFTH HACK: Next witness! Take the stand!

SIXTH HACK:
Mr. "Z," you're a junior official
And your income's rather low
Yet you've kept a dozen women
In the very best hotels
Would you kindly explain, how so?

BEN:
I can see Your Honor doesn't pull his
punches
And it looks a trifle fishy, I'll admit

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But for one whole week I went without my
lunches
And it mounted up, Your Honor, bit by bit

MEN:

Up Your Honor, bit by bit.
It's just a little tin box
A little tin box
That a little tin key unlocks
There is nothing unorthodox
About a little tin box
About a little tin box
About a little tin box
In a little tin box,
A little tin box
All a-glitter with blue chip stocks

BEN:

There is something delectable

ALL:

Almost respectable
In a little tin box
In a little tin box!

“(I’ll Marry) The Very Next Man”

MARIE:

I shall marry the very next man who asks me,
You'll see,
Next time I feel
That a man's about to kneel
He won't have to plead or implore
I'll say "yes" before his knee hits the floor.

No more waiting around
No more browsing through *True Romance*
I've seen the light so while there's a chance
I'm gonna marry the very next man
Who asks me.

Start rehearsing the choir
Tie some shoes on my Chevrolet
Pelt me with rice and catch my bouquet
I'm gonna marry the very next man

If he adores me
What does it matter if he bores me?
If I allow the man to carry me off
No more will people try to marry me off

No more living alone
No more cheating at solitaire
Holding my breath for one special man
Why I could smother for all he'd care
I'm through being wary
I'll marry the very next man

No more daydreams for me
Find the finest of bridal suites
Chill the champagne and warm up the
sheets
I'm gonna marry the very next man

And if he likes me
Who cares how frequently he strikes me
I'll fetch his slippers with my arm in a sling
Just for the privilege of wearing his ring*

New York papers, take note!
Here's a statement that you can quote:
Waiting for ships that never come in
A girl is likely to miss the boat
I'm through being wary
I'll marry the very next man.

**In revivals the lyrics above had begun to draw boos. When Barbara Cook wanted to sing the song in her cabaret act, she contacted Sheldon Harnick, who, she says replaced the lyrics with this stanza:*

I'm through with moping
Moping from all this pointless hoping
Hoping he'll notice me and open his heart
Time now to break away and make a new
start.

Source: Barbara Cook's spoken remarks on her album *Barbara Cook's Broadway*