Musicals 101: Broadway's Silver Age (Part 2)

Irving Berlin on Broadway & In Hollywood (1930s)

Music & Lyrics by Irving Berlin Unless Otherwise Noted

WORKS FOR THE STAGE

Face the Music (1932)

"Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee"

KIT AND PAT:
Verse:
Why worry when skies are gray—
Why should we complain?
Let's laugh at the cloudy day;
Let's sing in the rain.
Songwriters say the storm quickly passes;
That's their philosophy.
They see the world through rose-colored glasses
Why shouldn't we?

Chorus:
Just around the corner
There's a rainbow in the sky,
So let's have another cup o' coffee
And let's have another piece o' pie!
Trouble's just a bubble,
And the clouds will soon roll by,
So let's have another cup o' coffee
And let's have another piece o' pie!
Let a smile be your umbrella,
For it's just an April show'r,
Even John D. Rockefeller
Is looking for the silver lining.
Mister Herbert Hoover
Says that now's the time to buy,
So let's have another cup o' coffee
And let's have another piece o' pie!

"Two Cheers Instead of Three"

(Cut from original production; added in Encores! revival.)

ENSEMBLE:
Verse:
It's smart to be thrifty
When times are so bad.
Let's be patriotic,
But let's not go mad;
We must cheer the colors we prize,
So here's what I strongly advise:

Chorus 1:
We'll just have two cheers
Instead of three
For the land of the brave and the free.
Instead of three cheers
We'll just have two
For the red and the white and the blue,
So when we cheer the Stars and Stripes,
Here's what we'll do:
We'll cheer the red and cheer the white
But not the blue,
And just have two cheers
Instead of three
For the land of the brave and the free!

Patter:
Why give them three cheers
When two will more than do?
If there must be cheers,
Then let there just be two.
And the speeches that you make to Uncle Sam,
Cut 'em down to "Unaccustomed as I am."

Chorus 2:
And give them two cheers
Instead of three [etc.]

"Torch Song"

A LADY OF THE EVENING:
Verse:
I'm just one of those women,
But I have no regret;
Let me tell you what made me
A girl that men forget.
Listen please while I tell you
How I happened to fall:
Someone sang me a torch song—
That's the cause of it all:

Chorus:
I wanted to sing a torch song,
So I got a man to break my heart,
And though I soon became a tart,
I did it for the sake of Art
And a torch song.
I needed a faithless lover

And would give me all except his name,
A gigolo that I could blame,
And I was paid for all my shame
With a torch song.
I longed to sit upon a piano or an organ
Pouring out my heart, the same as Helen Morgan.
I wanted to sing a torch song
So I walked the streets where lights were pale
And shouted, "I've got love for sale"—
And now I'm winding up in jail
Singing a torch song.

"Soft Lights and Sweet Music"

PAT & KIT:
Verse:
I can't resist the moan of a cello;
I can't resist the light of the moon.
So place me in a light that is mellow
And let me hear a beautiful tune.
The music must flow;
The lights must be low.

Refrain:
Soft lights and sweet music
And you in my arms;
Soft lights and sweet melody
Will bring you closer to me.
Chopin and pale moonlight
Reveal all your charms;
So give me velvet lights and sweet music
And you in my arms.

"Manhattan Madness"

PAT & ENSEMBLE:
Manhattan, Manhattan,
Manhattan, Manhattan,
Manhattan madness,
You've got me at last.
I'm like a fly upon a steeple
Watching seven million people
Do a rhythm
That draws me with 'em.
Manhattan, Manhattan,
Manhattan, Manhattan,
Manhattan madness,
You're going too fast.
I'm like a baby on a rocker
Watching Father Knickerbocker
Being busy,
I'm getting dizzy.

When shadows creep,
In my bed I tumble,
But never sleep,
For I hear the rumble
In the street,
The tramping of feet
That haunt me the whole night long,
And through the day
I'm watching the drama
That people play
In your panorama,
And I hear,
In tones very clear,
The sound of your restless song.

Subways below and trains above racing,
Packed with humanity, chasing
Taxis and trucks and trolley cars,
Busy as they can be,
Steaming machines and riveters grating,
Motors instead of men,
Buildings go up with wrecking crews waiting
To tear them down again.
Newsies that shout sensational headlines,
Peddlers with things to sell
Noisy cafés and whispering headlines,
Children that scream and yell,
Whistles and bells and siren horns blowing,
Pistols that crack and roar,
Traffic that stops and goes without knowing
What's all the shooting for.

Manhattan, Manhattan,
Manhattan madness,
You've got me at last.
I'm like a fly upon a steeple,
Watching seven million people
Do a rhythm
That draws me with 'em,
And it's mad.

As Thousands Cheer (1933)

"How's Chances?"

Verse:
When I want to see the boys,
I know where to find the boys.
I don't go through a club or two;
I just find you
And there are the boys.
To get you alone I strive;
You ask me to tea at five.
I find you then
With other men
And wonder when
My chance will arrive.

Chorus:
How's chances,
Say, how are the chances
Of making you love me
The way I love you?
How many young men must I fight with
To be in right with,
In right with you?
How's chances
For one of those glances?
A glimpse of the heaven
I'm longing to see.
How's chances
To end all your romances
And start taking your chances with me?

"Heat Wave"

Verse:
A heat wave
Blew right into town last week;
She came from
The island of Martinique.
The cancan
She dances will make you fry;
The cancan
Is really the reason why;

Chorus:
We're having a heat wave,
A tropical heat wave.
The temp'rature's rising—
It isn't surprising:
She certainly can cancan.

She started the heat wave
By letting her seat wave,
And in such a way that
The customers say that
She certainly can can-can.
Gee!
Her anatomy
Made the mercury
Jump to ninety-three—
Yes, sir!
We're having a heat wave,
A tropical heat wave.
The way that she moves that
Thermometer proves that
She certainly can cancan.

Patter:
It's so hot,
The weatherman will
Tell you a record's been made.
It's so hot,
A coat of tan will
Cover your face in the shade.
It's so hot,
The coldest maiden
Feels just as warm as a bride.
It's so hot
A chicken laid an
Egg on the street—and it fried!

"Debts"

Verse 1:
England and Italy and Germany and France,
We came here to discuss the debts,
And we're leaving with no regrets;
For England and Italy and Germany and
France,
We have more than reached our aim,
And we're mighty glad we came

Chorus 1 (Europe):
We've had a lovely conference
With the U.S.A.
We'll pay our debts in silver and
We'll be glad to pay.
In a month or two, we think,
We can pay our debts in zinc,

And the next year we'll begin
Paying off what's left in tin.
Oh, how we love America,
For she never makes a fuss—
That's why we love America,
And America loves us!
We'll tell our countries what we did
And they're bound to say,
"If you think we could
Pay them off in wood,
Go back to the U.S.A."

Verse 2 (Statue of Liberty):
England and Italy and Germany and France,
Here's some news that you ought to know:
Off the gold standard we must go;
Like England and Italy and Germany and
France,
We are going to inflate,
And we're very glad to state,

Chorus 2 (Statue of Liberty):
Let the pound go up,
The franc go up,
The mark go up as well—
Uncle Sam will be in heaven
When the dollar goes to hell.
For the stocks go up,
The bonds go up—
When no one wants to sell,
Uncle Sam will be in heaven
When the dollar goes to hell.
Of course, our friends won't like it
Across the ocean blue,
But we can greet our neighbors
With a hey-nonny-nonny and the nuts to you!
Let them call us this
And call us that,
But while they scream and yell,
Uncle Sam will be in heaven
When the dollar goes to hell.

"The Funnies"

Verse:
Sunday is Sunday to my family,
But Sunday is not simply Sunday for me,
For Sunday's the one day
When I love to see
The funnies.
Breakfast is nothing of which you can boast,
But breakfast to me isn't coffee and toast
It's coffee and toast
And what I love most,
The funnies.

Chorus:
Oh,
I love the funnies!
A cup o' coffee to my lips,
And in between the sips,
The papers with the capers
That are in the comic strips,
Which means I'm simply mad about
I mean I couldn't do without,
The funnies.

Oh,
In my pajamas,
I love to read the Katzenjammers,
A little coffee in a cup,
And Bringing Father Up.
I'm dippy over Skippy
And his little yellow pup,
Which means I'm simply mad about,
I mean I couldn't do without,
The funnies.
I'm not concerned with the news of the day
The stories of who murdered who;
And as for what Mister Hearst has to say,
I have no need of.
I don't want to read of,
The Dempseys or the Tunneys,
The wealthy daughters or the sonnies,
The news about the lovely trips
That people take in ships—
I'd rather read about the people
In the comic strips,
Which means I'm simply mad about,
I mean I couldn't do without,
The funnies.

"Easter Parade"

Verse:
Never saw you look
Quite so pretty before;
Never saw you dressed
Quite so lovely—what's more,
I could hardly wait
To keep our date
This lovely Easter morning,

And my heart beat fast
As I came through the door,
For

Chorus:
In your Easter bonnet
With all the frills upon it
You'll be the grandest lady
In the Easter Parade.
I'll be all in clover
And when they look you over
I'll be the proudest fellow
In the Easter Parade.
On the Avenue—Fifth Avenue—
The photographers will snap us,
And you'll find that you're
In the rotogravure.
Oh, I could write a sonnet
About your Easter bonnet
And of the girl I'm taking to
The Easter Parade.

"Supper Time"

Supper time—
I should set the table,
'Cause it's supper time;
Somehow I'm not able,
'Cause that man o' mine
Ain't comin' home no more.
Supper time—
Kids will soon be yellin'
For their supper time;
How'll I keep from tellin' that
That man o' mine
Ain't comin' home no more?

How'll I keep explainin'
When they ask me where he's gone?
How'll I keep from cryin'
When I bring their supper on?
How can I remind them
To pray at their humble board?
How can I be thankful
When they start to thank the Lord?
Lord!

Supper time,
I should set the table,
'Cause it's supper time;
Somehow I'm not able,
'Cause that man o' mine
Ain't comin' home no more,
Ain't comin' home no more.

"Harlem On My Mind"

Verse:
Emeralds in my bracelets,
Diamonds in my rings,
A Riviera chateau
And a lot of other things,
And I'm blue,
So blue
Am I.
Lots of ready money
In seven different banks
I counted up this morning—
It's about a million francs,
And I'm blue,
So blue,
And I know why:

Chorus:
I've got Harlem on my mind,
And I'm longing to be low-down;
And my parlez-vous will not ring true
With Harlem on my mind.
I've been dined and I've been wined,
But I'm headin' for a showdown,
'Cause I can't go on from night to dawn
With Harlem on my mind.
I go to dinner with a French marquis
Each evening after the show;
My lips begin to whisper "mon chéri,"
But my heart keeps singing hi-de-ho.
I've become too damned refined,
And at night I hate to go down
To that high-falutin' flat
That Lady Mendel designed
With Harlem on my mind.

Tag Chorus (to same music as last 9 lines):
And when I'm bathing in my marble tub
Each evening after the show,
I get to thinking of the Cotton Club
And my heart starts chirping hi-de-ho.
I've become too damned refined,
And at night I hate to go down
To my flat with fifty million
Frenchmen tagging behind
With Harlem on my mind.

"Through a Keyhole"

Verse:
My mother was frightened by
A snoopy neighbor who poked his eye
Through mother's keyhole, and that is why
I am what I am today,
The man who looks through the keyholes
along Broadway.
My job is to be alert
And get the lowdown on all the dirt,
The dirt that gathers on Broadway's skirt,
For that's how I earn my pay,
The man who looks through the keyholes
along Broadway.

Chorus 1:
Would you like to take a look
Through a keyhole?
If you'd like to get the in
On the latest bit of sin,
Have a look.
Life is like an open book
Through a keyhole.
If you wonder what occurs
Ere the lady gets her furs
Have a look.

Angry people who think they're tough
Start to threaten, but that's a bluff—
They may holler but they won't stuff
Up their keyholes.
So come on and have a look
Through a keyhole.
If you'd like to get a view,
View of who is cheating who,
Have a look!

Chorus 2:
Would you like to take a look
Through a keyhole?
If you want to get a load
Of the husband on the road,
Have a look.
Life is like an open book
Through a keyhole.
If you want to see New York
Getting ready for the stork,
Have a look.
Lovely ladies of every kind
Think they're safe when they pull the blind;
I see just what is on their mind
Through a keyhole.

So come on and have a look
Through a keyhole
If you'd really like to know
How she got into the show,
Have a look.

"Not for All the Rice in China"

Verse:
I've got a song I want to sing to you,
To bring to you, my love,
Hoping it may reveal
Something of how I feel.
It's not a sentimental tune, with lines
Of moon that shines above—
Still, it's a love song, dear,
That I want the world to hear.

Chorus:
Not for all the rice in China,
Not for all the grapes in France,
Would I exchange the pleasure
That I get with every measure
When we dance.
Not for all the kilts in Scotland,
Not for all the bulls in Spain,
Would I give up arriving
At your house, although you're driving
Me insane.
Not for all the onions in Bermuda
Or the cheeses that are made by the Swiss
Would I exchange that first kiss
That you gave me.
Not for all the beans in Boston,
Not for all the steaks in Moore's,
Would I agree to part with
All the joy you filled my heart with
When you said, "I'm yours."

WORKS FOR THE SCREEN

Mammy (1930)

"Let Me Sing and I Am Happy"

Verse:
What care I who makes the laws of a nation;
Let those who will take care of its rights and wrongs.
What care I who cares
For the world's affairs,
As long as I can sing its popular songs.

Chorus:
Let me sing a funny song
With crazy words that roll along,
And if my song can start you laughing,
I'm happy, happy.
Let me sing a sad refrain
Of broken hearts that loved in vain,
And if my song can start you crying,
I'm happy.

Let me croon a lowdown blues
To lift you out of your seat;
If my blues can reach your shoes
And start you tapping your feet,
I'm happy.
Let me sing of Dixie's charms,
Of cotton fields and Mammy's arms,
And if my song can make you homesick,
I'm happy.

Top Hat (1935)

"Isn't This a Lovely Day (To Be Caught in the Rain)?"

Verse:
The weather is fright'ning;
The thunder and light'ning
Seem to be having their way.
But as far as I'm concerned,
It's a lovely day.
The turn in the weather
Will keep us together,
So I can honestly say
That as far as I'm concerned,
It's a lovely day.
And ev'rything's okay.

Chorus:
Isn't this a lovely day
To be caught in the rain?
You were going on your way,
Now you've got to remain.
Just as you were going,
Leaving me all at sea,
The clouds broke,
They broke, and oh,
What a break for me!
I can see the sun up high
Though we're caught in the storm.
I can see where you and I
Could be cozy and warm.
Let the rain pitter-patter,
But it really doesn't matter
If the skies are gray;
Long as I can be with you,
It's a lovely day.

"Top Hat, White Tie, and Tails"

Verse:
I just got an invitation through the mails.
"Your presence requested this evening, it's formal"—
A top hat, a white tie, and tails.
Nothing now could take the wind out of my sails
Because I'm invited to step out this evening
With top hat and white tie and tails.

Refrain:
I'm puttin' on my top hat,
Tyin' up my white tie,
Brushin' off my tails.
I'm dudein' up my shirt front,
Puttin' in the shirt studs,
Polishin' my nails.
I'm steppin' out, my dear,
To breathe an atmosphere
That simply reeks with class;
And I trust

That you'll excuse my dust
When I step on the gas,
For I'll be there,
Puttin' down my top hat,
Mussin' up my white tie,
Dancin' in my tails.

"Cheek to Cheek"

Heaven,
I'm in heaven,
And my heart beats so
That I can hardly speak,
And I seem to find
The happiness I seek
When we're out together dancing
Cheek to cheek.

Heaven,
I'm in heaven,
And the cares that hung around me
Through the week
Seem to vanish
Like a gambler's lucky streak
When we're out together dancing
Cheek to cheek.

Oh! I love to climb a mountain
And to reach the highest peak,
But it doesn't thrill me half as much
As dancing cheek to cheek.
Oh! I love to go out fishing
In a river or a creek,
But I don't enjoy it half as much
As dancing cheek to cheek.

Dance with me—
I want my arm about you.
The charm about you
Will carry me through
To heaven—
I'm in heaven,
And my heart beats so
That I can hardly speak,
And I seem to find
The happiness I seek
When we're out together dancing
Cheek to cheek.

"The Piccolino"

By the Adriatic waters,
Venetian sons and daughters
Are strumming
A new tune
Upon their guitars.
It was written by a Latin,
A gondolier who sat in
His home out
In Brooklyn
And gazed at the stars.
He sent his melody
Across the sea
To Italy,
And we know
They wrote some words to fit
That catchy bit
And christened it
The Piccolino.

And we know that it's the reason
Why everyone this season
Is strumming
And humming
A new melody.
Come to the casino
And hear them play the Piccolino.
Dance with your bambino
To the strains of the catchy Piccolino.
Drink your glass of vino,
And when you've had your plate of
scallopino
Make them play the Piccolino,
The catchy Piccolino,
And dance to
The strains of
That new melody,
The Piccolino.

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Follow the Fleet (1936)

"Let Yourself Go"

Verse:
As you listen to the band,
Don't you get a bubble?
As you listen to them play
Don't you get a glow?
If you step out on the floor,
You'll forget your trouble;
If you go into your dance,
You'll forget your woe—
So:

Chorus:
Come get together,
Let the dance floor feel your leather,
Step as lightly as a feather—
Let yourself go.
Come hit the timber,
Loosen up and start to limber,
Can't you hear that hot marimba?—
Let yourself go.
Let yourself go.
Relax
And let yourself go.
Relax.
You've got yourself tied up in a knot;
The night is cold
But the music's hot;
So come cuddle closer
Don't you dare to answer "No, sir,"
Butcher, banker, clerk, and grocer—
Let yourself go.

"I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket"

Verse:
I've been a roaming Romeo;
My Juliets have been many,
But now my roaming days have gone—
Too many irons in the fire
Is worse than not having any,
I've had my share, and from now on:

Chorus:
I'm putting all my eggs in one basket;
I'm betting ev'rything I've got on you.
I'm giving all my love to one baby;
Lord help me if my baby don't come through.
I've got a great big amount
Saved up in my love account,
Honey, and I've decided
Love divided
In two
Won't do.
So I'm putting all my eggs in one basket,
I'm betting everything I've got on you.

"Let's Face the Music and Dance"

There may be trouble ahead,
But while there's moonlight and music
And love and romance,
Let's face the music and dance.
Before the fiddlers have fled,
Before they ask us to pay the bill,
And while we still have the chance,
Let's face the music and dance.
Soon we'll be without the moon,
Humming a diffrent tune,
And then
There may be teardrops to shed.
So while there's moonlight and music
And love and romance,
Let's face the music and dance.

On the Avenue (1937)

"I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm"

The snow is snowing,
The wind is blowing,
But I can weather the storm.
What do I care how much it may storm?
I've got my love to keep me warm.
I can't remember
A worse December—
Just watch those icicles form.
What do I care if icicles form?
Oh, I've got my love to keep me warm.
Off with my overcoat,
Off with my glove,

I need no overcoat—
I'm burning with love.
My heart's on fire,
The flame grows higher,
So I will weather the storm.
What do I care how much it may storm?
I've got my love to keep me warm.

***Carefree* (1938)**

"Change Partners"

Must you dance ev'ry dance
With the same fortunate man?
You have danced with him since the music began—
Won't you change partners and dance with me?
Must you dance quite so close
With your lips touching his face?
Can't you see I'm longing to be in his place?
Won't you change partners and dance with me?
Ask him to sit this one out,
And while you're alone,
I'll tell the waiter to tell him
He's wanted on the telephone.
You've been locked in his arms
Ever since heaven knows when—
Won't you change partners, and then
You may never want to change partners again.

MISCELLANEOUS SONGS

"Blue Skies" (1926)
IB's daughter Mary Ellin writes that the song was written on the occasion of her birth. It was later inserted into Ziegfeld's show *Betsy,* with a score primarily by Rodgers & Hart. It was also sung by Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer* (1927).

Verse 1:
I was blue,
Just as blue as I could be;
Ev'ry day
Was a cloudy day for me.
Then good luck
Came a-knocking at my door;
Skies were gray,
But they're not gray anymore.

Chorus:
Blue skies
Smiling at me
Nothing but blue skies
Do I see.
Bluebirds
Singing a song,
Nothing but bluebirds
All day long.
Never saw the sun
Shining so bright,
Never saw things
Going so right.
Noticing the days
Hurrying by—
When you're in love,
My, how they fly!
Blue days,
All of them gone—
Nothing but blue skies
From now on.

Verse 2:
I should care
If the wind blows east or west;
I should fret
If the worst looks like the best;
I should mind
If they say it can't be true;
I should smile—
That's exactly what I do.

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"How Deep Is the Ocean? (How High Is the Sky?" (1932)

Verse 1:
How can I tell you what is in my heart?
How can I measure each and ev'ry part?
How can I tell you how much I love you?
How can I measure just how much I do?

Chorus:
How much do I love you?
I'll tell you no lie:
How deep is the ocean,
How high is the sky?
How many times a day
Do I think of you?
How many roses
Are sprinkled with dew?
How far would I travel
To be where you are?
How far is the journey
From here to a star?
And if I ever lost you,
How much would I cry?
How deep is the ocean,
How high is the sky?

"God Bless America" (1938)

Verse:
While the storm clouds gather
Far across the sea,
Let us swear allegiance
To a land that's free;
Let us all be grateful
For a land so fair,
As we raise our voices
In a solemn prayer.

Chorus:
God bless America,
Land that I love,
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above.
From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans white with foam,
God bless America,
My home sweet home.