

Loesser, Lerner & Loewe 101:
Selections from *My Fair Lady* (1956)
(Lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner & Music by Frederick Loewe)

“Why Can’t the English?”

HENRY:
Look at her—a pris’ner of the gutters;
Condemned by ev’ry syllable she utters.
By right she should be taken out and hung
For the cold-blooded murder of the English
tongue!

ELIZA: Aooooww!

HIGGINS: Aooooww! Heavens, What a noise!
This is what the British population,
Calls an element’ry education.

PICKERING:
Come sir, I think you picked a poor example.

HIGGINS: Did I?
Hear them down in Soho Square,
Dropping aitches everywhere,
Speaking English any way they like.

You sir, did you go to school?

COSTERMONGER:
Wadaya tike me for, a fool?

HIGGINS:
No one taught him “take” instead of “tike.”
Hear a Yorkshireman, or worse,
Hear a Cornishman converse.
I’d rather hear a choir singing flat.
Chicken cackling in a barn . . .
Just like this one—!

ELIZA: —Garn!

HIGGINS:
I ask you, sir, what sort of word is that?
It’s “Aoooow” and “Garn” that keep her in
her place.
Not her wretched clothes and dirty face.

Why can’t the English teach their children
how to speak?
This verbal class distinction by now should
be antique.
If you spoke as she does, sir,
Instead of the way you do,
Why, you might be selling flowers, too!

PICKERING: I beg your pardon!

HIGGINS:
An Englishman’s way of speaking absolutely
classifies him
The moment he talks he makes some other
Englishman despise him.
One common language I’m afraid we’ll never
get.

Oh, why can’t the English learn to set
A good example to people whose English is
painful to your ears?
The Scotch and the Irish leave you close to
tears.

There even are places where English
completely disappears.
In America, they haven’t used it for years!
Why can’t the English teach their children
how to speak?
Norwegians learn Norwegian; the Greeks are
taught their Greek.
In France every Frenchman knows his
language from “A” to “Zed”
The French never care what they do,
actually, as long as they pronounce it
properly.

Arabians learn Arabian with the speed of
summer lightning.
And Hebrews learn it backwards, which is
absolutely frightening.
But use proper English, you’re regarded as a
freak.
Why can’t the English,
Why can’t the English learn to speak?

“Wouldn’t It Be Lovely”

COSTERMONGERS:
It’s rather dull in town,
I think I’ll take me to Patee.

The mistress wants to open up
The castle in Capri.
Me doctor recommends
A quiet summer by the sea!
Mmmmmm! Mmmmmm!
Wouldn’t it be lovely?

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ELIZA:

All I want is a room somewhere,
Far away from the cold night air;
With one enormous chair . . .
Oh, wouldn't it be lovely?

Lots of choc'late for me to eat;
Lots of coal makin' lots of heat;
Warm face, warm hands, warm feet . . . !
Oh, wouldn't it be lovely?

Oh, so lovely sittin' absobloominlutely still
I would never budge 'till spring
Crept over me winder sill.

Someone's head restin' on my knee,
Warm and tender as he can be,
Who takes good care of me . . .
Oh, wouldn't it be lovely?
Lovely! Lovely!
Lovely! Lovely!

“I'm an Ordinary Man”

HIGGINS:

[spoken] I find that the moment I let a woman
make friends with me she becomes jealous,
exacting, suspicious and a damned
nuisance. I find that the moment I let myself
become friends with a woman, I become
selfish and tyrannical. So here I am, a
confirmed old bachelor, and like to remain
so. After all, Pickering . . .

[sung] I'm an ordinary man;
Who desires nothing more
Than just the ordinary chance
To live exactly as he likes,
And do precisely what he wants.
An average man am I,
Of no eccentric whim;
Who likes to live his life,
Free of strife,
Doing whatever he thinks is best for him.
Just an ordinary man.

But
Let a woman in your life
And your serenity is through!
She'll redecorate your home
From the cellar to the dome;
Then get on to the enthralling

Fun of overhauling
You.

Oh, let a woman in your life
And you are up against the wall!
Make a plan and you will find
She has something else in mind;
and so rather than do either
You do something else that neither
Likes at all.

You want to talk of Keats or Milton;
She only wants to talk of love.
You go to see a play or ballet,
And spend it searching for her glove.

Oh, let a woman in your life
And you invite eternal strife!
Let them buy their wedding bands
For those anxious little hands;
I'd be equally as willing
For a dentist to be drilling
Than to ever let a woman in my life!

I'm a very gentle man;
Even-tempered and good-natured,
Whom you never hear complain;
Who has the milk of human kindness
By the quart in ev'ry vein.

A patient man am I
Down to my fingertips;
The sort who never could,
Ever would,
Let an insulting remark escape his lips.

But let a woman in your life
And patience hasn't got a chance.
She will beg you for advice,
Your reply will be concise.
And she'll listen very nicely,
Then go out and do precisely
What she wants!

You were a man of grace and polish
Who never spoke above a hush.
Now all at once you're using language
That would make a sailor blush.

Oh, let a woman in your life
And you're plunging in a knife!

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Let the others of my sex
Tie the knot—around their necks;
I'd prefer a new edition
Of the Spanish Inquisition
Than to ever let a woman in my life!

I'm a quiet living man,
Who prefers to spend his evenings
In the silence of his room;
Who likes an atmosphere as restful
As an undiscovered tomb.
A pensive man am I
Of philosophic joys;
Who likes to meditate,
Contemplate,
Free from humanity's mad, inhuman noise.
Just a quiet living man.

But let a woman in your life
And your sabbatical is through!
in a line that never ends
Come an army of her friends;
Come to jabber and to chatter
And to tell her what the matter
Is with you.

She'll have a booming, boist'rous fam'ly
Who will descend on you en masse.
She'll have a large Wagnerian mother
With a voice that shatters glass!

Oh, let a woman in your life . . .
Let a woman in your life . . .
Let a woman in your life . . .
I shall never let a woman in my life!

“Just You Wait”

ELIZA:
Just you wait, 'enry 'iggins, just you wait!
You'll be sorry but your tears'll be too late!
You'll be broke and I'll have money;
Will I help you? Don't be funny!
Just you wait, 'enry 'iggins, just you wait!

Just you wait, 'enry 'iggins, till you're sick,
And you scream to fetch a doctor double-
quick.
I'll be off a second later
And go straight to the the-ater!
Oh ho ho, 'enry 'iggins, just you wait!

Ooooooh 'enry 'iggins!
Just you wait until we're swimmin' in the sea!
Ooooooh 'enry 'iggins!
And you get a cramp a little ways from me!

When you yell you're going to drown
I'll get dressed and go to town!
Oh ho ho, 'enry 'iggins!
Oh ho ho, 'enry 'iggins!
Just you wait!

One day I'll be famous! I'll be proper and
prim;
Go to St. James so often I will call it St. Jim!
One evening the King will say: "Oh, Liza, old
thing,
I want all of England your praises to sing.
Next week on the twentieth of May
I proclaim Liza Doolittle Day!
All the people will celebrate the glory of you,
And whatever you wish and want I gladly will
do."
"Thanks a lot, King," says I, in a manner well-
bred;
But all I want is 'enry 'iggins 'ead!"
"Done," says the King with a stroke.
"Guard, run and bring in the bloke!"

Then they'll march you, 'enry 'iggins, to the
wall;
And the King will tell me: "Liza, sound the
call."
As they raise their rifles higher,
I'll shout: "Ready! Aim! Fire!"
Oh ho ho! 'enry 'iggins!
Down you'll go, 'enry 'iggins!
Just you wait!!!

“I Could Have Danced All Night”

ELIZA::
Bed! Bed! I couldn't go to bed!
My head's too light to try to set it down
Sleep! Sleep! I couldn't sleep tonight!
Not for all the jewels in the crown!

I could have danced all night!
I could have danced all night!
And still have begged for more.
I could have spread my wings

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And done a thousand things
I've never done before.

I'll never know
What made it so exciting;
Why all at once
My heart took flight.
I only know when he
Began to dance with me,
I could have danced, danced, danced all
night!

SERVANTS:

It's after three now.
Don't you agree, now,
She ought to be in bed?

ELIZA:

I could have danced all night!
I could have danced all night!
And still have begged for more.
I could have spread my wings
And done a thousand things
I've never done before.

I'll never know
What made it so exciting,
Why all at once
My heart took flight.
I only know when he
Began to dance with me.
I could have danced, danced, danced all
night!

MRS. PEARCE:

I understand, dear.
It's all been grand, dear.
But now it's time to sleep.

ELIZA:

I could have danced all night!
I could have danced all night!
And still have begged for more.
I could have spread my wings
And done a thousand things
I've never done before.

I'll never know
What made it so exciting,
Why all at once
My heart took flight.

I only know when he
Began to dance with me.
I could have danced, danced, danced all
night!

“Ascot Gavotte”

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Ev'ry duke and earl and peer is here.
Ev'ry one who should be here is here.
What a smashing, positively dashing
Spectacle: the Ascot op'ning day.

At the gate are all the horses
Waiting for the cue to fly away.
What a gripping, absolutely ripping
Moment at the Ascot op'ning day.

Pulses rushing!
Faces flushing!
Heartbeats speed up!
I have never been so keyed up!

Any second now
They'll begin to run.
Hark! A bell is ringing,
They are springing
Forward
Look! It has begun . . . !

What a frenzied moment that was!
Didn't they maintain an exhausting pace?
'Twas a thrilling, absolutely chilling
Running of the Ascot op'ning race.

“On the Street Where You Live”

FREDDY:

When she mentioned how her aunt bit off the
spoon,
She completely done me in.
And my heart went on a journey to the moon,
When she told about her father and the gin.
And I never saw a more enchanting face,
Than that moment when she shouted "move
your bloomin' . . . "

I have often walked down this street before;
But the pavement always stayed beneath my
feet before.

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All at once am I
Several stories high.
Knowing I'm on the street where you live.

Are there lilac trees in the heart of town?
Can you hear a lark in any other part of
town?

Does enchantment pour
Out of ev'ry door?
No, it's just on the street where you live!

And oh! the towering feeling
Just to know somehow you are near!
The overpowering feeling
That any second you may suddenly appear!

People stop and stare. They don't bother
me.
For there's nowhere else on earth that I
would rather be.
Let the time go by,
I won't care if I
Can be here on the street where you live.

"Show Me"

FREDDY:
Speak and the world is full of singing,
And I'm winging
Higher than the birds.
Touch and my heart begins to crumble,
The heavens tumble,
Darling, and I'm . . .

ELIZA:
Words!
Words! Words! I'm so sick of words!
I get words all day through;
First from him, now from you!
Is that all you blighters can do?

Don't talk of stars
Burning above;
If you're in love,
Show me!

Tell me no dreams
Filled with desire.
If you're on fire,
Show me!

Here we are together in the middle of the
night!

Don't talk of spring! Just hold me tight!
Anyone who's ever been in love'll tell you
that
This is no time for a chat!

Haven't your lips
Longed for my touch?
Don't say how much,
Show me! Show me!

Don't talk of love lasting through time.
Make me no undying vow.
Show me now!

Sing me no song!
Read me no rhyme!
Don't waste my time,
Show me!

Don't talk of June,
Don't talk of fall!
Don't talk at all!
Show me!

Never do I ever want to hear another word.
There isn't one I haven't heard.
Here we are together in what ought to be a
dream;
Say one more word and I'll scream!

Haven't your arms
Hungered for mine?
Please don't "expl'ine,"
Show me! Show me!

Don't wait until wrinkles and lines
Pop out all over my brow,
Show me now!

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“A Hymn to Him”

HIGGINS:
What in all of heaven could've prompted her
to go?
After such a triumph at the ball?
What could have depressed her?
What could have possessed her?
I cannot understand the wretch at all!

Women are irrational, that's all there is to
that!
Their heads are full of cotton, hay, and rags!
They're nothing but exasperating, irritating,
Vacillating, calculating, agitating,
Maddening and infuriating hags!

Pickering, why can't a woman be more like a
man?
Yes. Why can't a woman be more like a
man?
Men are so honest, so thoroughly square;
Eternally noble, historically fair;
Who when you win will always give your
back a pat.
Well, why can't a woman be like that?
Why does ev'ryone do what the others do?
Can't a woman learn to use her head?
Why do they do everything their mothers do?
Why don't they grow like their father
instead?
Why can't a woman take after a man?
Men are so pleasant, so easy to please;
Whenever you're with them, you're always at
ease.
Would you be slighted if I didn't speak for
hours?

PICKERING: Of course not!

HIGGINS: Would you be livid if I had a drink
or two?

PICKERING: Nonsense.

HIGGINS: Would you be wounded if I never
sent you flowers?

PICKERING: Never.

HIGGINS:
Well, why can't a woman be like you?

One man in a million may shout a bit.
Now and then there's one with slight defects.
One perhaps whose truthfulness you doubt a
bit.
But by and large we are a marvelous sex!

Why can't a woman behave like a man?
Men are so friendly, good-natured and kind;
A better companion you never will find.
If I were hours late for dinner, would you
bellow?

PICKERING: Of course not!

HIGGINS: If I forgot your silly birthday, would
you fuss?

PICKERING: Nonsense.

HIGGINS: Would you complain if I took out
another fellow?

PICKERING: Never.

HIGGINS: Why can't a woman be like us?

Mrs. Pearce, you're a woman,
Why can't a woman be more like a man?
Men are so decent, such regular chaps.
Ready to help you through any mishaps.
Ready to buck you up whenever you are
glum.

Why can't a woman be a chum?

Why is thinking something women never do?
Why is logic never even tried?
Straightening up their hair is all they ever do.
Why don't they straighten up the mess that's
inside?

Why can't a woman behave like a man?
If I was a woman who'd been to a ball,
Been hailed as a princess by one and by all;
Would I start weeping like a bathtub
overflowing?

And carry on as if my home were in a tree?
Would I run off and never tell me where I'm
going?

Why can't a woman be like me?

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“Without You”

ELIZA:

What a fool I was! What dominated fool!
to think that you were the earth and sky.
What a fool I was! What an addle-pated fool!
What a mutton-headed dolt was I!
No, my reverberating friend,
You are not the beginning and the end!

HIGGINS: [spoken] You impudent hussy!
There's not an idea in your head or a word in
your mouth that I haven't put there.

ELIZA:

There'll be spring ev'ry year without you.
England still will be here without you.
There'll be fruit on the tree,
And a shore by the sea;
There'll be crumpets and tea
Without you.

Art and music will thrive without you.
Somehow Keats will survive without you.
And there still will be rain
On that plain down in Spain,
Even that will remain
Without you.
I can do
Without you.

You, dear friend, who taught so well,
You can go to Hartford, Hereford and
Hampshire!

They can still rule with land without you.
Windsor Castle will stand without you.
And without much ado
We can all muddle through
Without you!

Without your pulling it, the tide comes in,
Without your twirling it, the earth can spin,
Without your pushing them, the clouds roll
by.

If they can do without you, ducky, so can I!
I shall not feel alone without you.
I can stand on my own without you.
So go back in your shell,
I can do bloody well without . . .

HIGGINS:

By George, I really did it!
I did it! I did it!
I said I'd make a woman
And indeed I did!

I knew that I could do it!
I knew it! I knew it!
I said I'd make a woman
And succeed I did!

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“I’ve Grown Accustomed to Her Face”

HIGGINS:

Damn! Damn! Damn! Damn!
I've grown accustomed to her face!
She almost makes the day begin.
I've grown accustomed to the tune
She whistles night and noon.
Her smiles. Her frowns.
Her ups, her downs,
Are second nature to me now;
Like breathing out and breathing in.
I was serenely independent and content
before we met;
Surely I could always be that way again—
and yet
I've grown accustomed to her looks;
Accustomed to her voice;
Accustomed to her face.

[Spoken]

Marry Freddy. What an infantile idea. What a
heartless, wicked, brainless thing to do! But
she'll regret it! She'll regret it. It's doomed
before they even take the vow!

[Sung]

I can see her now:
Mrs. Freddy Eynsford-Hill,
In a wretched little flat above a store.

I can see her now:
Not a penny in the till,
And a bill-collector beating at the door.

She'll try to teach the things I taught her,
And end up selling flow'rs instead;
Begging for her bread and water,
While her husband has his breakfast in bed!

In a year or so
When she's prematurely grey,
And the blossom in her cheek has turned to
chalk,
She'll come home, and lo!
He'll have upped and run away
With a social climbing heiress from New
York!

Poor Eliza!
How simply frightful!

How humiliating!
How delightful!

[spoken]

How poignant it'll be on that inevitable night
when she hammers on my door in tears and
rags. Miserable and lonely, repentant and
contrite. Will I let her in or hurl her to the
wolves? Give her kindness, or the treatment
she deserves? Will I take her back or throw
the baggage out?

[sung]

But I'm a most forgiving man;
The sort who never could,
Ever would,
Take a position and staunchly never budge.
Just a most forgiving man.

But I shall never take her back,
If she were even crawling on her knees.
Let her promise to atone!
Let her shiver, let her moan!
I will slam the door and let the hell-cat
freeze!

[Spoken]

Marry Freddy! Ha!

[Sung]

But I'm so used to hear her say:
Good morning every day.
Her joys, her woes,
Her highs, her lows
Are second nature to me now;
Like breathing out and breathing in.
I'm very grateful she's a woman
And so easy to forget;
Rather like a habit
One can always break—and yet
I've grown accustomed to the trace
Of something in the air;
Accustomed to her face.