

STUDY GUIDE

THE REPERTORY THEATRE OF ST. LOUIS



MUSIC AND LYRICS BY COLE PORTER
ORIGINAL BOOK BY GUY BOLTON & P.G. WODEHOUSE AND
HOWARD LINDSAY & RUSSEL CROUSE
NEW BOOK BY TIMOTHY CROUSE AND JOHN WEIDMAN

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WHO'S WHO

Elisha J. Whitney is a business tycoon with poor vision and a healthy taste for "liquid refreshment."

Fred is the good-natured bartender at Whitney and Billy's neighborhood watering hole.

Billy Crocker is Whitney's young assistant and a particular favorite among the ladies.

Reno Sweeney is a long-time friend of Billy's who has turned from an evangelist to a night club singer.

Ship's Captain is more concerned about what variety of celebrities his vessel can boast than anything else.

The Sailors are all looking for a little feminine company.

The Purser is the ship's officer responsible for the comfort and safety of the passengers.

The Reporters and Photographer are eager for some juicy gossip or a shot of a celebrity.

Henry T. Dobson is a self-righteous minister who finds himself falsely accused.

Luke and John are two of Dobson's most recent converts from a life of drinking and gambling.

Purity, Chastity, Charity & Virtue are Reno's Angels, her backup singers.

Hope Harcourt is an American debutante on the verge of a marriage of convenience.

Lord Evelyn Oakleigh is Hope's wealthy English fiancé.

Evangeline Harcourt is Hope's widowed mother.

The FBI Agents are scouring the ship for gangsters.

Erma is Moonface Martin's sexy sidekick.

Moonface Martin is a gangster who, as Public Enemy #13 is on the downside of his career.



WORDS TO THE WISE

Regatta—Whitney is going to London to compete in this rowing competition.

Steamer—The *S.S. American* is referred to as a steamer, because steam is its main power source.

Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, Hyde Park—Reno tries to tempt Billy to join her in London by promising to visit these famous tourist destinations.

Ennui—This is a fancy French term for boredom, particularly when it is accompanied by dissatisfaction.

Charlie Chaplin—The Captain is crushed to learn that this movie star has cancelled his reservations onboard the ship.

Debutante—Hope is about to surrender this title of a young single woman entering society.

Jimmy Walker—Walker was forced to resign as New York City's mayor in 1932 when he was unable to deny corruption charges. He fled to Europe to avoid prosecution.

Machine Gun Kelly—A true "Public Enemy Number One," George Kelly earned his nickname through his gangster lifestyle.

Stork Club—From the 1920s through the 1960s, this night club was New York's hot spot, attracting celebrities from Frank Sinatra to JFK.

Distilled Waters—Reno makes a play on words by using this term for alcohol and referencing the biblical phrase "beside still waters."

Catechisms—Rev. Dobson requires Luke and John to recite these religious principles regularly.

Straddlevarious—This is Moonface's pronunciation of Stradivarius, a well-known kind of violin.

Cleric—The other passengers of the *S.S. American* believe that Moonface is a cleric, or a minister.

Zeppelin—Hope made her debut in society aboard one of these airships, similar to today's Goodyear blimp.

Bendel Bonnet—This lyric probably actually refers to a “bundle bonnet,” which would be a woman’s hat constructed of a handmade Irish linen, making it quite expensive.

Vincent Youmans—Youmans was a popular composer and producer during the 1920s and 30s.

Garbo—Born in Sweden, Greta Garbo’s Hollywood career made her famous around the world.

Arrow collar—A sign of affluence and style, the Arrow collar marked a man of distinction.

Coolidge Dollar—The Coolidge Dollar was an ocean liner in the fleet of Dollar Cruise Ships named in honor of President Calvin Coolidge.

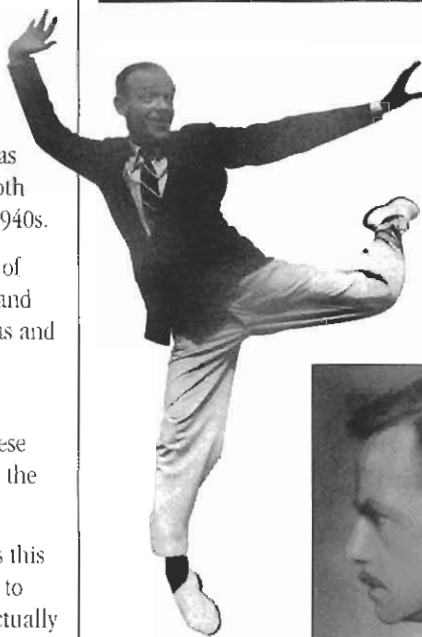
Fred Astaire—Known for his incredible dance routines, Astaire was at the height of his popularity on both stage and screen in the 1930s and 1940s.

O’Neill—Eugene O’Neill, author of plays such as *The Iceman Cometh* and *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*, was and still is, widely regarded as America’s premiere playwright.

Camembert—This gourmet cheese would be an indulgence for most in the Depression era.

Inferno’s Dante—Porter slides this clever transposed lyric past listeners to preserve the rhyme scheme. He is actually referring to *Inferno*, a classic 14th century epic poem written by Dante Alighieri.

Durante—Known as the great “Schnozzola,” because of his prominent nose, Jimmy Durante made a name for himself on vaudeville and later film and television.



Botticelli—This early Italian Renaissance painter is best known for his works *Primavera* and *Birth of Venus*.

Keats—One of the best known English Romantic poets, Keats is famous for, among other works, “Ode on a Grecian Urn.”

Shelley—A contemporary of Keats, Shelley is known for his lyric poetry.

Ovaltine—This chocolate milk flavoring is still on grocery shelves today.

Berlin ballad—Irving Berlin was at the height of his success during this period and remains one of America’s best-known composers.

Sing-Sing—Moonface fears being sent to prison or Sing-Sing.

Rat’s pajamas, flea’s knees—Lord Evelyn mangles these popular phrases meaning “cool”: cat’s pajamas and bee’s knees.

Bedlam—The ship is in bedlam, or a state of uproar when the passengers discover that Billy is not really a gangster.

Delectable—Billy uses this adjective normally reserved to describe tasty food to explain how he feels about love.

Delirious—Billy also sings that love makes a person a little bit crazy or delirious.

Noel Coward—This playwright and composer was the height of sophistication in his day.

Cognac or cointreau—Mrs. Harcourt wants to know which of these liqueur fillings Hope wants in her wedding cake.

Brooks Brothers—Still a classic sign of style, Brooks Brothers was selling men’s clothing in the 30s as well.

*They’re the top:
Greta Garbo, Fred Astaire,
Eugene O’Neill, Jimmy Durante*

WHAT'S THE STORY

Act I

As Anything Goes opens, Wall Street broker Billy Crocker is helping his boss Elisha Whitney with his final preparations to sail for England. He is so busy with Whitney's concerns that he forgets that he planned to meet an old friend, evangelist turned night club singer, Reno Sweeney until she hunts him down. Reno tells Billy that she is sailing for London as well and wants Billy to join her. He declines though, saying that he can't go because he is in love. Reno is shocked, as she has always secretly thought that Billy was devoted to her. She storms off with Billy trailing after her.

When Billy reappears, it is aboard the *S.S. American*. He is in search of Whitney to give him his forgotten passport. Just before departure, newspaper cameramen are snapping pictures of the celebrities who are boarding. Among them are beautiful American debutante Hope Harcourt, her English fiancé Lord Evelyn Oakleigh and Hope's mother. Mrs. Wadsworth T. Harcourt may not be the beauty her daughter is, but she is slightly antique and therefore receives more attention from Sir Evelyn, obviously an admirer of fine old things. Other travelers arriving aboard are Reverend Dobson, shepherding two reformed gambler converts, Luke and John, and Reno and her not-so-angelic Angels. When Billy sees that Hope is aboard, he tries to find a moment alone with her. The two shared a romantic night together, but Billy had no idea that she was engaged. He loves her though and is determined to talk to her. While searching for her, he accidentally bumps into his boss, who orders him to get back to work on Wall Street.

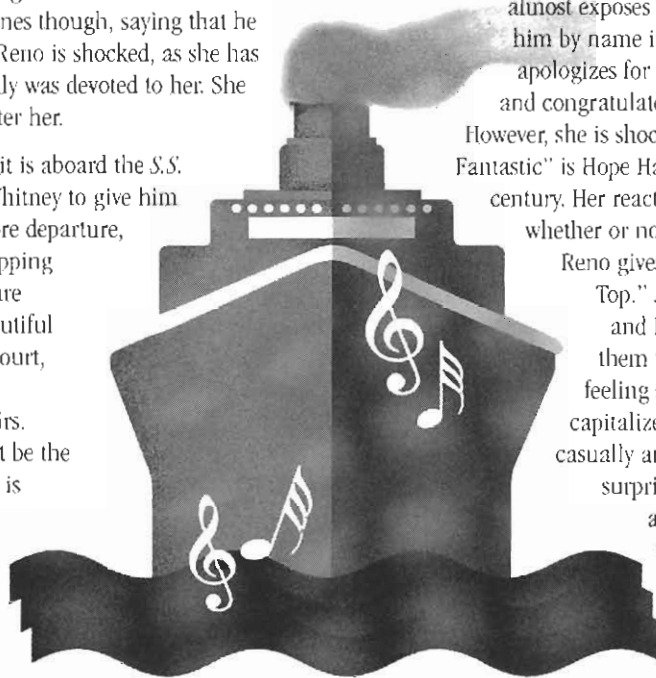
Traveling incognito is Moonface Martin, Public Enemy Number 13. Moonface is trying to escape the country without attracting attention from the FBI and is disguised as a minister. He is accompanied by a stunning accomplice, Erma, whose boyfriend, Snake Eyes Johnson (a.k.a. Public Enemy Number One) is supposed to be on the same boat. Snake Eyes misses the departure and Erma and Moonface sail without him. However, two FBI agents also join the cruise and acting on a tip, are searching the boat for a gangster dressed as a man of the cloth. When they question Billy, he mistakefully directs them to Rev. Dobson, whom the agents promptly arrest, leaving Luke and John with no one to "lead them not into temptation." Moonface

is grateful for the diversion though and rewards Billy with the missing Snake Eyes' passport and ticket. Since Billy has not yet had the opportunity to speak with Hope, he accepts the offer, even though he finds the name on the passport, "Murray Hill Flowers," a little suspicious.

That evening on deck, Reno runs into Billy and almost exposes his false identity when she calls him by name in front of the purser. She apologizes for getting so angry the night before and congratulates him on his new love interest. However, she is shocked when she learns that "Miss Fantastic" is Hope Harcourt, the debutante of the century. Her reaction makes Billy start questioning whether or not he is good enough for Hope, but Reno gives him reassurance with "You're the Top." As they are leaving the deck, Hope and Evelyn enter, and Billy spies on them through a porthole. Evelyn is feeling seasick, and Billy decides to capitalize on the opportunity. He strolls in casually and takes Hope completely by surprise. He explains that he has stowed away because he couldn't stand the thought of losing her. They are just about to embrace when Evelyn groans and Hope is reminded of her impending marriage. Billy talks about delicacies from

dinner until Evelyn can't take any more and retreats inside. With his competition out of the way, Billy reminds Hope of the plans they made: to marry, live in California and raise a family, but Hope tells him, "things like that just aren't done." Billy is not deterred though and insists that Hope will marry him.

He returns to his cabin, shared with Moon and Erma and relates his romantic troubles to them. When he hears Whitney singing in the cabin next door, though, he realizes that he has more immediate problems: if his boss discovers him on the ship, he will lose his job. Moon provides a temporary solution by swiping Whitney's glasses—without them, the tycoon can barely see his own hand. This fix is short-lived though because the captain arrives to warn the "Rev. Moon" that the FBI has discovered that Murray Hill Flowers is actually Snake Eyes Johnson. So Erma uses her persuasive powers to obtain a sailor suit and the broker quickly becomes a first mate. With all of this secretive help from Moon, Billy begins to question whether or not he is a real minister. Moon finally confesses that he is actually Public Enemy Number 13, and Billy vows that the secret is safe with him.



The next morning, Billy sets out to stop Hope's wedding, but is interrupted by a near disaster with Whitney. He gives his boss the slip by faking a seagull attack and manages to eliminate Mrs. Harcourt (who is eager for Hope to marry the wealthy Lord) by telling her that the ship is sinking and she should report to the lifeboats. Reno is not fooled though and recognizes both Billy and Moon (an old acquaintance). While they are reminiscing, Billy is summoned by the Purser who wants him to look for Murray Hill Flowers. Evelyn comes on deck and is delighted to see Reno. He is secretly a huge fan of her nightclub act and invites her to tea in his cabin. Reno starts to decline, but Moon has a plan and accepts on her behalf. After Evelyn is gone, Moon explains that Reno will go to Evelyn's room and seduce him, allowing Moon to take compromising photographs that they can use to blackmail Evelyn into breaking his engagement to Hope. Reno loves the plan, and the two celebrate their new pact with "Friendship." Evelyn, however, proves a bit more difficult to lead astray than Reno had expected and when Moon bursts in to "rescue" her, he finds the two chatting about American slang.

That evening, Whitney makes advances on Mrs. Harcourt on deck while Moon and Billy conjure a new plan. They decide that the best way to dissolve the engagement is to convince Mrs. Harcourt that Evelyn is insane. Billy introduces himself to Hope's mother as Evelyn and explains that the man claiming to be Evelyn is actually his deranged brother, Edna. Moon describes how "Edna" has escaped from his care before and married young women, only to murder them and their mothers. This leaves Mrs. Harcourt terrified, so when the real Evelyn enters, she faints in fear. Hope comes on deck and exposes the charade, and the sailors recognize Billy as Murray Hill Flowers. Moon and Billy flee while Reno tries to make Hope admit that she loves Billy. They are interrupted by an elderly lady, who turns out to be Billy in yet another disguise. Hope can't help herself and agrees with Billy that things are indeed, "De-Lovely."

The next morning, Hope and Billy are still on deck when Mrs. Harcourt enters with questions about wedding details. Billy expects that Hope will tell her mother that she is marrying him instead, but she does not. Even worse, the purser spots Billy and arrests him as Snake Eyes Johnson. When the other passengers learn about this, they are thrilled to have a celebrity on board and treat Billy like royalty. Seeing the warm reception that a fake gangster received, Moon reveals himself as well and the two become the guests of honor, as "Anything Goes."



*Nancy Hess as Reno Sweeney
and David Kortemeier as
Lord Evelyn Oakleigh*

Act II

In the grand lounge of the liner, passengers and crew sing the praises of Public Enemy Number One, for bringing a generous measure of glamour and excitement to the voyage. The party culminates with a rousing "sermon" from Reno and her Angels, during which Evelyn confesses that once, while in China, he led a young woman astray. When Billy's turn to testify arrives, he confesses that he is not really a gangster at all, and the crowd turns on him. Both Moon and Billy are arrested, again, and placed in the brig. Erma visits them in their cell and brings a note for Billy from Hope. It reads, "I love you so but what good does love do when there is no hope." This moves Billy to sing "All Through the Night."

Meanwhile, above board, neither Reno nor Evelyn can sleep, and they both seek solace on deck. Evelyn admits that during Reno's service, he realized that he does not love Hope. Reno is secretly thrilled, not only for Billy, but also for herself, as she is strangely attracted to Evelyn's quirky ways. Evelyn declares that it doesn't matter though, because Oakleigh men must always act with honor, which means marrying Hope the next day. Reno asks him how his indiscretion in China plays into that code of honor, and by the time he has finished explaining "The Gypsy in Me," they are in each other's arms.

The next morning, Moon and Billy are joined in the brig by Luke and John who are being held for an hour because their gambling has gotten out of hand again. Reno arrives to visit the prisoners and brings news of her rendezvous with Evelyn. Everything is in place, then: Evelyn can marry Reno and Billy can marry Hope, except Moon and Billy are stuck in jail. Knowing that Luke and John will be released in an hour, Moon proposes a game of strip poker and before long, Billy and Moon are dressed as Luke and John.

On deck, the wedding ceremony has already started when Moon and Billy rush in dressed in Luke's and John's clothes. They

pretend to be representatives of Little Plum Blossom, the Chinese girl whom Evelyn dallied with many years before. Reno enters disguised as the deflowered Blossom and with Hope as an intermediary, they

conclude that the only honorable solution is for Evelyn to marry Plum Blossom and give Hope to one of the girl's representatives (Billy). Mrs. Harcourt is devastated, as she was expecting to live off of her new son-in-law's wealth. However, Whitney asks her to marry him promising her all kinds of wealth from the sale of shares that Billy was responsible for completing on Wall Street. Billy reveals himself and confesses that he didn't make the deal, but no sooner has he said that than a cable from New York arrives with news that the value of the unsold stock has skyrocketed, leaving everyone and everything just as they should be.

BIO & BEYOND

Heir to a considerable fortune, Cole Porter never needed to work a day in his life, yet this world-traveling bon vivant earned a reputation for being one of the most conscientious and productive artists in his day. Faced with the hardships of rejection and ill health, he nevertheless became one of the most prolific composers and lyricists of all time. With music and lyrics for over 50 shows and movies to his name, he penned more than 1000 songs, all known for their verbal intricacy, technical ingenuity and tuneful charm. Even his most frivolous lyrics boast a craftsmanship and artistry that demands respect and induces delight.

Born June 9, 1891, Cole Porter was the only surviving child of Kate Cole and Sam Porter. Even before he took up piano and violin at the age of six, he was composing rhymes to everyone's amusement. Disliking the violin's harsh tone, he focused on piano. His mother Kate would occasionally play with him, parodying popular tunes to help him endure long hours of daily practice. He wrote his first composition, "Song of the Birds," at age 10 and dedicated it to her.

From childhood, music was a favorite subject. His first and possibly most influential teacher, Dr. Ambercrombies of Worcester Academy, planted this seed in young Cole's mind: "Words and music must be so inseparably wedded to each other that they are like one." Clearly, Cole took those words to heart.

For all his precocity, wealth and connections, Porter's career was slow to start. After leaving Yale with a legacy of hundreds of songs, including football fight songs still used today and six full-scale productions, he wrote his first Broadway show: *See America First*. It ran for a dismal 15 performances. Soon after it closed, he sailed for France; it would be over a decade before he returned to Broadway. Some said the show's failure deeply upset him; some said he joined the Foreign Legion to fight in World War I (he encouraged this story, enjoying the "war hero" status it gave him). His years abroad were actually spent happily traveling and socializing, gaining fresh experiences and a worldly perspective to strengthen his individual voice. While in Paris, he furthered his musical studies at the Schola Cantorum, and waited for Broadway to become interested in him.



"I am the most enthusiastic person in the world. I like everything—as long as it's different." —Cole Porter

In 1919, he met and married Linda Lee Thomas, several years his senior, who was quite rich and once considered the most beautiful woman in the world. Though Cole was homosexual, they had a long and happy, if unusual, marriage; she was his biggest fan and a tremendous supporter of his work.

The Porters spent much of the 1920s in Europe, part of the fashionable group of artists and intellectuals living abroad. In 1928, Irving Berlin recommended his friend Cole to producer E. Ray Goetz, for whom he wrote a show that contained the soon-to-be-famous "Let's Do It." He contributed "You Do Something to Me," "What Is This Thing Called Love" and "Love For Sale" to other shows, and was soon regarded as the smartest, most sophisticated songwriter available.

Cole's notorious sense of humor surfaced not just in his lyrics. When writing *Anything Goes*, he intentionally placed one of the show's biggest hit songs within the first five minutes of the show. It seemed that his society friends found it amusing to drift into a show quite late. He considered this habit rude, and chided them the best way he knew how: by making them miss the song everyone would be talking about afterwards.

Even during his most prolific songwriting period, Cole and Linda lived the high life, traveling extensively and entertaining on a grand scale. He composed "You're The Top" while floating along the German Rhine, inspired by a parlor game played by his guests. He wrote the score for *Jubilee* while sailing with playwright Moss Hart on a cruise around the world, a mere five months after *Anything Goes* opened. The bewitching and sultry "Begin the Beguine" debuted at an upright piano in Cole's cabin, as they sailed toward the Fiji Islands.

His songs, with their blend of sophistication and innocence, continue to enchant audiences from all walks of life. In his urbane, top-hat fantasy world, everyone is clever, nonchalant and carefree, and love could be sparkling, wry, casual or ecstatic, but was always meant-to-be. Wrote the *N.Y. World Telegram* and *Sun* upon his death, "His songs will be played and sung for countless years to come, and the man who wrote them will be gratefully and affectionately remembered for his talent, originality and taste."

Excerpt reprinted courtesy of The 5th Avenue Theatre

ANYTHING GOES

Since its first presentation in 1934, *Anything Goes* has seen a number of reincarnations, from Broadway to London to television to film. Track the most notable of these productions below.



1969—London Revival

Music and Lyrics by Cole Porter
Book by Howard Lindsay & Russel Crouse
Opened November 18, 1969 at the Saville Theatre, London
Produced by Cameron Mackintosh (in association with David Dien) and the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre
Directed and Choreographed by Michael Clare
Lighting by Michael Saddington

Costumes supervised by Helen Coles
Scenery by John Stoddart
Assistant Choreographer: Janet Hall
Musical Direction and Orchestration by Alfred Ralston
Music Arranged by Julian Stein

Cast

Marian Montgomery (Reno Sweeney)
James Kenney (Billy Crocker)
Michael Segal (Moonface Martin)
Michael Malnick (Sir Evelyn Oakleigh)
Valerie Verdon (Hope Harcourt)
Janet Mahoney (Bonnie)
Linda Gray (Mrs. Wadsworth T. Harcourt)
Peter Honri (Elisha J. Whitney)

Special Notes: Running for only 15 performances, this production introduced "It's De-Lovely," "Heaven Hop," "Friendship," and "Let's Do It."

1934—Original Broadway Production

Music and Lyrics by Cole Porter
Book by Guy Bolton and P. G. Wodehouse, revised by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse
Opened November 21, 1934 at the Alvin Theatre, NYC
Transferred October, 1935 to the 44th Street Theatre
Ran for 420 performances
Produced by Vinton Freedley
Directed by Howard Lindsay
Dance and ensembles by Robert Alton
Settings by Donald Oenslager
Gowns by Jenkins
Orchestra conducted by Earl Busby
Orchestrations by Russell Bennett and Hans Spialek
Choral arrangements by Ray Johnson

Cast

William Gaxton (Billy Crocker)
Ethel Merman (Reno Sweeney)
Victor Moore (Reverend Dr. Moon)
Bettina Hall (Hope Harcourt)
Paul Everton (Elisha J. Whitney)
Vera Dunn (Bonnie Latour)

Special Notes: This original version of the show does not include the songs "Friendship," "It's De-Lovely," or "Easy to Love." Also, at this point, Erma has not yet been created; in her place is moll, Bonnie Latour.



1936—Film Version

Music and Lyrics by Cole Porter,
Additional songs by Leo Robin,
Richard A. Whiting, Frederick Hollander,
Hoagie Carmichael, and
Edward Heyman
Screenplay based on the play
by Guy Bolton and
P. G. Wodehouse, revised by
Howard Lindsay
and Russel Crouse
Produced by Benjamin Glazer
Directed by Lewis Milestone
Photographed by Karl Struss
Dance ensembles staged by
Le Roy Prinz



Special photographic effects by Farciot Edouart
Art direction by Hans Dreier and Ernst Fegté
Edited by Eda Warren
Sound recording: Jack Godrich and
Don Johnson
Costumes designed by Travis Banton
Interior decorations by A.E. Freudeman
Production advisor: Vinton Freedley

Cast

Bing Crosby (Billy Crocker)
Ethel Merman (Reno Sweeney)
Charlie Ruggles (Rev. Dr. Moon)
Ida Lupino (Hope Harcourt)
Grace Bradley (Bonnie Latour)
Arthur Treacher (Sir Evelyn Oakleigh)
Robert McWade (Elisha J. Whitney)
Richard Carle (Bishop Dobson)

Special Notes: Also known as Tops Is the Limit, this black and white film ran 92 minutes and added a number of songs not written by Cole Porter, including: "Am I Awake," "My Heart and I," "Hopelessly in Love" and "Shanghai-De-Ho."

AND GOES AND GOES...

1956—Film Version

Music and Lyrics by Cole Porter
[with new songs by Sammy Cahn and
James van Heusen]
Screenplay by Sidney Sheldon, based
on the play by Guy Bolton and
P. G. Wodehouse
Produced by
Robert Emmett Dolan
Directed by Robert M. Lewis
Cinematography by
John E. Warren
Costumes by Edith Head
Choreography by Nick Castle
Orchestra directed by Joseph Lilley



Cast

Bing Crosby (Bill Benson)
Donald O'Connor (Ted Adams)
Mitzi Gaynor (Patsy Blair)
Phil Harris (Steve Blair)
Zizi "Renée" Jeanmaire
(Gaby Duval)
Kurt Kasznar (Victor Lawrence)
Richard Entman (Ed Brent)
Walter Sande (Alex Todd)

Special Notes: This film version appeared in color, but the title was practically the only element that remained intact from the original production. Character names and plot underwent major changes, and several new songs were added. Still, Cole Porter's irresistible music remained untouched.

SHOP TALK

Costume designer James Scott has faced some interesting challenges in creating the attire for the zany cast of characters in *Anything Goes*. While the setting for the play is plausible enough—1934, aboard a London-bound ocean liner—the action of the musical is anything but realistic. Cole Porter's music and the madcap book take us on a wild ride across the Atlantic with multiple disguises and mistaken identities and enough cases of love at first sight to fill a Las Vegas wedding chapel. Because of this, Scott had to find a balance between historically accurate clothing choices and the light-hearted fantasy world that these characters inhabit. For another designer, this might have been an easier choice, but for Scott, an ocean liner history buff, the decision was more difficult. Armed with enough knowledge about the attire of real 1930s luxury cruise passengers to—in his words—“make a PBS documentary,” the costumer chose to let stark realism fall by the wayside in favor of maintaining the giddy, rarified air of the *S.S. American*.

The cold temperatures standard for the North Atlantic route that most ocean liners would have followed at the time would make many of the gauzy garments seen in The Rep's production obsolete. In fact, any passenger who

went on deck would most likely be bundled in furs and lap blankets to ward off the biting cold. However, love ballads and tap routines are much less persuasive (not to mention, awkward) when performed underneath layers of wool and fur. The extensive dance numbers integral to this show demand that the costumes and choreography work hand in hand, making the clothing as much about movement as appearance. With this in mind, Scott opted for fluid, flashy fabrics that will accent, rather than hinder the movement of dancers. Sequins, chiffon and feathers stand in for boiled wool, and most of the heat of these costumes comes from bare backs, fur trims and exotic animal prints—not long sleeves or flannel linings. The result is a wardrobe that enables these characters—and the audience—to have as much fun as possible and to revel in the knowledge that “*Anything Goes*.”



READ MORE ABOUT IT

We encourage you to examine these topics in-depth by exploring the following books and videos.

Who Could Ask for Anything More, as told to Peter Martin by Ethel Merman and Pete Martin. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955. Ethel Merman's biography, this contains several inside stories regarding her work on *Anything Goes* as well as other Cole Porter projects.

Life With Lindsay & Cause by Cornelio Otis Skinner. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976. This dual biography of the collaborators who saved *Anything Goes* from certain doom is a quick, easy and

enjoyable read tracing their independent and joint careers.

Better Foot Forward by Ethon Mordden. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1976. Outlining the evolution of musical theatre from the 1800s through the early 1970s, this history text gives *Anything Goes* depth through context.

P.G. Wadehouse: An Illustrated Biography by Joseph Connolly. London: Orbis Publishing, 1979. Follow the life of original book collaborator, Wadehouse, through his

work on musicals to his highly successful series of novels.

150 Years of Popular Musical Theatre by Andrew Lamb. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. At just over 350 pages this work provides an in-depth look at the growth of musical theatre from European operettas to contemporary pieces such as *Rent*.

<http://www.coleporter.org> For biographical information as well as a history of Porter's works, visit this well-organized site.



These questions and activities are designed to help students anticipate the performance and then to build on their impressions and interpretations after attending the theatre. The activities and questions are divided into “**Before the Performance**” and “**After the Performance**” categories. While most of the exercises provide specific instructions, please feel free to adapt these activities to accommodate your own teaching strategies and curricular needs. To assist you in incorporating these materials into your existing curriculum, we have provided the numbers of some of the corresponding Missouri Knowledge Standards and Illinois Learning Standards.

COMMUNICATION ARTS

Before the Performance

1 The book—also called the libretto—is the least appreciated and yet most dramatically important element of a musical. It is the narrative structure that keeps the score from being nothing more than a medley of songs. More than one expert has observed that musicals with great scores and bad books tend to fail, while those with mediocre scores and solid books have a better chance of succeeding. After all, the first job of every play—musical or not—is to tell a good story.

A musical book must do the following:

- Keep the story line clear and easy to follow.
- Create characters that are easy to relate to.
- Create situations that call characters into song.
- Move in and out of songs as smoothly as possible.
- Hand over much (and sometimes all) of the plot and character development to the songs and choreography.
- Make the audience care at all times. (If the action gets dull, nothing guarantees an audience will stay to learn the ending!)

And all this must be done within a script that seems skeletal compared to a full length drama. At least fifty percent of a musical’s running time belongs to the songs and dances. Choose a musical on video available in your school library or the public library. Watch the video, paying particular attention to the function of the book. Rate each of the attributes below on a scale of 1–10, with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent.

(MO: CA1, CA2, CA4, CA5, FA1, FA2, FA3 IL: 1, 3, 4, 5, 25, 26)

2 Only a few successful musicals use completely original story lines. Most are adapted from novels (*Les Miserables*, *King & I*), plays (*Oklahoma!*, *Hello, Dolly*) or films (*A Little Night Music*, *Nine*, *The Producers*). Others are inspired by historical figures (*Rex*, *George M*) or events in the headlines (*Call Me Madam*, *Capeman*).

When selecting a story for adaptation, the creative team must first determine that music will add to the effectiveness of the story. Not all stories sing, and relentlessly tragic tales are better suited to grand opera. The main requirement is to have a situation that allows characters to experience a wide range of emotions. It is in the transitions from hope to joy to despair to (hopefully) final triumph that characters can find something about which to sing.

With a partner, try your hand at adapting an existing story for a musical book. For your first venture, start with something small, maybe a fairy tale or picture book. Remember to look for the criteria described above. Choose a dramatic moment in the story that you think could be made into a scene in the musical. Write the book for that scene. Then save your scene for later use.
(MO: CA1, CA4, CA5, FA1, FA2, FA3 IL: 1, 2, 3, 5, 25, 26)

1	CLARITY OF STORYLINE	10
	ACCESSIBILITY OF CHARACTERS	
	PLOT MOTIVATION FOR SONGS	
	TRANSITIONS IN AND OUT OF SONGS	
	SHARED CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT WITH SONGS AND DANCE	
	AUDIENCE INVESTMENT	

After the Performance

3 For many years, the books of most Broadway musicals were a series of scenes, jokes and sight gags designed to get from song to song. The main point of most shows was to showcase a score and/or a major star. So long as the script provided excuses for Al Jolson to sing a few hits or Marilyn Miller to do a dance routine, theatergoers were satisfied. By the 1940s, audiences were ready for something more, and shows like *Pal Joey*, *Lady in the Dark* and *Oklahoma!* made it imperative that the book and score interweave to tell a



cohesive story. After that point, when a performer stopped the show, it was because the action had built up to a key moment of song and/or dance. *Anything Goes* was written in 1934, prior to the major shift towards the traditional “book musical.” However, it underwent revisions in the late 1980s. Based on the performance that you saw at The Rep, do you believe that writing in this show is more star-centered or book-centered? Try to think of specific examples from the musical to support your argument as you discuss this question within a small group. (MO: CA1,

CA2, CA5, CA6, FA1, FA2 IL: 1, 2, 4, 5, 25, 26)

FINE ARTS

Before the Performance

1 Most show tunes have a verse and a chorus (or “refrain”). The verse sets up the premise of a song and can be of most any length, while the chorus states the main point of the lyric. For example, look at this excerpt from “Blow, Gabriel, Blow” in *Anything Goes*:

*Do you hear that playin’?
Yes, we hear that playin’!
Do you know who’s playin’?
No, who is that playin’?
Well, it’s Gabriel, Gabriel playin’!
Gabriel, Gabriel sayin’
“Will you be ready to go
When I blow my horn?”
Oh, blow, Gabriel, blow,
Go on and blow, Gabriel, blow!
I’ve been a sinner, I’ve been a scamp,
But now I’m willin’ to trim my lamp,
So blow, Gabriel, blow!
Oh, I was low, Gabriel, low,
Mighty low, Gabriel, low.
But now since I have seen the light,
I’m good by day and I’m good by night,
So blow, Gabriel, blow!*

The first 8 lines establish the reason for singing the song with a verse, and the following lines express the main idea of the song with the chorus. The choruses of American popular songs have traditionally been thirty-two bars long, divided into four sections of eight bars apiece—the AABA form. This format forces composers and lyricists to make their points efficiently acting more as a discipline than a limitation. A is the main melody,



repeated three times—in part, so that it can be easily remembered. B is the release or bridge, and should contrast as much as possible with A. Those show tunes that do not use AABA tend to use a variation of the form. A song may double the number of bars (four sections of sixteen apiece). Other numbers may intentionally use a variation, such as introducing a third melody line at the end (AABC)—but the AABA structure and proportions remain the norm.

Put today’s popular music to the test. Choose three current hits from the radio and analyze their song structure. Do they follow the ABBA form or a variation of it? Write or type the lyrics for one verse and the chorus of each song and label the ABBA (or other) patterns. Work with a partner if you prefer. (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA5 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 25, 26)

After the Performance

2 It is not enough for a show tune to be melodic and generally entertaining. That may have been true in the days of Ziegfeld revues and screwball musical comedies, when any song could be inserted into most any show regardless of its connection to the action, but the rules have changed. Now, a show tune must serve as a dramatic element in a play by helping to develop character and/or move the story forward. As much as everyone loves a showstopper, it has to work as a cohesive part of the storytelling process—otherwise the only thing it really stops is audience interest. The four types of songs commonly used in musicals:

- Ballads are usually love songs, but they can also philosophize about any strong emotion.

- Charm Songs let a character beguile an audience.
- Comedy Numbers, as the name suggests, aim for laughs.
- Musical Scenes seamlessly blend dialogue and song, usually with two or more characters.

Using the musical numbers listing on page 26 of your Mainstage program, classify each of the songs into the categories above. (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA2, CA4, CA5 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 25, 26)

3 Songs in a musical libretto must be strategically placed at emotional highpoints where dialogue is no longer enough. As a rule, the composer and lyricist work closely with the librettist (the script or “book” writer) to plan each number. Four song positions are of particular importance. “The Opening” sets the tone for the rest of the show. It is not unusual for this number to be written after the rest of a show is in place. The Main “I Want” Song comes early in the first act, with one or more of the main characters singing about the key motivating desire that will propel them (and, with luck, the audience) through the remainder of the show. In many cases, these songs literally include the words “I want,” “I wish” or “I’ve got to.” “The Eleven O’clock Number” takes place about midway through Act Two. It does not necessarily have to mark a climactic moment in the plot, but it must be strong enough to energize the audience for the final climactic scenes.

“The Finale” should carry an emotional wallop, leaving audiences with a powerful last impression. This is usually done by reprising (repeating all or part of a previous song) one of the

score’s strongest numbers. Identify the “Opening Number”, the main “I Want” song, “the Eleven O’clock Number,” and “The Finale” in *Anything Goes*. Discuss with your classmates how these songs provide support to the plot of the musical. (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA2, CA5, CA6 IL: 1, 2, 4, 5, 25, 26)

4 Rhyme is one of a lyricist’s most potent tools, giving a song much of its comic or dramatic impact. It is easy enough to find words that rhyme — the trick is in how a lyricist gets from one of these words to another. Fresh use of language and surprising word arrangements are the hallmarks of great songwriting, and these revolve around the careful placement of rhymes within a song. For example, placing rhymes at the ends of lines and within them (internal rhyme) can add comic impact. Creative rhyme can make a difference in any type of show tune, setting classics apart from pedestrian efforts. Porter’s ballad “I Get a Kick Out of You” has a famous five part rhyme (“fly-high-guy-sky-I”) that audiences have loved since Ethel Merman first sang it in 1934. Obvious, tired rhymes, clichéd phrases or forced non-rhymes are distractions that can ruin the effect of a show song. Using what you have learned from the previous Fine Arts exercises and your observations of Cole Porter’s work in *Anything Goes*, write a stanza of song lyrics for the scene that you wrote in Communication Arts exercise #2. Either compose your own melody to accompany your lyrics or get a musical friend to help you. (MO: FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA2, CA4, CA5 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 25, 26)

SOCIAL STUDIES

Before the Performance

1 *Anything Goes* was only weeks away from the beginning of rehearsal when the tragic ship wreck of the *U.S.S. Morro Castle* off the coast of New Jersey caused the producer to demand rewrites of the script. The original plot centered around the exploits of an ocean liner full of First class passengers who were stranded on an isolated island following an accident at sea. Producer Vinton Freedley concluded that audiences could not be expected to find a shipwreck comical so soon after a nautical disaster, and the script was overhauled. Hollywood and Broadway producers were faced with a similar (but much larger-scale) problem in the months following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. A number of film projects involving explosions or terrorism were either cancelled or delayed for release, and Broadway theatres opened light-hearted fare such as *Noises Off* and *Mamma Mia!* Many films and television programs were either re-shot or digitally edited to



remove the World Trade Towers from background footage. Examine how other generations have dealt with periods of crisis in our nation’s history. Choose a point of disaster in U.S. history, such as either of the World Wars, the Vietnam War or President Kennedy’s assassination and examine the response of the entertainment industry in the months immediately following the event. Keep in mind that depending on the time of your event, you may need to look at different forms of entertainment than you would today. For example, if you are researching the effects of World War I, you will probably need to focus primarily on music, various forms of theatre and printed materials. Based on your research, determine what you think the major entertainment trend was in response to your event. Present your analysis to your classmates, citing at least five specific examples to support your conclusion. (MO: SS2, SS6, SS7, CA1, CA3, CA4, CA5, CA6 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 18)

After the Performance

2 *Anything Goes* was written in 1934, in the midst of the Great Depression, but there is little evidence of this in the lives of the characters in the musical. After all, the *S. S. American* is a luxury liner voyaging to London. Escapism was a common trend in entertainment of this period, as Americans looked for brighter alternatives to their stressful lives. Use the outline below as a starting point to research the real events and culture of this era. Use your findings to write the script for a radio news program in 1934. You may choose a specific day for your focus, or imagine that you are providing a year-end overview. Be sure to include news from the following areas: national and international events, business, entertainment and sports. Present your script for your classmates. (MO: SS2, SS6, SS7, CA1, CA3, CA4, CA5, CA6 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 18)

3 In *Anything Goes*, Billy and Moonface are treated like royalty when the other passengers on the ship believe them to be dangerous criminals. What do you think this suggests about the society's sense of celebrity? What elevates a person to celebrity status? Are there any contemporary examples of this kind of situation, in which a person's questionable (or blatantly negative) behavior is actually rewarded through fame and notoriety? Choose one such case from recent history and research it in detail. Present the facts to your classmates and ask them to discuss what effect they think this case has had on current notions of celebrity. (MO: SS2, SS6, SS7, CA1, CA3, CA4, CA5, CA6 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 18)

THE YEAR 1934

International Events

"Most-favored nation" concept of tariffs introduced by Trade Agreements Act.

Nazis purge party with numerous murders (by some counts in the hundreds) of Nazi party members.

Hitler elected president after the death of von Hindenburg.



Austrian Nazis assassinate Chancellor Dollfuss.

Fascists gain power in Bulgaria.

General Lazaro Cardenas elected president of Mexico.

USSR joins League of Nations.

Domestic Events

Massive dust storms in the west caused by improper plowing in previous years sends "Okies" and "Arkies" to California.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established.

National Labor Board becomes National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Numerous strikes sweep the nation during the summer, including the first general strike.

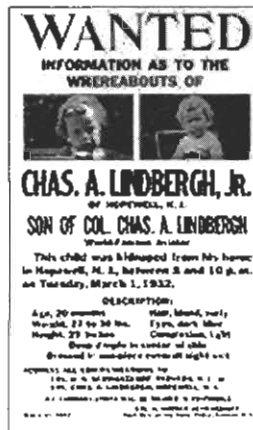
National Archives established.

Naval Parity Act expands naval forces with 100 warships.

Opposition to New Deal develops with groups such as Liberty League and Nat'l Union for Social Justice.

Florence E. Allen, Ohio Supreme Court Justice, becomes first female justice on US Circuit Court of Appeals.

Great Smokey Mountains Nat'l Park established (NC).



Railway Labor Act allows collective bargaining

The Morro Castle, a steamship, burns off coast of NJ, killing 134.

Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow shot and killed in Texas by law enforcement.

John Dillinger shot and killed in Chicago outside a theater.

Bruno Hauptmann arrested for kidnapping of Charles Lindbergh's child.

Alcatraz Island established as a prison.



The Dionne quintuplets born.

Art and Culture

Terry and the Pirates by Milton Caniff, *L'il Abner* by Al Capp, and *Flash Gordon*

by Alex Raymond debut.

School of American Ballet founded by George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein.

The Apollo Theater in NYC's Harlem opens.

Ella Fitzgerald joins Chick Webb band.

Decca Records founded.



The Bullfight by Pablo Picasso.

"Solitude" by Duke Ellington, "You Oughta Be in Pictures" by Dana Suesse, "On the Good Ship Lollipop" by Richard Whiting, Sidney Clare, "Winter Wonderland" by Felix Bernard, Dick Smith, "Anything Goes" and "I Get a Kick Out of You" by Cole Porter.