PANAMA HATTIE (Return visit)

London run: Adelphi, January 25th (100 performances)
Music & Lyrics: Cole Porter
Book: Herbert Fields & B.G. De Sylva
Revision: Graham John
Director: William Mollison
Choreographer: Wendy Toye
Musical Director: Harold Collins
Producer: Tom Arnold & Lee Ephraim

Cast: Bebe Daniels (Hattie Maloney), Leigh Stafford (Nick Bullett), Max Wall (Eddy Brown), Claude Hulbert (Vivian Budd), Fred Kitchen Jr (Loopy Smith), Frances Marsden (Florrie), Jack Stanford (Joe Briggs), Georgia MacKinnon (Leila Tree), Betty Blacker (Elizabeth Bullett), Dorothy Jacobs (Chiquita)

Notes: The original run at the Piccadilly Theatre came to an abrupt end because of the renewed bombing attacks in the autumn of 1944. Subsequently the show had been on a prolonged provincial tour and had now returned to the West End with most of the original cast. It ran until April 21st—by which time it had achieved a total of 408 performances in London and 600 overall.

Original London run: Piccadilly Theatre, November 1943

THREE WALTZES

London run: Prince’s Theatre, March 1st (187 performances)
Music: Johann Strauss I & II and Oscar Strauss
Lyrics: Robert MacDermot
Book: Diana Morgan
Director: Norman Marshall
Choreographer
Musical Director: Herbert Griffiths
Producer: Henry Sherek

Cast: Evelyn Laye (Katherine/Katie/Kay), Esmond Knight (Richard/Dickie/Dick), Charles Goldner (John Brunner), Bruce Winston (Stanislaus Vayda)

Story: The story is set in three different eras. Backstage at the Victorian Alhambra, rising star Katharine Sheridan sacrifices her love for the Hon Richard Wessex in order to advance her career. She accepts a new contract from impresario John Brunner and abandons a distraught Richard. A generation later, backstage at Daly’s Theatre, famous actress Kate Sheridan (daughter of Katharine from Act 1) is madly in love with the Hon. Dickie Wessex (whose father loved and lost Kate’s mother.) This time Kate does give up her career for love of Dickie, only to find country-life boring, and abandons him when the smell of the greasepaint proves too strong.

The third generation of Sheridans sees film-star Kay (daughter of Kate from Act 2) in Hollywood where, by amazing coincidence, up crops yet another Wessex, namely Dick, son of the previous Dickie. In spite of the urgings of Stanislaus Vayda, the colourful Hungarian film director, this time, Kate finally realises that Love is the most important thing— and she leaves show business to marry and live happily ever after as Mrs Wessex

Notes: “Drei Wälzer” was first produced in Zurich on October 5th 1935, but it was the Paris Exposition production in 1937 starring Yvonne Printemps and Pierre Fresnay that brought the work great fame. The libretto by Paul Knepler and Armin Robinson set the show in three separate eras, with the music for each of the three acts respectively by Johan Strauss I, Johann Strauss II and Oscar Strauss - all adapted by Oscar Strauss and with lyrics by Clare Kummer. The New York production opened on Christmas Day 1937 with Kitty Carlisle and Michael Bartlett, but managed just a four month run and 122 performances. The London production had been newly adapted with a new book and new lyrics. Most of the character names had been changed: romantic Viennese Guardsmen and noblemen had become minor English aristocracy, and the "Von Hohenbrunn" dynasty had become the descendants of “Lord Wessex”. Thanks to the drawing power of Evelyn Laye, it did manage a slightly longer run than Broadway. This work is generally regarded as the last worthwhile Viennese operetta to achieve worldwide production. The rest of Oscar Strauss’s output was mainly for the cinema, and it was said at the time of his death in 1951 “obituaries for Oscar Strauss are also obituaries for the Viennese operetta”.
GAY ROSALINDA

London run: Palace, March 8th (412 performances)

Music: Johann Strauss II
German libretto: Karl Haffner & Richard Genée
English lyrics: Sam Heppner
English Adaptation: Austin Melford & Rudolf Bernauer
Director: Leontine Sagan & Bernard Delfont
Choreographer: Wendy Toye
Musical Director: Richard Tauber
Producer: Tom Arnold & Bernard Delfont

Cast: Cyril Ritchard (Baron von Eisenstein),
Ruth Naylor (Rosalinda),
Peter Graves (Orlofsky),
Bernard Clifton (Dr Falke),
James Etherington (Alfred),
Jay Laurier (Frosch)

Story: Baron von Eisenstein, after committing a petty crime, is due to start his eight-day jail sentence. Even though he tells his wife, Rosalinda, he is going to jail he actually decides to delay jail one day in order to attend a fancy ball at Prince Orlofsky’s with his friend Dr. Falke. Meanwhile, Rosalinda takes advantage of the situation and invites over her lover, Alfred. Confusion ensues when the prison guard arrives and mistakes Alfred for the Baron and takes him to prison, under the control of Frosch, the jailer.

Notes: On April 5th 1874 Vienna’s Theater an der Wien saw the premiere of “Die Fledermaus” with music by Johann Strauss II. It was based on a French play by Meilhac & Halévy and set to a German libretto by Karl Haffner & Richard Genée. It was soon recognised as the greatest of all Viennese operettas to date and it remains the golden standard by which all other operettas are measured even today.

By the end of that same year it had been performed in New York, and it first appeared in London at the Alhambra on December 18th 1876 in a rather heavily adapted version. In the early years of the 20th Century it began to appear in the repertoire of the world’s great opera houses, and was first performed at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 1931.

In 1942 the famous German director, Max Reinhardt, staged a revival on Broadway under the title “Rosalinda”, and this was a triumph, running for 502 performances. This version, with musical arrangements by Erich Korngold was adapted for London by Austin Melford and Rudolf Bernauer – and was a great success, running for a year, closing on March 2nd 1946.
IRENE (1st Revival)
London run: His Majesty’s, March 21st (158 performances)
Music: Harry Tierney
Lyrics: Joseph McCarthy
Book: James Montgomery
Director: William Mollison
Choreographer:
Musical Director: Jack Hylton

Cast: Pat Taylor (Irene Dare), Frank Leighton (Donald Marshall), Arthur Riscoe (Mme Lucy), Mignon O’Doherty (Mrs O’Dare), Doreen Percheron (Helen)


Story: Poor Irene Dare from New York’s 9th Avenue works for an upholsterer and is sent to mend some cushions at the Long Island home of wealthy Donald Marshall. Donald is attracted to the talkative girl and gets her a job, along with two of her friends, to model the designs of a male fashion designer who trades under the name Mme. Lucy. Since the modelling involves passing herself as a member of society, Irene is wooed by social-climbing J.P. Bowden, but he drops her when her humble origins are revealed. Donald, however, loves her exactly the way she is.

Notes: The show premiered on Broadway on November 18th 1919 and ran for 670 performances. Edith Day travelled to London to star in the British premiere, which was staged at the Empire Theatre on April 7th 1920. It ran for 399 performances. A film version, starring Anna Neagle and Ray Milland, was made in 1940 directed by Herbert Wilcox. This first revival ran until August 4th

Original London run: Empire, April 1920

PERCHANCE TO DREAM
London run: Hippodrome, April 21st (1,022 performances)

The ghosts of Huntersmoon flit across the Great Hall in the last scene of “Perchance to Dream”
PERCHANCE TO DREAM

London run: Hippodrome, April 21st (1,022 performances)
Music, Lyrics & Book: Ivor Novello
Director: Jack Minster
Choreographer: Frank Staff & Keith Lester
Musical Director: Harry Acres
Producer: Tom Arnold

Cast: Ivor Novello (Sir Graham, Valentine Fayre, Bay Fayre),
Muriel Barron (Lydia Lyddington, Veronica Lyddington, Iris),
Roma Beaumont (Melinda Fayre, Melanie, Melody),
Olive Gilbert (Ernestive Flavelle, Mrs Bridport),
Margaret Rutherford (Lady Charlotte Fayre), Robert Andrews (William Fayre)

Songs: Love is My Reason, When I Curtsied to the King, Highwayman Love, A Woman’s Heart, The Glo-Glo, We’ll Gather Lilacs

Story: Set in Hunters Moon, a Georgian stately home where three generations of the same family have lived. In Regency days Sir Graham Rodney, a highwayman, falls in love with his cousin, Melinda Fayre, much to the chagrin of his mistress, Lydia Lyddington. At Melinda’s 21st birthday party Sir Graham staggers through the door – he’s been shot in a highway robbery which has gone wrong – and he dies in Melinda’s arms, professing his eternal love. In Act Two it’s 1843, and composer-choirmaster Valentine Fayre is married to Veronica, the daughter of Sir Graham and Lydia. However he gradually falls in love with his niece Melanie, but their plans to run away together are dashed when Veronica announces she is pregnant. In despair, Melanie commits suicide. In Act Three – the present day – Valentine’s grandson, Bay, finds happiness with his new bride, Melody – a re-incarnation of Melinda and Melanie.

Notes: This was Ivor Novello’s longest consecutive run, and it was the one show where he was responsible for the book, music and the lyrics. It ran until October 11th 1948, and during the run Muriel Barron was replaced with Sylvia Cecil and Hilary Allen; Margaret Rutherford was replaced by Zena Dare.
SWEET YESTERDAY

London run: Adelphi, June 21st (196 performances)
Music: Kenneth Leslie-Smith
Lyrics: Philip Leaver, James Dyrenforth & Max Kester
Book: Philip Leaver
Director: Jack Hulbert (Originally Esmée Church)
Choreographer: Frank Staff & Cleo Nordi
Musical Director: Herbert Lodge
Producer: Lee Ephraim

Cast: Reginald Tate (Sir John Manders), Anne Ziegler (Louise Varennes), Doris Hare (Madame Sans-Gene), Webster Booth (Captain Laboucheure), Mark Daly (Cabouchon)

Songs: Tomorrow, No Words, Love Needs a Waltz, Morning Glory

Story: Sir John Manders, an English government agent is on a secret mission in France disguised as a Dutch diamond merchant. Whilst at a party given by Madame Sans-Gene and her amusing friend, Cabouchon, Sir John is recognised by French woman, Louise Varennes, whom he had known in London when she was living there as a refugee during the Revolution. She does not give him away. However, her lover, Captain Edouard Laboucheere, slightly tipsy gives away information regarding a plan of Napoleon’s against England (thus proving the much-advertised wartime slogan “careless talk costs lives”) and he is arrested. Sir John, who also loves Louise, plans for her sake Edouard’s escape from prison. After a great deal of plotting, court intrigue and sword-play, he finally manages to get the young couple safely away from France, making Louise promise to deliver his message to the Prime Minister in London, revealing Napoleon’s plan, an act which will ultimately lead to Nelson’s victory at Trafalgar.

Notes: This began life as a 1941 radio play as a war propaganda exercise, and was expanded into a musical to showcase the enormously popular husband and wife singing team, Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth. It was an unhappy show from the start of its pre-London tour in Edinburgh. The experienced director Esmé Church was new to musicals, whilst the choreographer, Frank Staff was expert at ballet but not at dances for actor-singers. After a series of complaints from the stars, Jack Hulbert was brought in as replacement director, and Cleo Nordi was added to the choreography team. Then Hugh Morton, the original Sir John, was replaced with Reginald Tate, causing Ziegler and Booth to announce they were walking out in protest. However, the producer Lee Ephraim, told them this would be a breach of contract and he would be prepared to sue. In this really unhappy atmosphere the show opened in London to mixed notices. However, the star names meant the show was extremely successful at the box office and ran six months up to December, when the Adelphi was pre-booked for the pantomime season. Lee Ephraim wanted to arrange a transfer to another theatre, but this required the agreement of Anne Ziegler and Webster Booth. They did not agree, and took the opportunity to leave the show. Without its stars there was no realistic prospect of it continuing.

ME & MY GIRL (2nd Revival)

London run: Victoria Palace, August 6th (304 performances)
Music: Noel Gay
Book & Lyrics: L. Arthur Rose & Douglas Furber
Director: Lupino Lane
Choreographer: Fred Leslie & Tommy Godfrey
Musical Director: Marcel Gardner
Producer: Lupino Lane

Cast: Lupino Lane (Bill Snibson), Valerie Tandy (Sally Smith), George Graves (Sir John), Wallace Lupino (Parchester), Phyllis Stanley (Lady Jacqueline)

Notes: This second revival continued the success of this show, running until March 30th 1946. Original run Victoria Palace, December 1937; First revival: Coliseum, June 1941
MERRIE ENGLAND (3rd Revival)
London run: Prince’s Theatre, September 6th (365 performances)
Music: Edward German
Book & Lyrics: Basil Hood
Revised libretto: Edward Knoblock
director: William Mollison
Choreographer: Pauline Grant
Musical Director: Jan Hurst
Producer: Jack Waller

Cast: Linda Grey (Queen Elizabeth), Heddle Nash (Walter Raleigh),
Anna Jeans (Bessie), Dennis Noble (Earl of Essex), Morris Sweden
Charles Hawtrey (Walter Wilkins)

Notes: This revised version made considerable changes to the original
show, cutting several characters and interpolating two ballets and a
hornpipe. With the famous tenor Heddle Nashe and its fortuitous timing
at the end of six years of war, this was a rousing success, running till July
20th 1946 and notching up 365 performances. This version would be
revived by the National Light Opera Company for 15 performances at the
London Coliseum (Jan 23 – Feb 3, 1951) as part of the Festival of Britain
celebrations. Another version, revised by Dennis Arundell would be performed in repertoire by the Sadler’s Wells
Opera Company from August 10th 1960.

Original London run: Savoy, April 1902
First revival: Prince’s Theatre, September 1934; Second revival: Winter Garden, October 1944

BIG BOY
London run: Saville, September 12th
(174 performances)
Music: Carol Gibbons
Lyrics: Douglas Furber & Fred Emney
Book: Douglas Furber, Fred Emney & Max Kester
Director: Frank Adey
Choreographer: Freddie Carpenter
Musical Director: Harold Collins
Producer: Bernard Delfont

Cast: Fred Emney (Sir Freddie Bolsover),
Richard Hearne (Mr Pastry),
Margaret Halstan (Duchess of Lexe),
Carol Raye (Frankie Dean),
Ethel Edwards (Customer)

Songs: Cry for the Moon, Where do you go when
you Dream?

Story: There are four themes running through this
show: 1) Bolsover’s Department Store is about to go bankrupt due to the extravagance of its chief executive, Sir
Frederick Bolsover; 2) To raise money Sir Freddie and his friend Mr Pastry are producing a documentary film
about the history of the department store, showing how the Duchess of Lexe originally financed the store by selling
(or was it pawning?) her jewels – this film will turn the obscure shop girl Frankie Dean into a big star ;
3) Some
American gangsters are attempting to steal these jewels; and 4) Another attempt to save the store is made by
promoting their new invention – a potion guaranteed to grow hair on bald heads. These plot lines were excuses for
the Richard Hearne/Fred Emney and company routines – which included wearing medieval armour whilst under the
effect of the gangsters’ dope, a comedy routine with a ladder and rolls of fabric, and a ballet sequence trying to sell a
woman a hat.

Notes: This was back to the tried and true formula – even down to the plot about stolen jewels – and although it
pleased its regular audience, it only ran five months in London, and then returned to the touring circuit for several
months more.
**FOLLOW THE GIRLS**

London run: His Majesty’s, October 25th (572 performances)

Music: Phil Charig
Lyrics: Dan Shapiro & Milton Pascal
Book: Guy Bolton & Eddie Davis
Director: Walter Forde
Choreographer: Jack Billings & Wendy Toye
Musical Director: Freddie Bretherton
Producer: Jack Hylton

Cast: Arthur Askey (Goofy Gale), Evelyn Dall (Bubbles La Marr),
Jack Billings (Dinky Reilly), Vic Marlowe (Spud Doolittle), Hugh French (Bob Monroe),
Wendy Toye (Betty Deleaninnion), Charles Peters (Felix)

Songs: You’re Perf, I Wanna Get Married, Where You Are, You Don’t Dance, Thanks for a Lousy Evening, Brave Jack Tar, Twelve O Clock and All is Well, I’m Gonna Hang My Hat, Today Will be Yesterday Tomorrow.

Story: British sailor Goofy Gale has been posted on a special mission to Long Island USA where he has fallen in love with the burlesque strip-tease performer, Bubbles La Marr. He illegally changes into a sailor’s uniform in order to sneak his way into the Spotlight Canteen to meet his beloved. But Bubbles seems to change her mind and fancies another man, causing Goofy and his pals to dope the would-be bridegroom and clear the way to a happy ever after for Goofy and Bubbles. Before this is achieved, however, Goofy has been forced to disguise himself in the feminine uniform of a “Wave” (the American equivalent of a “Wren”), impersonate a ship’s steward, suffer from sea-sickness, and hide himself in a cannon that is about to be fired.

Notes: This show had been one of Broadway’s most popular attractions, opening on April 8th 1944 and running for 882 performances. Jackie Gleason played Goofy, and the show made a star out of Gertrude Niesen in the role of Bubbles. The plot was merely an excuse to string together a series of dance routines and comic specialities. In London there was great praise for Arthur Askey’s non-stop energetic clowning, for Evelyn Dall, and for a show-stopping dance speciality by Wendy Toye.

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**UNDER THE COUNTER**

London run: Phoenix, November 22nd (665 performances)
UNDER THE COUNTER

London run: Phoenix, November 22nd (665 performances)
Music: Manning Sherwin
Lyrics: Harold Purcell
Book: Arthur Macrae
Director: Jack Hulbert
Choreographer: Jack Hulbert & John Gregory
Musical Director: Robert Probst
Producer: Lee Ephraim, Tom Arnold & Emile Litlter

Cast: Cicely Courtneidge (Jo Fox), Cyril Raymond (Mike Kenderdine), Hartley Power (Sir Alec Dunn), Thorley Walters (Tim Garrett), John Gregory, Irene Handl, Audrey Godfrey

Songs: Everywhere, No-one’s Tried to Kiss Me, The Moment I Saw You, Let’s Get Back to Glamour, Ai-Yi-Yi...

Story: Jo Fox is an actress attempting to produce a show in the absence of her lover, Mike Kenderdine, who is abroad holding a civil appointment. Despite clothes rationing, Jo is adept at searching out black market goods (under the counter) for herself and for her show. Meantime she is using her charms on Sir Alec from the Ministry, hoping he can get Mike posted back to England. Her go-between is Sir Alec’s private secretary, Tim Garrett, who in his spare time is a song-writer. On Tim’s regular official visits he tries hard to get Jo to include his songs in her forthcoming show. Naturally the line-up of chorus girls from Jo’s rehearsals, Mike, Tim, Mike’s lady friend from Paris and Sir Alec himself all get mixed up in a series of comic mishaps and misunderstandings.

Notes: This was virtually a one-woman triumphant tour-de-force for Cicely Courtneidge, and was a great success, running nearly two years. In its second year an exhausted Cicely Courtneidge took a month off and was temporarily replaced by Florence Desmond. Following its London run, the show transferred to Broadway, opening on October 3rd 1947. It survived just 27 performances and came in for mostly damning reviews, though most critics agreed Cicely Courtneidge was a very funny performer. As far as the Americans were concerned, it was not really a musical: there were only five songs in the show and they were performed as part of the show Jo was rehearsing; and it was far too old-fashioned in style and too “British” in humour.
SONG OF NORWAY

London run: Palace, March 7th (526 performances)
Music & Lyrics: Edvard Grieg
(adapted by Robert Wright & George Forrest)
Book: Milton Lazarus
Director: Charles Hickman
Choreographer: Robert Helpmann & Pauline Grant
Musical Director: Gideon Fagan
Producer: Emile Littler

Cast: Janet Hamilton-Smith (Louisa Giovanni),
John Hargreaves (Edvard Grieg),
Arthur Servent (Rikard),
Halina Victoria (Nina Hagerup),
Bernard Ansell (Count Peppi Le Loup),
Olive Sturgess (Mrs Grieg),
Colin Cunningham (Grieg),
Jan Lawski (Freddy), Moira Fraser (Adelina),
John Pygram (Tito)

Songs: The Legend, Hill of Dreams, Freddy and his Fiddle, Now, Strange Music, Midsummer’s Eve, Three Loves

Story: Set in Troldhaugen in 1860, and then in Copenhagen and Rome, it is the story of composer Edvard Grieg and his poet friend Rikkard Nordraak who are determined to raise the artistic profile of music in Norway. However Grieg is suddenly enamoured of the flirtatious Italian prima-donna Louisa Giovanni who invites him to leave his homeland and his wife and to become her piano accompanist on her European tour. Whilst he is away he gets the news of Rikkard’s death, and returns home to find his friend’s last poem – “The Song of Norway” – which inspires the composer to write the A Minor Piano Concerto to honour his friend’s memory and to fulfil their original artistic dream.

Notes: This began life with the Los Angeles and San Francisco Civic Light Opera Company in July 1944, and was almost immediately taken up for a Broadway production, opening on August 21st 1944 and running for 860 performances. The London production featured members of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo performing a fantasy ballet, choreographed by Robert Helpmann. A Cinerama film, directed by Andrew Stone, was made in 1970 with Florence Henderson and Edward G. Robinson.

EVANGELINE

London run: Cambridge Theatre, March 14th (32 performances)
Music: George Posford & Harry Jacobson; Lyrics: Eric Maschwitz; Book: Romney Brent
Director: Val Guest & Frances Day
Choreographer: William Chappell & Therese Langfield
Musical Director: Philip Martell
Producer: George T. Smith

Cast: Frances Day (Evangeline), Jon Pertwee (Boris Stukin), Mary Rigby (Miss Pratt), Stanley Vilven (Constantine), Mavis Walker (Joyce), Guy Rolfe (André de Croissant)

Songs: The Legend of Letty, Please Let This Be Love, It’s Bad for Me, Evangeline Leaves Russia, Paris is Paris Again, Baby Goes to Broadway.

Story: The story was basically the same as “Nymph Errant”: Evangeline leaves finishing school and decides to have a fling before settling down to the traditional wedded bliss and happy home. Her travels and adventures take her to a Russian collective farm, The Temple of Jupiter in Greece, the nightclubs of Paris and the bright lights of Broadway.

Notes: This was a re-worked version of James Laver’s novel “Nymph Errant”, which had first appeared in the Cole Porter/Gertrude Lawrence musical version at the Adelphi with very limited success in 1933. This new version was once again written and directed by Romney Brent, but this time he used completely new music and lyrics. It was a complete flop, described as witless, tuneless, and raising the question “how so many clever people can fail in one show” (The Stage). It was booted on the opening night and closed in its third week of twice-nightly performances.
CAN-CAN
London run: Adelphi, May 8th (76 performances)
Music: Offenbach (arranged Bernard Grun)
Lyrics: Fred F. Tysh
Book: Max Catto
Director: William Mollison
Choreographer: Pauline Grant
Musical Director: Billy Ternant
Producer: Jack Hylton
Cast: Clifford Mollison (Paul Latour), Elizabeth French (Angela),
Charles Dorning (Count Simon), Leo Franklyn (Alphonse),
Noel Morris (Duc de Chambreau), Margaret Davison (Colette),
Doreen Duke (Lolita), William March (Alfred), John Marquand (Claude)

Story: The story tells of Paul Latour, a playwright, in love with his leading lady, Angela. During Paul’s absence abroad Angela has agreed to marry Count Simon. On his return, Paul poses as a Russian in order to win her back again. She sees through the disguise but finally all ends well. Other characters in the story include the comic Alphonse, the Duc de Chambreau, Colette and Lolita, and Alfred and Claude, two effeminate gendarmes.

Notes: Although the music by Offenbach and the ballet sequences featuring Pauline Grant were much praised, it was generally felt the book was lacking in wit and humour, the lyrics were undistinguished and the whole show pleasant and nothing more. This was the 100th production by director William Mollison, and featured his brother, Clifford, in a leading role. It had a short run of just over two months, finishing on July 8th.

BIG BEN
London run: Adelphi, July 17th (172 performances)
Music: Vivian Ellis
Book & Lyrics: A.P. Herbert
Director-Choreographer: Wendy Toye
Musical Director: Charles Prentice
Producer: C.B. Cochran
Cast: Carole Lynne (Grace Green), Trefor Jones (Henry Hope),
Eric Palmer (George Hume), David Davies (Benjamin Green),
Gabrielle Brune (Juniper Joy), Lizbeth Webb (Miss Sylvester)

Songs: Other Men, My Father was a Grocer, Come to Britain, London Town, I Want to See People Happy, Let Us Go Down to the River, In Parliament We Offer, London’s Alight Again, The Poodle and the Pug

Story: Grace Green, working in a shop and supported by her fellow worker Henry Hope, is elected to Parliament as a Socialist, although she is also the girl-friend of the very rich Conservative MP, The Hon George Hume, and the daughter of true-blue Benjamin Green. They all unite to fight the moral crusader Alderman Mrs Busy who is fighting to close down all the public houses in the UK – but in the course of their fight the lovers end up locked in the tower of Big Ben for contempt of Parliament. However, all eventually comes to a happy ending.

Notes: This was a very competent and well-written combination of political humour and a dose of patriotism for a Britain that had survived the war with its democracy and its spirit intact. However its “preachy” quality tended to overwhelm the comedy and fun. It managed a five month run. Shortly after opening Carole Lynne (Mrs Bernard Delfont) dropped out of the show due to pregnancy, and was replaced by Lizbeth Webb. Then Gabrielle Brune dropped out for the same reason, replaced by Noele Gordon.
SWEETHEART MINE
London run: Victoria Palace, August 1st (323 performances)
Music: Noel Gay
Lyrics: Frank Eyton
Book: Lauri Wylie & Lupino Lane
Director: Lupino Lane
Choreographer: Dorothy MacAusland
Musical Director: Marcel Gardner
Producer: Lupino Lane

Cast: Lupino Lane (Harry Hawkins), Barbara Shotter (Liza),
Noel Doyle (The Nipper), Gordon Craig (Herbert Hawkins),
Billy Russell (‘Erb ’Uggins), Lauri Lupino Lane (Bill Crow),
Wallace Lupino (Jock McStrapp), Phyllis Stanley (Benita Page)

Songs: Maybe, The More they See of Me, The Missus and the Moke and Me, It’s all a Bloomin’ Lot of La-Di-Dah, ‘Appy ‘Amstead

Story: This is the story of the forty years that Harry Hawkins and his Liza have been together, starting in 1898 when she was his Cockney “donah” and ending up in 1939 when she is Harry’s “old dutch”. Their happy married life, more ups than downs, includes their Nipper and Nellie their moke (donkey). Liza wins some money and spends it all for the education of their son, Herbert. But he turns against his parents and goes to live abroad. Other characters in their lives are Harry’s pals, ‘Erb ‘Uggins, Bill Crow and Mr Sam, not to mention the Scotsman, Jock McStrapp. Also in the story is Benita Page, the night-club secretary and strip-tease act. In the way of all good musical comedy, Herbert returns at the end, is reunited with his parents and all ends happily.

Notes: This was adapted from the play “My Old Dutch” by Albert Chevalier and Arthur Shirley, which had run for nearly 200 performances at the Lyceum in 1920, and which had been based on Albert Chevalier’s music-hall song of the same name.

GAY ROSALINDA (Return visit)
London run: Prince’s, August 8th (Limited six week season)
Music: Johan Strauss
Original Book & Lyrics: Meilhac & Halevy
English lyrics: Sam Heppner
English Adaptation: Austin Melford & Rudolf Bernauer
Director: Leontine Sagan & Bernard Delfont
Choreographer: Wendy Toye
Musical Director: Michael Collins
Producer: Bernard Delfont, Frith Shephard & Tom Arnold

Cast: Bernard Clifton (Baron von Eisenstein), Tara Barry (Rosalinda),
Peter Graves (Orlofsky), Sidney Burchall (Dr Falke),
Ivor Sheridan (Alfred), Fred Beck (Frosch)

Notes: This was the same production which had ended its year long run at the Palace just five months earlier and had been on a highly successful provincial tour ever since. It was back in London for a six week season before returning to its tour. There had been a number of cast changes since the original production, and the orchestra was now conducted by Michael Collins and not Richard Tauber.
GOODNIGHT VIENNA

London run: Wimbledon Theatre, November 11th
(One week touring visit)

Music: George Posford
Book & Lyrics: Eric Maschwitz
Additional lyrics: Harold Purcell
Director: Leslie Julian Jones & Sydney J. Pearse
Choreographer: Beatrice Appleyard
Musical Director: George Windeatt

Cast: James Etherington (Count Max Schmettoff),
Leo Sheffield (Prince Schmettoff), Sylvia Handel (Countess Helga),
Wendy Horner (Vicki), Teddie St Denis, Nichola March, David Reid,
Conway Dixon

Story: Set in 1914 Vienna, where Max is an Austrian army officer and the son of a highly placed general, Prince Schmettoff. His father wants him to marry Countess Helga von Eberhart but Max has fallen in love with Vicki. Attending a party given in his honour, they are informed that war has broken out. Max writes a note to Vicki and goes off to war. Unfortunately the note is lost. Some time after the war, and after the fall of the Habsburg Empire, Max is just a shoe shop assistant while Vicki is now a famous singer. They meet and at first she snubs him but then falls in love with him again.

Notes: This show began life as a radio operetta, written when Eric Maschwitz was employed in the Variety Department of the BBC. However, the musical was not broadcast until 1934 – two years after a successful film version was made, starring Anna Neagle, Jack Buchanan and Gina Malo and directed by Herbert Wilcox. In 1946 it was re-written for a stage production, and after an amateur company try-out, it began a tour in July. The tour ended at Wimbledon in November, and failed to get a West End engagement. It would tour again in 1947 and 1951, and still not attract a West End booking. It is subject to the showbiz story: when the producer asked the Box office how well the show was selling in Lewisham, and got the reply “About as well as ‘Goodnight Lewisham’ would sell in Vienna”.

PACIFIC 1860

London run: Drury Lane, December 19th (129 performances)
**PACIFIC 1860**

London run: Drury Lane, December 19th (129 performances)

Music & Lyrics: Noel Coward

Book: Noel Coward

Director: Noel Coward

Musical Director: Mantovani

Cast: Tudor Evans (Mr Stirling), Maidie Andrews (Mrs Stirling),
Graham Payn (Kerry), Pat McGrath (Rollo), Mary Martin (Elena Salvador),
Daphne Anderson (Penelope), Sylvia Cecil (Rosa)

Songs: His Excellency Regrets, If I Were A Man, Poor Uncle Harry, Dear Madam
Salvador, My Horse Has Cast a Shoe, Bright Was the Day, I Never Knew, I Saw No
Shadow, Invitation to the Waltz, I Wish I Wasn't Such a Big Girl, Pretty Little Bridesmaids, This Is a Changing
World, This Is a Night For Lovers

**Story:** Mr and Mrs Stirling - British plantation owners on the island of Samola – are parents to two sons, the romantic Kerry and the practical Rollo, and to six daughters. Mr Stirling is holding a party for visitors to the island, but refuses to invite Elena Salvador, a visiting opera singer, on the grounds that theatre people are not quite respectable. Left alone in the house – his sisters have gone for a picnic with their plump friend Penelope – Kerry is visited by a young woman, passing the house but now in need of assistance following a minor carriage accident. She is, of course, Elena, and they, of course, are immediately attracted to each other. Kerry invites her to the party. When Elena arrives at the party Mr Stirling is put out until he discovers she is a friend of the Governor’s wife. He is then happy to allow her to stay and agrees that she and Kerry may entertain the guests a song and dance. At the end of the dance Elena kisses Kerry full on the mouth, in front of the scandalised guests, and sweeps out. Straightway Elena and Rosa, her duenna, have to leave Samolo to fulfil singing engagements, and she departs leaving a broken-hearted Kerry on the quayside. She returns a year later and is told it is the wedding day of young Mr Stirling. Sadly she watches from the shadows as the daughters prepare for the wedding and protest they're always the bridesmaids, never the brides! When the bridal couple appear, the groom is not Kerry, but Rollo. Kerry gives the best man's toast and watches the happy pair depart. Left alone, he hears a voice ... Elena is there, they are in each other's arms, and the curtain falls on a happy ending.

**Notes:** Despite its lavish production, several musical highlights and much wit, the basic story was not very dramatic and the two leading characters were not especially interesting. This gave the whole show a tepid and somewhat faded feel. During its run a few alterations were introduced – some numbers cut and others added – but it was withdrawn after four months and 129 performances

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**THE WIZARD OF OZ  (Revival)**

London run: Winter Garden, December 26th

Transfer: Saville Theatre, January 30th 1947

(Limited 3 month season)

Music & Lyrics: Harold Arlen & E.Y. Harburg

Adaptation: Paul Tietjens & Janet Green

Director: Basil Dean

Cast: Diana Yardley (Dorothy), Claude Hulbert (Leo the Lion),
Ruth Naylor (Aunt Em/Glinda), Ellen Pollock (Wicked Witch),
Walter Crisham (Billy the Scarecrow),
Fred Kitchen Jnr (Nick the Tinman), Prudence Hyman (Cynthia),
Raymond Lovell (Showman), Harold Tarran (Toto)

Notes: Ellen Pollock left on February 20th to fulfil another engagement, and the show itself closed on March 22nd - after a three month run. It was announced that due to its great success, it would return at Christmas for another season. Janet Green also took out a series of advertisements declaring this version was her copyright, and action would be taken against any infringement of her rights.

Fred Kitchen, Diana Yardley & Walter Crisham
ROMANY LOVE
London run: His Majesty’s Theatre, March 7th (Nine weeks)
Music: Victor Herbert (adapted by Arthur Kay)
Lyrics: Wright & George Forest
Book: Henry Myers
Director: William Mollison
Choreographer: John Regan & Ray Drakeley
Musical Director: Freddie Bretherton
Producer: Jack Hylton

Cast: John Tyers (Alvarado), Jane Farrer (Valerie), Helena Bliss (Musetta), Eric Starling (André), George Britton (Sandor), Henry Hewitt (Baron Pettibois), Kaye Connor (Yvonne), Eddie Kelland Espinosa (Fresco)


Story: The actor Alvarado is refused marriage by Valerie, Marquise de Roncevalle, because her family is too proud to allow an actor into their ranks. In revenge he persuades the gipsy girl Musetta to masquerade as a real princess and win the love of André, the Marquise’s brother. This she achieves, but meantime Alvarado has fallen in love with her. Now, pursued by an actor and an aristocrat, she decides the true love of her life is Sandor, the gipsy sweetheart from her childhood. Characters in Baron Pettibois’ acting school include Yvonne, a drama student, and Fresco, the dancing master.

Notes: This was an amalgamation of two Victor Herbert shows – “The Fortune Teller” and “Serenade”, and had been staged on Broadway under the title “Gypsy Lady”. The scenery and costumes had been imported from New York along with most of the principal performers from the American cast (John Tyers, Helena Bliss, Kaye Connor, Jane Farrer and others). The British tour opened in Manchester for Christmas 1946 and was a great success, with its run extended. Three weeks into the London run Helena Bliss was taken ill and returned to America. Kaye Connor moved up to fill the leading role.

THE DANCING YEARS (2nd Revival)
London run: Casino, March 8th (96 performances)
Book & Music: Ivor Novello
Lyrics: Christopher Hassall
Director-Choreographer: Freddie Carpenter
Musical Director: Tom Lewis
Producer: Tom Arnold

Cast: Barry Sinclair (Rudi Kleber), Jessica James (Maria Zeigler), Nicolette Roeg (Grete Schöne), ara Romano (Cäcile Kurt), Peter Tuddenham (Franzl), Peter Madren (Prince Charles Metternich)

Notes: Following a three month run, the show moved onto a long provincial tour and the Casino became a variety theatre under the management of Bernard Delfont.

Original London run: Drury Lane, March 1939
First revival: Adelphi, March 1942
BLESS THE BRIDE

London run: Adelphi, April 26th
(886 performances)

Music: Vivian Ellis
Book & Lyrics: A.P. Herbert
Director-Choreographer: Wendy Toye
Musical Director: Michael Collins
Producer: Charles B. Cochran

Cast: Lizbeth Welch (Lucy Veracity Willow),
Georges Guetary (Pierre Fontaine),
Brian Reece (Thomas Trout),
Betty Paul (Suzanne Valois)

Songs: Ma Belle Marguerite, This is My Lovely Day, I Was Never Kissed Before, Table for Two, Come Dance My Dear, The Silent Heart, My Big Moment, What Will Mother Say?, God Bless the Family

Story: Taking place in 1870, this is a romance of the Franco-Prussian War, involving an English girl, Lucy, who elopes to France with dashing actor, Pierre Fontaine, having left the dependable but rather dull Thomas Trout at the altar. She is closely followed by her entire family in search of her. Though Lucy and Pierre are separated when war breaks out, the two are eventually reunited in England.

Notes: This was Lizbeth Welch’s first leading role, and the show itself the very best of the series of collaborations between Vivian Ellis, A.P. Herbert and the producer C.B. Cochran. In spite of the huge success of the “new” American shows like “Oklahoma” and “Annie Get Your Gun”, “Bless the Bride” became a great favourite, running for two years.
OKLAHOMA!

London run: Drury Lane, April 29th (1,548 performances)
Transfer: Stoll Theatre May 29th 1950

Music: Richard Rodgers
Book & Lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein II
Director: Rouben Mamoulian (re-staged by Jerome Whyte)
Choreographer: Agnes de Mille
(Musical Director: Salvatore Dell’Isola
Producer: H.M. Tennent Ltd

Cast: Mary Marlo (Aunt Eller), Harold Keel (Curly),
Betty Jane Watson (Laurey), Walter Donahue (Will Parker),
Dorothea MacFarland (Ado Annie), Henry Clarke (Jud Fry),
Marek Windheim (Ali Hakim)

Songs: Oh What a Beautiful Mornin’, The Surrey With the Fringe on Top, People Will Say We’re in Love, Kansas City, I Cain’t Say No, Many a New Day, All Er Nuthin’, Out of My Dreams, The Farmer and the Cowman

Story: Watched over by no-nonsense Aunt Eller, the upstanding young farmer Curly McLain eventually wins the hand of Laurey Williams in spite of menacing opposition from the disreputable farmhand Jud Fry. On Curly and Laurey’s wedding day, Jud, enraged with jealousy, has a fight with Curly and is accidentally killed with his own knife. Curly is tried for murder but is quickly acquitted, just in time to celebrate the admittance of Oklahoma as a fully-credited State. Meantime Laurey’s flighty friend, Ado Annie is torn between her love for Will Parker and a travelling tinker, Ali Hakim.

Notes: Based on the play “Green Grow the Lilacs” by Lynn Riggs, the show opened on Broadway on March 31st, 1943. It ran for 2,212 performances, and until 1961 held the record for the longest running Broadway show. Because of its close interweaving of story, song and dance it has always been acclaimed as one of the most important and influential musicals in the history of the art-form. With its cornfields and cattle ranches, farmers and cowboys, it was a glorified and vivid depiction of rural America, borrowing from country music, vaudeville and the language of the frontier. It was a folk-musical, and revolutionary in many respects. Along with “Showboat” in 1927, “Oklahoma” is regarded as a turning point in the history of musical theatre. The London production was an exact re-creation of the Broadway show and Curley was played by Harold Keel, who had taken over the role during its Broadway run. (Harold Keel would later be better known as Howard Keel). The film version was made in 1955 with Gordon MacRae, Shirley Jones and Rod Steiger, directed by Fred Zinneman.

Photo by Angus McBean
Harold Keel & Betty Jane Watson
1947

Photo by Angus McBean
Oklahoma!
THE RED MILL (1st Revival)

London run: Palace, May 1st (20 performances)
Music: Victor Herbert
Book & Lyrics: Henry Blossom
Revised version: Harold Purcell
Director: Charles Hickman
Choreographer: Phyllis Blakston
Musical Director: Philip Martell
Producer: Emile Littler

Cast: Jimmy Jewel (Kid Conner), Ben Warris (Con Kidder), Joanne Cameron (Fleurette), Billy Danvers (Burgomaster), Daphne Peretz (Gretchen), Jack Meyer (Governor of Zeeland), Doreen Duke (Tina), Madame La Fleur (Maudie Edwards), Eric Palmer (Harry Grey)

Songs: By the Side of the Mill, Loved But me, Mignonette, You Can Never Tell About a Woman, The Isle of our Dreams, Go While the Going is Good, Every Day is Ladies’ Day With Me, The Streets of New York, The Wedding Song

Story: Two penniless American comedians, Con and Kid, on tour in Europe, are stuck in an inn in Holland, and yearning to get back home to New York. The inn is used by artists and their models, one of whom, Flora, declares how much she loves and wants to marry her artist lover. Con and Kid try to sneak out of the inn without paying their bill, but they are discovered and sent to jail. The Innkeeper takes pity on them, however, and arranges for them to work at the inn to pay off their debt. The Burgomaster's daughter, Gretchen, loves Captain Harry Grey but her father wants her to marry the Governor of Zeeland. Con and Kid agree to help Gretchen and the Captain elope, but the Burgomaster discovers the plot and locks Gretchen in the windmill. Con and Kid, helped by Gretchen’s friend Tina, manage to rescue her, and then, disguised as Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, offer to help the Burgomaster find his missing daughter. They manage to sort things out happily, helped no end by the fact that it turns out the Captain is heir to a large fortune. Finally Con and Kid return home to New York.

Notes: “The Red Mill” premiered on Broadway on September 24th 1906 and ran for 274 performances. Its first London production was not until December 26th 1919 at the Empire, starring the famous music-hall comedian Little Tich as Kid Conner. However, it failed in London, running just 64 performances. It was revived in New York on October 16th 1945, and successfully ran for 531 performances and this encouraged Emile Littler to have another go in the UK. A provincial tour opened in Coventry in November 1946 and during its five months on the road the show underwent some re-writing as various character names were changed or written out. The tour itself attracted good notices and excellent business— enough to justify a West End revival – but sadly once it came into town, even with established comics like Jewel and Warris and Maudie Edwards, the show failed to catch on, and closed after just two weeks and three days.

Original London run: Empire, December 1919
**THE BIRD SELLER (1st Revival)**

**London run:** Palace, May 29th

**Music:** Karl Zeller

**Lyrics:** Harry S. Pepper

**Book:** Austin Melford & Rudolf Bernauer

**Director:** Dennis Arundell

**Choreographer:** Pauline Grant

**Musical Director:** Richard Tauber

**Producer:** Bernard Delfont by arrangement with Tom Arnold & Emile Littler

**Cast:** James Etherington (Adam), Irene Ambrus (Christel), Douglas Byng (Baron Weps), Roy Royston (Count Stanislaus), Moya Nugent (Countess Adelaide), Adele Dixon (Empress Elizabeth), Barry Mackay (Emperor Franz-Joseph)


**Story:** In a village near Vienna, Adam, a Tyrolean bird-seller, loves Christel, the village post-mistress, but to get married, he will need a proper job and the perfect job - Keeper of the Imperial Menagerie - is available. Meantime Count Stanislaus, hopelessly in debt, is urged by his uncle, Baron Weps, to seek the hand of Countess Adelaide, lady in waiting to the Empress Elizabeth. Stanislaus plans another way of raising money – he will impersonate the Emperor and collect monies due and also, perhaps enjoy some dalliances with the village maidens. The Empress, Adelaide and other court ladies arrive, disguised as village maidens and eager to catch their various menfolk frolicking. It seems to be working well: Adam starts flirting with “Marie” (who is really the Empress) and Christel turns up to ask the “Emperor” (who is really Stanislaus) if he will consider offering the Menagerie job to Adam. He invites her into the summer house to discuss the matter. But the real Emperor Franz-Joseph turns up and believes he has discovered his wife flirting with the bird-seller, just as the real Empress believes her husband is flirting in the summer-house with the post-mistress. After much misunderstanding, all is eventually solved: Emperor and Empress are reunited, Stanislaus gets his Adelaide, and Adam gets both his girl and the job.

**Notes:** The original operetta “Der Vogelhändler” was staged at Vienna’s Theater an der Wien on January 10th 1891, and in Berlin and New York the same year. Its first London performance was at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane on June 17th 1895. Although it remained extremely popular and much revived in Continental Europe, it failed to make much impact in Britain or America. This was its first revival and had undergone considerable revision, with the action moved from Germany to Vienna, and character names changed to include Franz Joseph and Elizabeth of Austria. It was conducted by Richard Tauber, who had just returned from America in April 1947 in time to rehearse this production. The show had a short run at the Palace.

The original London performance was at Theatre Royal Drury Lane on June 17th 1895

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**ANNIE GET YOUR GUN**

**London run:** Coliseum, June 7th (1,304 performances)

_Dolores Gray & Bill Johnson_
ANNIE GET YOUR GUN
London run: Coliseum, June 7th (1,304 performances)
Music & Lyrics: Irving Berlin
Book: Herbert & Dorothy Fields
Director: Joshua Logan (re-staged by Helen Tamiris & Charles Hickman)
Choreographer: Helen Tamiris
Musical Director: Lew Stone
Producer: Prince Littler

Cast: Dolores Gray (Annie Oakley), Bill Johnson (Frank Butler),
Ellis Irving (Buffalo Bill), John Garside (Chief Sitting Bull),
Hal Bryan (Charlie Davenport), Barbara Babington (Dolly Tate),
Irving Davies (Tommy Keeler), Wendy Toye (Winnie Tate),
Edmund Dalby, Paddy Stone

Songs: Doin’ What Comes Natur’lly, The Girl That I Marry, You Can’t Get a
Man with a Gun, They Say It’s Wonderful, I’m an Indian Too, I Got Lost in
His Arms, I Got the Sun in the Morning, Anything You Can Do, There’s No
Business Like Show Business.

Story: The story tells the rise of hillbilly Annie Oakley to become the star attraction of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West
Show, even eclipsing the fame of marksman, Frank Butler. Although Annie loves Frank, their rivalry keeps them
apart until Annie realises the only way to get her man is to let him win over her in a shooting contest.

Notes: Planned as a vehicle for Ethel Merman, the show was originally to have been written by Dorothy Fields and
Jerome Kern, but the composer died before starting work on the project. Irving Berlin took over the composing and
the result was the most successful show of his – and Ethel Merman’s – career. It opened on May 16th 1946 in New
York and ran for 1,147 performances. The London production ran even longer than on Broadway, and made a star
of Dolores Gray – who was offered the part only after June Havoc had turned it down. (The film version with Betty
Hutton and Howard Keel was made by MGM in 1950)

THE NIGHTINGALE
London run: Prince’s, July 15th (55 performances)
Music: Kennedy Russell
Book & Lyrics: Michael Martin-Harvey & Saz Rohmer
Director: Jack Hulbert
Choreographer: Anthony Burke
Musical Director: Kennedy Russell
Producer: Lee Ephraim

Cast: John Westbrook (Emperor),
Fabia Drake (Dowager Empress),
Julia Breton (Princess Hana Koe),
Mimi Benzell (Pearl o’ the Moon – The Nightingale),
Rosaline Haddon, Richard Walter, Gavin Gordon, Eve Lister,

Notes: The story of an Emperor of China who, betrothed to a Japanese
Princess, heard the nightingale calling in the woods. The nightingale was
a little Chinese girl who had loved him from the moment she set eyes on
his handsome figure and whose destiny was to turn his genius to the
salvation of his people. The only comic relief in this whimsical romantic
tale came in the form of the Emperor’s mother. Despite its lavish
production values, excellent cast and a much praised score, it closed after
six and a half weeks.
**THE DUBARRY (1st Revival)**

*London run:* Prince’s, October 8th (Five weeks)

*Music:* Carl Millocker

*Original Book & Lyrics:* Paul Knepler & J. Williminski

*English adaptation:* Rowland Leigh & Desmond Carter

*Director:* Hugh Miller

*Choreographer:* Beatrice Appleyard

*Musical Director:* 

*Producer:* 

*Cast:* Irene Manning (Jeanne), Kathleen Williams (Mme. Labille), John Hendrik (René Lavallery), Barry Mackay (Comte Dubarry), Netta Westcott (Maréchale de Luxembourg), Frank Leighton (Louis XV)

*Notes:* The American singing film-star Irene Manning headed this cast in a lavish production which failed to catch on with neither critics nor audience. Although everyone agreed she sang well, she failed to capture the inherent “naughtiness” of the role.

Original London run: His Majesty’s, April 1932

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**FINIAN’S RAINBOW**

*London run:* Palace, October 21st (55 performances)

*Music:* Burton Lane

*Lyrics:* E.Y. Harburg

*Book:* E.Y. Harburg & Fred Saidy

*Director:* James Gelb

*Choreographer:* Michael Kidd

*Musical Director:* Phil Green

*Producer:* Emile Littler

*Cast:* Beryl Seton (Sharon McLonergan), Patrick J. Kelly (Finian McLonergan), Alan Gilbert (Woody Mahoney), Alfie Bass (Og), Beryl Kaye (Susan), Frank Royde (Senator Billboard Rawkins)

*Songs:* How are Things in Glocca Morra?, If This Isn’t Love, Look to the Rainbow, Old Devil Moon, Something Sort of Grandish, When the Idle Poor Become the Idle Rich, When I’m Not Near the Girl I Love, That Great Come-and-Get-It Day.

*Story:* Simple-minded Finian, together with his daughter Sharon, has emigrated from Ireland to the town of Rainbow Valley in the American state of “Missitucky”. He has been told how America had become rich by burying its gold reserves at Fort Knox, so he believes he too can become rich by burying a crock of gold he has stolen from the leprechaun, Og. Og has followed him from Ireland intent on recovering his treasure, before the loss of it turns him permanently human. There is also the problem of a corrupt Senator Billboard Rawkind, who makes no effort to conceal his racial bigotry. It transpires that the buried gold has a special magic power - any wishes spoken unknowingly near the hidden treasure will come true – and as a result Sharon gives the senator a taste of his own hateful medicine by accidentally turning him black (temporarily). There is a happy ending, of course, when Sharon marries the handsome, cocky young Woody Mahoney; and Woody's mute sister, “Susan the Silent”, acquires the power of speech and falls in love with Og, who decides that being human is not so bad after all.

*Notes:* This was a whimsical political satire with an Irish-tinged score including gospel and R&B influences. It opened in New York on January 10th 1947 and settled down for a 725 performance run. The London production proved to be far too whimsical for a British audience, and the show was a flop, closing after just 55 performances. (The film version with Fred Astaire, Petula Clark and Tommy Steele was released in 1968, directed by Francis Ford Coppola),
THE WIZARD OF OZ (Revival)
London run: Strand, December 24th (Limited run to February 8th)
Music & Lyrics: Harold Arlen & E.Y. Harburg
Original Book: L. Frank Baum
Adaptation: Uncredited “new”
Director: Edward Beaumont
Choreographer: Donald Jourmeaux
Musical Director: Charles Prentice
Producer: Gordon Stewart

Cast: Diana Yardley (Dorothy), Richard Dolman (Scarecrow), Wilfred Johns (Tinman), Jackie Hunter (Lion), Peggy Anne Tyler (Aunt Em), Natalie Lynn (Wicked Witch), Sebastian Cabot (Wizard), Robert Harbin (Merlin)

Notes: Despite the public announcement that Janet Green’s version of “The Wizard of Oz” would be returning to London for Christmas 1947, this was a completely new version although the cast did include some of the performers from the previous production. The writers of this new version were not credited. The magician Robert Harbin was credited with the magical effects
BURLESQUE

London run: Prince’s February 25th - April 3rd
(46 performances)
Transfer: Garrick, April 8th- May 1st
twice nightly (41 performances)

Music & Lyrics: Creamer & Layton,
Clifford Whiting & others
Book: George Manker Watters & Arthur Hopkins
Director: Richard Bird
Choreographer: Jackie Billings
Musical Director: Freddie Bretherton
Producer: Jack Hylton

Cast: Bonar Colleano (Skid), Zoe Gail (Mazie),
Marjorie Reynolds (Bonny), Aletha Orr (Gussie),
William Kemp (Harvey Howell), Sydney James (Lefty),
Thomas Godfrey (Bozo), Jack Billings, Kim Kendall

Story: The story of Skid, an American music-hall comedian, whose domestic affairs and professional career are nearly ruined by his drinking habits. Skid’s talents take him to Broadway, but his thirst soon sends him back on the road where his much-suffering wife, Bonny, after a period of dalliance with Harvey Howell, a likeable hick from the Middle-West, saves her husband’s reputation when it seems finally cast away. Other characters include Maizie, the soubrette role; Bozo, a second comedian, with Gussie his shrewish wife; and Lefty, the warm-hearted company manager, rough and ready back stage characters

Notes: This began life as a straight play, originally staged in London at the Queen’s in 1928 with Nelson Keys and Claire Luce. Because of its back-stage settings it seemed an ideal subject for a musical. After five weeks at the Prince’s it transferred to the Garrick – now playing twice-nightly – and with Annabella Ross replacing Zoe Gail as Maizie. It ran another three and a half weeks and then went on tour.

CARISSIMA

London run: Palace, March 10th
(466 performances)

Music: Hans May
Book & Lyrics: Eric Maschwitz
Director: Reginald Tale
Choreographer: Alan Carter & Joan Davis
Musical Director: Walter Stiasny
Producer: Tom Arnold & Emile Littler

Cast: Lester Ferguson (Paolo Marinelli),
Shirl Conway (Lisa), Maxine Audley (Edith),
Hannah Watt (Contessa Spoldini),
Elizabeth Theilmann (Giulietta Binci),
Hugh Dempster (Lord Poleigh)


Story: In Venice Paolo Marinelli, a shy Italian tenor, is being pursued by Lisa, an American advertising executive, who wants him to sing the virtues of her new perfume on radio commercials. In order to escape from her, helped and sometimes hindered by his friend the Contessa Spoldini and the silly-ass English Milord Poleigh, he disguises himself as a gondolier. Lisa finds herself falling in love with the gondolier, and, the attraction is mutual. But when Giulietta Binci, a jealous rival, reveals the deception, the romance is over. By chance both Marinelli and Lisa end up in New York, where she sells her business and he becomes a great Broadway star, and then, as you expect in musical comedy, they both meet again, reconcile, and end up flying back to Venice and to a happy ending.

Notes: Hans May had fled his native Vienna and moved to Britain by 1935 when his “Dancing City” had a very short run at the Coliseum. He was much more successful this time, earning a run of more than one year and 466 performances.
**BOB’S YOUR UNCLE**

**London run**: Saville, May 5th (363 performances)

**Music**: Noel Gay

**Lyrics**: Frank Eyton

**Book**: Austin melford

**Director**: Leslie Henson & Austin Melford

**Choreographer**: Beatrice Appleyard

**Musical Director**: Mantovani

**Producer**: Leslie Henson


**Songs**: He Loves Me, Like Me a Little Bit More, We’ll Start as We Mean to Go On, Walking Out with a Girl Like You, Call it Love.

**Story**: June has just got married to rich Hector, on the rebound from her first love, Dick Allan, because he suddenly stopped sending his love letters. She didn’t know that her ambitious mother, Mrs Edgoose, had intercepted the letters – since Hector is a much better (and richer) match. Dick, together with his Uncle Bob and young cousin Sheila, arrives at the newly-weds’ hotel, with Dick intent on making a last-ditch stand to recapture June. Uncle Bob valiantly attempts to help Dick, but also has to fight off the amorous advances of Mrs Edgoose, who spots him as a good match for herself. Mandeville, the hotel night porter, contributes more hilarity to this door-slamming, fast-moving whirl of farcical complications and misunderstandings. In the end, Dick realises that June isn’t worth the effort, and his real love is none other than pretty cousin Sheila.

**Notes**: This was well and truly in the well-established style of Leslie Henson, who was still throwing himself around the stage with incredible energy even though he was approaching sixty years of age. The show ran nearly a year. It also featured a very young Lionel Blair in one of his earliest roles – as a waiter.

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**CALYPSO**

**London run**: Playhouse, May 24th (32 performances)
CALYPSO
London run: Playhouse, May 24\textsuperscript{th} (32 performances)
Music & Lyrics: Ronnie Hill
Book: Hedley Briggs
Director: Hedley Briggs
Choreographer: John Cranko
Musical Director: Jack Hylton & Claude Soman
Cast: Evelyn Dove (Marie), Mabel Lee (Amanda), Edric Connor (Napoleon), James Browne (Pincher), Bill Dayne (Lofty), Barry Gosney (Dusty), John Shackell (Nobby), Norma Amsden (Sally), Gretta Grayson (Lois), Gwenda Grayson (Jean), Joan Mullen (Anne), Edward Baxter (L/Sergeant Brandon), Moya Nugent (Miss Dennington)
Songs: The Day to Ourselves, Nobody’s Business, Democracy
Story: An odd mixture of comedy, revue, ballet, negro spirituals and West Indian music with very little dialogue and a lot of song and dance, this was performed by a cast that was half West Indian and half British. The story involves a Harlem cabaret singer, Amanda, who has returned to her native village and to Napoleon, her boyfriend, only to become extremely jealous when she finds he has received a letter from another girl called Julia. (By the end, it turns out that Julia is his sister!) Meantime four sailors have docked in the port – Pincher, Lofty, Dusty and Nobby – and very soon they are joined by their girl-friends - Sally, Lois, Jean and Anne - and they provide the “English” songs in the show. The romantic misunderstandings between all these couples, and between Lieutenant Sergeant Brandon and a Miss Edington form the very thin basis of the plot.
Notes: According to The Stage: “It cannot be denied the long succession of little musical numbers tends towards monotony, and that the vigour of the artists is by no means always matched by their technical ability”. The music was supplied by two pianos and an onstage steel band. Its tour had brought it to Wimbledon and then into the Playhouse Theatre, where it ran just under a month.

LES CLOCHE DE CORNEVILLE (3\textsuperscript{rd} Revival)
London run: The Boltons, June 10\textsuperscript{th}
Music: Robert Planquette
Book & Lyrics: H.B. Farnie & R.Reece
Director: John Wyse
Cast: Wilfred Fletcher (Gaspard), Louise Traill (Germaine), Terry Trent (Jean Grenicheux), Daphne Anderson (Serpolette), Dennis Wood (Henri, Marquis de Corneville)
Notes: The Boltons was a small theatre of the kind that would later be called a “fringe” venue. This was its second year in existence, and “Les Cloches de Corneville” was its first production of a “big” musical. The music was provided by two pianos, and the cast included a very small chorus. The London critics had very little experience of scaled-down musicals, and tended to treat shows like these with a great deal of condescension. Of the young newcomer Louise Traill The Stage said “she has a pleasing enough voice, but the part is a little beyond her”. Six years later she was an acclaimed Musetta in the BBC TV production of “La Boheme”.

Original London run: Folly Theatre/ Globe, February 1878
First revival: 1880
Second revival: Prince Edward, March 1931
CAGE ME A PEACOCK
London run: Strand, June 18th
Transfer: Cambridge Theatre, Dec 6th
(Total: 337 performances)

Music: Eve Lynd
Book & Lyrics: Noel Langley
Additional lyrics: Adam Leslie
Director: Charles Hickman
Choreographer: David Paltenghi
Musical Director: Philip Martell
Producer: Linnit & Dunfee

Cast: Bill O’Connor (Mercury), Linda Gray (Cassandra),
Yolande Donlan (Althea), Richard Littledale (Dionysius),
Simon Lack (Sextus Tarquinius), Mai Bacon (Volumnia),
Ballard Berkeley (Collatinus), Simon Traherne (Britannicus)

Songs: Time Alone Will Tell,

Story: The story is told by Mercury and Cassandra (a kind of Good and Evil Spirits), and concerns the Roman maiden Althea, happily partnered with Dionysius, her simple rural lover, until the Roman Army arrives, and she meets the dashing Captain Sextus Tarquinius, who soon falls for her charms. When Sextus is called away for military service, taking Dionysius with him as his batman, she promptly forgets them both. She, along with her friend Volumnia, gets to Rome where she learns that even a Captain, however exalted his family, is only a junior officer, and so she falls in with the top-man, Commander Collatinus. Ten years later both Sextus and Dionysius realise that the Commander-in-Chief’s wife is none other than Althea – so both of them set out for Rome with murder in their hearts. However, in the meantime, she has cheated on Collatinus himself, and he chooses to punish her in the most cruel way known to the Roman Empire: she is given to the monocled “silly-ass” British ambassador, Britannicus, and sent to live with him on the distant island of Britain.

Notes: Noel Langely, a South African, following his screen-writing career in Hollywood, wrote his enormously successful novel “Cage Me a Peacock”. It was a fictionalised and hilarious version of the Rape of Lucretia, throwing in everything from adultery to homosexuality, bestiality and nymphomania. In 1946 he adapted it into a play version, somewhat toned down, and then – even more toned down! – into a musical with Eve Lynd writing the score. (She was the first woman to compose a full-scale West End musical since the days of Liza Lehman – who composed several shows before the First World War). The musical with its “naughty” themes and fresh young American star, Yolande Donlan, was a hit, running for nine months and 337 performances.

THE BEGGAR’S OPERA (Revival)
London run: Sadler’s Wells, September 6th (Limited run)
Music: Benjamin Britten (for original airs)
Book & Lyrics: John Gay & Tyrone Guthrie
Director: Tyrone Guthrie

Cast: George James (Peachum), Flora Nielsen (Mrs Peachum),
Nancy Evans (Polly Peachum), Peter Pears (Macheath),
Rose Hill (Lucy Lockitt), Otakar Kraus (Lockit),
Jennifer Vyvyan (Jenny Diver), Gladys Parr (Beggar/Mrs Trapes).

Notes: A new version by Benjamin Britten, this had been premiered at the Arts Theatre Cambridge in May prior to this staging at Sadler’s Wells by the English Opera Group.
**THE KID FROM STRATFORD**  
**London run:** Prince’s, September 30th  
Transfer: Winter Garden, December 13th (Total: 235 performances)  
**Music:** Manning Sherwin  
**Book & Lyrics:** Barbara Gordon & Basil Thomas  
**Director:** William Mollison  
**Choreographer:** Pauline Grant  
**Musical Director:** Louis Voss  
**Producer:** Jack Waller  
*Cast:* Arthur Askey (Arthur Price), Chic Elliott (Aunt Agatha), John Lewis (Oblong of Skance), Ginette Wander (Frankie Duval), Gil Johnson (Freddie Foster), Shamus Locke (Jack), Lynette Rae (Sally).

**Songs:** What Time Do They Open?, Oh What an Ignorant Lot, Memroy Lane, The Promise in Your Eyes, Baghdad Daddy, One Romance, As For You, You’re as Young as you Feel, The Ides of March, I’m Telling Thee, The Maku and the Monkey Ballet

**Story:** Arthur Price, of the Price family in Stratford-upon-Avon, is digging in the garden when he discovers a priceless object – the lost manuscript of a musical written by William Shakespeare. It was possibly written while Shakespeare was drunk, but nevertheless, it is a worthy of production. Arthur disguises himself as a wealthy sultan, the Oblong of Skance, in order to persuade rich Aunt Agatha to come up with some money. When the real Oblong turns up the money problem is solved, and a cast is engaged: Frankie Duval from the Folies Bergère, Freddie Foster, an American crooner, and Jack & Sally as a romantic young couple. But before opening night all the performers walk out because of Aunt Agatha’s rudeness in rehearsals – leaving Arthur to go on single-handedly as scenery builder, wardrobe mistress and star of the show

**Notes:** This was another one-man triumph for Arthur Askey. After two and a half months at the Prince’s it moved out to make way for the pantomime, and transferred to the Winter Garden where it ran for another four and a half months, and a total of 235 performances. During the pre-London tour the roles of Jack and Sally were played by Alfred Marks and Eunice Gayson, and both were replaced before the West End opening after re-writing and cutting had considerably reduced their roles.

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**LUTE SONG**  
**London run:** Winter Garden, October 11th (24 performances)  
**Music:** Raymond Scott  
**Lyrics:** Bernard Hanighen  
**Book:** Sidney Howard & Will Irwin  
**Director:** Albert de Courville  
**Choreographer:** Yeichi Nimura & Lisan Kay  
**Producer:** Michael Myerberg  
*Cast:* Yul Brynner (Tsai-Yong), Dolly Haas (Tchao-Ou-Niang), Iris Russell (Princess Nieou-Chi).

**Songs:** Mountain High Valley Low, Monkey See Monkey Do, Where You Are, Willow Tree, Vision Song, Bitter Harvest, Lute Song.

**Story:** The plot focuses on Tsai-Yong, a young student who leaves his parents and his wife, Tchao-Ou-Niang, to seek his fortune. He becomes a notable magistrate, but when he marries Princess Nieou-Chi, he is forbidden by her father to contact his family. His impoverished parents die of starvation during a famine, and Tchao-Ou-Niang is forced to sell her hair to pay for their funeral. She ultimately is reunited with her husband by Nieou-Chi, and is welcomed to the palace as his Number One wife.

**Notes:** Based on the 14th century Chinese play “Pi-Pa-Ki” by Kao-Tong-Kia and Mao-Tseo, this opened on Broadway on February 6th 1946. It ran just four months and 142 performances. However, it was notable for a number of reasons: Mary Martin played the lead and worked for the first time with the unknown newcomer Yul Brynner (whom she later recommended for the 1951 “King and I”); and another unknown, in the role of lady-in-waiting, was Nancy Davis in her first and only Broadway appearance (she would later become Mrs Ronald Reagan, and America’s First Lady.) The London production had a cast of 80, and some astonishing dancing sequences, especially the much praised Lion Dance. Included in the cast of young children was the 14 year old Millicent Martin. Despite respectful and admiring notices, it had a very short run, finishing October 30th, after a three week run.
HIGH BUTTON SHOES
London run: Hippodrome, December 22nd (291 performances)
Music & Lyrics: Jule Styne & Sammy Cahn
Book: Stephen Longstreet
Director: Robert Nesbitt & Archie Thomson
Choreographer: Jerome Robbins (re-staged by Fred Hearn)
Musical Director: Freddie Bretheron
Producer: Jack Hylton

Cast: Lew Parker (Harrison Floy), Kay Kimber (Sara Longstreet),
Sidney James (Henry Longstreet), Jack Cooper (Oggle Ogglethorpe),
Tommy Godfrey (Mr Pontdue), Hermene French (Fran), Joan Heal (Nancy),
Peter Felgate (Uncle Willie), Michael Nicholls (Stevie Longstreet),
James Ramsey (Elmer Simpkins)

Songs: Can’t You Just See Yourself?, There’s Nothing Like a Model T, You’re My Girl, Papa Won’t You Dance With Me?, On a Sunday By the Sea, I Still Get Jealous, Nobody Ever Died for Dear Old Rutgers

Story: In 1913 New Jersey, the Longstreet family, consisting of Mama, Papa, Mama’s younger sister Fran, and her college boyfriend Oggle, is affected when a con man, Harrison Floy, and his accomplice, Mr. Pontdue, come to town. Floy pitches "snake-oil" schemes including selling fake watches and diamond mines, while his accomplice, planted in the crowd, makes fake purchases. They are chased by the police, but not before they have cheated the Longstreets in a phoney land deal, and have escaped to Atlantic City with the money and with young Fran Longstreet, who has fallen in love with Floy. In Atlantic City the con-men are surrounded by bathing beauties, lifeguards, other criminals, identical twins, and even a gorilla. But Floy meets his downfall, losing everything when he bets on the wrong football team, and is pursued by the Keystone Cops. When he is arrested we learn that Pontdue had misunderstood, and bet the money on a horse named “Princeton” not the football team. The horse won, of course, and Floy pays back every penny to the conned citizens. But, as he leaves the town, he naturally tries to sell them one more non-existent item of great worth.

Notes: Based on Stephen Longstreet’s semi-autobiographical novel “The Sisters Liked Them Handsome”, this opened on Broadway on October 9th 1947 with Phil Silvers in his first starring role, playing Harrison Floy and Nanette Fabray as Sara Longstreet. Directed by George Abbott and choreographed by Jerome Robbins, it was the first Broadway score by Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn. It ran for 727 performances.

THE WIZARD OF OZ (Revival)
London run: Strand, December 24th (49 performances –fixed 4 week run)
Music: Harold Arlen
Lyrics: E.Y. Harburg
Adaptation: Uncredited “new”
Director: Frank Collins
Choreographer: Donald Jourmeaux
Musical Director:?
Producer: Gordon Stewart

Cast: Diana Yeard (Dorothy), Richard Dolman (Scarecrow), Peter Evans (Tinman),
Jackie Hunter (Lion), Ann Martin (Aunt Em), Natalie Lynn (Wicked Witch), Sebastian Cabot (Wizard)

Notes: This ran twice nightly till January 22nd
**LILAC TIME (9th Revival)**

London run: His Majesty’s, February 24th – April 9th
Transfer: Palace Theatre, April 25th – July 9th

**Music:** Franz Schubert, arranged by Heinrich Berte & G.H. Clutsam

**English version & Lyrics:** Adrian Ross

**Director:** Pat Hillyard

**Choreographer:** Phyllis Blakstone

**Musical Director:** Gideon Fagan

**Producer:** Emile Little

**Cast:** John Lewis (Schubert), Celia Lipton (Lili), Bruce Trent (Von Schober), Bernard Ansell (Christian Veit) Enid Lowe (Marini), Anne Martin & Pamela White (Tilli & Wili), William Senior (Count Scharntorff)

The production opened at His Majesty’s for six and a half weeks, and then transferring to make room for “Brigadoon”. The move to the Palace was announced as a fixed season of eleven weeks, running till July 9th

**Notes:**
- Original London production: Lyric Theatre, December 1922
- 1st Revival: Lyric, Dec 1925;
- 2nd Revival: Daly’s Dec, 1927;
- 3rd Revival: Daly’s Theatre, 1928
- 4th Revival: Lyric Theatre, May 1930;
- 5th Revival: Globe, Dec 1932;
- 6th Revival: Alhambra, Dec 1933
- 7th Revival: Coliseum, July 1936;
- 8th Revival: Stoll, Oct 1942

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**BELINDA FAIR**

London run: Saville, March 25th
Transfer: Strand, June 20th
(Total 131 performances)

**Music:** Jack Strachey

**Book & Lyrics:** Eric Maschwitz & Gilbert Lennox

**Director:** Charles Goldner

**Choreographer:** Pauline Grant

**Musical Director:** Walter Stiasny

**Producer:** Leslie Henson & John Buckley

**Cast:** Adele Dixon (Belinda), John Battles (Miles O’Malley), Frank Tilson (Sir Patrick O’Malley), Bill Stephens (Squire Wootton), Jerry Verno (Peregrine), Daphne Anderson (Belle Barrow)


**Story:** During the reign of Good Queen Anne, Belinda goes to war disguised as a man in order to be near Miles O’Malley, the man she loves. However, because “he” (Belinda) is a rather feminine looking man, “he” is ordered to disguise himself as a woman and infiltrate the enemy camp as a spy. Unfortunately this leads to Belinda’s capture, then her rescue by the army, the discovery that “he” is a “she”, and a final reunion with her beloved. Sub-plots involve a domestic squabble between old Sir Patrick O’Malley and Squire Wootton, and the antics of the forlorn serving-man, Peregrine, who has eyes for the actress Belle Barrow, much to the chagrin of his wife.

**Notes:**
- It did respectable business for the first three months and then was obliged to transfer to the Strand because of a prior booking at the Saville. It survived just under a month after its move. It was an old-fashioned, melodramatic story of a swashbuckling lady with a rapier – and was in opposition to a bang-up-to-date story of Annie Oakley with her gun. The music and lyrics were adequate and whimsical for “Belinda” but knockout and smash-hit for “Annie”. This was a no-win show.

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**John Battles & Adele Dixon**

1949 28
**BRIGADOON**

**London run:** His Majesty’s, April 14th
(685 performances)

**Music:** Frederick Loewe  
**Book & Lyrics:** Alan Jay Lerner  
**Director:** Robert Lewis  
**Choreographer:** Agnes de Mille  
(re-staged by James MacGregor Jamieson)  
**Musical Director:** Charles Prentice  
**Producer:** Prince Littler  

**Cast:** Philip Hanna (*Tommy Albright*), Hiram Sherman (*Jeff Douglas*), Patricia Hughes (*Fiona MacLaren*), Noele Gordon (*Meg Brockie*), Bill O’Connor (*Charlie*), James Jamieson (*Harry*)  

**Songs:** Waitin’ for My Dearie, I’ll Go Home with Bonnie Jean, The Heather on the Hill, The Love of My Life, Come to Me Bend to Me, Almost Like Being in Love, There But For You Go I, My Mother’s Wedding Day  

**Story:** Brigadoon is a fairy-tale Scottish town that re-awakens for one day every century. On that particular day, two Americans, Tommy and Jeff, happen to discover it. Tommy soon falls in love with Fiona, but at the end of the day when the town disappears, he returns to New York. His love, however, proves so strong, that he goes back to the Highlands to join the sleeping townsfolk.

**Notes:** The original Broadway production opened on March 13th 1947 and ran for 581 performances. The London production managed a longer run, though for some unknown reason several of the character-names were changed for the British audiences. Agnes de Mille’s dances were a noteworthy contribution to the show, and included a Scottish sword dance, a chase through the forest, and a funeral dance accompanied by bagpipes. (The 1954 film version was directed by Vincente Minnelli, and starred Gene Kelly, Cyd Charisse and Van Johnson.)

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**HER EXCELLENCY**

**London run:** Hippodrome, June 22nd  
Transfer: Saville, September 21st  
(252 performances total)

**Music:** Manning Sherwin & Harry Parr-Davies  
**Book & Lyrics:** Archie Menzies & Max Kester  
**Director:** Jack Hulbert  
**Choreographer:** Bert Stimmel & Jack Hulbert  
**Musical Director:** Robert Probst  
**Producer:** Val Parnell & Jack Hulbert  

*Cicely Courtneidge & Thorley Walters*
**HER EXCELLENCY**

**London run:** Hippodrome, June 22nd  
Transfer: Saville, September 21st (252 performances total)

**Music:** Manning Sherwin & Harry Parr-Davies  
**Book & Lyrics:** Archie Menzies & Max Kester  
**Director:** Jack Hulbert  
**Choreographer:** Bert Stimmel & Jack Hulbert  
**Musical Director:** Robert Probst  
**Producer:** Val Parnell & Jack Hulbert

**Cast:**  
Cicely Courtneidge (Frances Maxwell), Patrick Barr (Martin Nash), Austin Trevor (Senor Riazza), Sandra Martin (Margarette), Thorley Walters (Jimmy Denham)

**Songs:** She Goes Straight to My Heart, Steak and Samba, Sunday Morning in England

**Story:** Frances Maxwell is created Her Excellency, the British Ambassador to a South American country, and one of her first duties is to negotiate a new meat contract. She wins two romantic admirers, Martin Nash, the nice steady American Ambassador, and Senor Riazza, the fiery Meat King. Meantime the meat king’s man-eating daughter, Margarette, makes a heavy play for Jimmy Denham, the Embassy’s young commercial attaché, whom we know will end up with his sweet and innocent secretary, Mary Cresset, when he finally manages to shake off the South American vamp.

**Notes:** This was the new Cicely Courtneidge show, but it was not up to the previous standards. Among other adventures, it managed to provide excuses for Cicely Courtneidge to be an aeroplane passenger and to take part in a bullfight. All the reviews complained about its dull book and, indeed, on the opening night the gallery started slow hand-clapping during the final number “Sunday Morning in England”. This caused the Courtneidge fans to applaud even longer, and the magic of her name kept this somewhat second-rate show running for seven months and a transfer, before it closed at the end of January 1950.

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**SONG OF NORWAY (1st Revival)**

**London run:** Palace, July 11th (Limited 9 week run – 72 performances))

**Music & Lyrics:** Edvard Grieg  
(adapted by Robert Wright & George Forrest)

**Book:** Milton Lazarus  
**Director:** Charles Hickman  
**Choreographer:** Pauline Grant  
**Musical Director:** Alexander Faris  
**Producer:** Emile Littler

**Cast:** Peggy Rowan (Louisa Giovanni), Ivor Evans (Edvard Grieg), Arthur Servent (Rikard Nordraak), Brenda Stanley (Nina Hagerup), Frank Rydon (Count Peppi Le Loup), Olive Sturgess (Mrs Grieg), Dale Williams (Grieg), Guy Massey (Freddy/Tito), Shelagh Day (Adelina).

**Notes:** Following this revival the show did a prolonged provincial tour.

Original London run: Palace, March 1946
TOUGH AT THE TOP

London run: Adelphi, July 15th (154 performances)
Music: Vivian Ellis
Book & Lyrics: A.P. Herbert
Director-Choreographer: Wendy Toye
Musical Director: Michael Collins
Producer: C.B. Cochran & Anthony Vivian

Cast: Maris d’Attili (Princess Philomel), Carol Raye (Barbara Duchesne), George Tozzi (Bartholomew Brain), Brian Reece (Count Victor of Plush), Geoffrey Bayldon (Baron Theodore), Clive Stock (Valentine), Anita Bolster (Queen Mother), Gwen Nelson (Miss Mervin), Peter Lupino (Charles Lupin)

Songs: I’m On Fire, Blood and Iron, I Don’t Want to Marry, I Feel a New Fellow, I Wish I Could Sing, I’m Really a Rather Nice Man, The Muffin Man, All the Ladies are Lovely, England is a Lovely Place, This Is Not the End, Most Gracious Lady

Story: Her Serene Highness Princess Philomel of Pomania, together with Barbara Duchesne, her lady-in-waiting, is visiting London and enjoying the Races, and even a boxing match, where she falls in love with Bartholomew Brain, a handsome, poetry-writing and music-loving pugilist. Away from the elegant but stuffy Pomanian Court, she manages to persuade Barbara to swap identities for a while. For dynastic reasons back home Philomel cannot consider a marriage to a British boxer – she is already promised to Count Victor of Plush, ferociously Prussian and pompous, but quite a decent chap at heart. The problem is Barbara really fancies the Count while her mistress doesn’t. Other characters in the story are Baron Theodore du Plat, the Pomanian Prime Minister, Valentine, his private secretary and Princess Selina, the Queen Mother. The English contingent includes Miss Mervin, Philomel’s English Governess and Charles Lupin of the British Foreign Office.

Notes: Charles Cochran imported Maria d’Attili from Bolivia and George Tozzi from New York to head his latest Vivian Ellis production. This was intended to top the glory of “Bless the Bride” – but it was too long, too unexciting, and too improbable, despite its magnificent Edwardian costumes and lavish settings. Sadly it would be the last of C. B Cochran’s West End shows. He died in January 1951, aged 78, having been a major force in British theatre since the 1920s.

ROUNDABOUT

London run: Saville Theatre, August 4th (27 performances)
Music: Edward Horan
Lyrics: Frank Eyton & Ken Attiwill
Book: Austin Melford & Ken Attiwill
Director: Dick Hurran
Choreographer: Beatrice Appleyard
Musical Director: Robert Busby
Producer: Bernard Delfont & Austin Melford

Cast: Pat Kirkwood (Angelina), Marilyn Hightower (Rusty), Vic Marlowe (Phil Burton), Bobby Howes (Billy Warren), Gabrielle Brune (Molly Blythe), Marie Sellar (Judy Blythe), Jerry Desmonde (Monty Blythe)

Songs: Making Hay, A Home of My Own, A Little Bit of Love

Story: Angelina Warren returns from Argentina with her theatrical company, including Rusty, her star dancer, and needs to find somewhere to live. She rents a flat from Phil Burton, a friend of her ex-husband, Billy. Only then does she discover that the flat really belongs to Billy, and that he has just become engaged to Molly Blythe from the Argentine – and Phil has become engaged to Molly’s sister, Judy. To add to the complications, their father, Monty Blythe, has come over from Argentina for the wedding. After a number of complications, Billy and Angelina decide to get back together again.

Notes: This show opened in Birmingham in June, under the title “Hat in the Air”. Following a short tour, and a break for re-writing, it arrived in London following considerable alteration and cutting. It was roundly condemned: “It was pathetic to see so many clever artists struggling with such poor material” (The Stage). It was booted on the opening night and closed on August 27th.
**KING’S RHAPSODY**

**London run:** Palace, September 15th  
(839 performances)

**Music & Book:** Ivor Novello  
**Lyrics:** Christopher Hassall  
**Director:** Murray MacDonald  
**Choreographer:** Pauline Grant  
**Musical Director:** Harry Acres  
**Producer:** Tom Arnold

**Cast:**  
Ivor Novello (King Nikki),  
Vanessa Lee (Queen Christiane),  
Zena Dare (Queen Elena),  
Phyllis Dare (Marta Karillo),  
Olive Gilbert (Countess Vera Lemaiken),  
Denis Martin (Count Egon Stanieff),  
Victor Bogetti (King Peter),  
Robert Andrews (Vanescu)

**Songs:** Some Day My Heart Will Awake, Fly Home Little Heart, If This Were Love, A Violin Began to Play, The Gates of Paradise, Muranian Rhapsody

**Story:**  
Nikki, who has been exiled to Paris because of his scandalous behaviour, must return to his homeland now that his father has died. He must assume the title of King, marry the young Princess Christiane of Norseland, and produce the necessary heir to the throne as part of his long-established duty. However, when he returns, he is accompanied by his long-established first love, Marta, thus causing more scandal at court. After he has married and produced the necessary heir, his attempts to get a democratic reform bill through Parliament fail, and he decides to abdicate as King, leaving Christiane to serve as Regent until their son is old enough to rule. Nikki returns to Paris with Marta.

**Notes:** Prompted by the celebrated romance between King Carol of Romania and actress Magda Lupescu (and by the abdication of King Edward VIII) – this would have an uncanny future echo when, half a century later, a middle-aged British Prince would be pressurised into marrying a suitable young woman to produce an “heir and a spare” even though his real love would be for a long-established old love. This enormous successful show was Ivor Novello’s last fling at his customary Ruritanian glamour, since he died a few hours after the performance on March 5th 1951. He was replaced by Jack Buchanan – though for a very large number of theatre-goers, Ivor Novello was simply irreplaceable.
ME & MY GIRL (3rd Revival)

London run: Winter Garden, December 12th (75 performances)
Music: Noel Gay
Book & Lyrics: L. Arthur Rose & Douglas Furber
Director: Lupino Lane
Choreographer: Fred Leslie
Musical Director: Harold Brewer
Producer: Lupino Lane

Cast: Lupino Lane (Bill Snibson), Polly Ward (Sally Smith), Doris Rogers (Duchess), Austin Melford (Sir John), Roy Macready (Parchester), Susannah Fellows (Lady Jacqueline)

Notes: This ran the Christmas season at the Winter Garden, finishing its run on February 11th 1950.
Original run Victoria Palace, December 1937
First revival: Coliseum, June 1941
Second revival: Victoria Palace, August, 1945