

Presenting Fanny Brice The Original Funny Girl

*A musical play in two acts by Chip Deffaa
With songs from the era of Fanny Brice
Music arranged by Chip Deffaa*

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DEDICATION

"For J.S., with affection, admiration and respect."

STORY OF THE PLAY

Here's a unique and dynamic look at Fanny Brice, the original Funny Girl, and her rise from poverty to become a superstar, then falling for a man who's a crook. In this version we get to meet lots of colorful characters, including Fanny's good friend Gypsy Rose Lee, Flo Ziegfeld, W. C. Fields, Eddie Cantor, Nicky Arnstein, and Fanny's mother and father. Every actress will enjoy singing songs Fanny Brice made famous, such as "My Man" and "Second Hand Rose." Other songs include "The Sheik of Araby," "After the Ball," "Rose of Washington Square," "You Made Me Love You," and more. Easy to stage and an engrossing look into a golden age of show business!

Many Thanks From the Playwright...

My gratitude to... the one and only Carol Channing—not just for sharing recollections of Brice on stage (and even singing "Second Hand Rose" for me), but for her wise insights and boundless encouragement; the multi-talented Tommy Tune, for sharing his ever-appreciated stardust; the late entertainer Todd Fisher, whose stories, songs, and dances from the vaudeville era meant so much to me; Keith Anderson of Univision, for many kindnesses; the late George Burns, for the delightful tales of vaudeville he shared with me at his Hollywood office; Eric Anthony Stevens, a first-rate talent, for his terrific energy; the always magical Victoria Leacock Hoffman for being who she is; the ever-inspiring Matthew Broderick, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Toby Parker, whose belief in my work has meant a lot; theatre-pros Lisa Lambert, Renee Purdy, Cody Green, and M. V. Beer. I value, too, the longtime friendship of Herbert Goldman, the definitive Brice biographer. (We've known each other for 25 years; I was happy to help contribute a couple of Brice photos from my collection for his terrific book.) And--as always--I'm most grateful to my wonderful and quite spirit-filled family.

More information about the development and premiere production of this musical can be found at the end of the script.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(About 35 characters; can be performed with anywhere from 15 - 40 actors.)

FANNY BRICE: The legendary singing comedienne.

WALTER WINCHELL: A powerful syndicated gossip columnist and radio commentator.

GYPSY ROSE LEE: "The Queen of the Striptease."

JIMMY: A newsboy, working in New York's theatre district.

CHARLES: Fanny's father.

ROSE: Fanny's mother.

YOUNG FANNY BRICE: Fanny as a girl, 8 or 9 years old.

YOUNG LEW BRICE: A brother of Fanny.

MAN IN THE SALOON

REPOSSESSION WORKER

MR. KEENEY: Proprietor of a Brooklyn theatre, famed for its amateur nights.

MADAME FRIEDMAN: Head of a traveling theatrical company.

MADAME BORDONARO: Head of a touring burlesque troupe.

WILLIE WESTON: Comic in the burlesque troupe.

BURLESQUE TROUPE: Several singing/dancing gals.

MAID: Adelle, Fanny's maid.

FLO ZIEGFELD: Producer of the lavish, star-studded Ziegfeld Follies and other shows.

NICK ARNSTEIN: Handsome, dashing gambler who woos and eventually weds Fanny Brice.

W.C. FIELDS: The famed comedian.

WILL ROGERS: The folksy comic actor and commentator.

EDDIE CANTOR: A successful singing comedian.

LARGE FACE: One of the best safecrackers.

ARNOLD ROTHSTEIN: A leading figure in organized crime.

DETECTIVE

CARRIE GREENTHAL ARNSTEIN: Nick's first wife.

HITCHHIKER

INTERROGATOR

(Continued)

CAST-- continued

ZIEGFELD TENOR

WARDEN

WARDEN'S DAUGHTER

WAITER: At Lindy's Restaurant.

BILL BRICE: Fanny's son, about 16.

FRANCES BRICE: Fanny's daughter, about 17.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

(Rehearsal/Performance CD available from the publisher.)

ACT I

1. "Rose of Washington Square" (*words by Ballard Macdonald, music by James F. Hanley*)
2. "The Band Played On" (*words by John F. Palmer, music by Charles B. Ward*)
3. "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry" (*by N. J. Clesi*)
4. "Will You Love Me in December as You Do in May?" (*words by James J. Walker, music by Ernest R. Ball*)
5. "The Curse of an Aching Heart" (*words by Henry Fink, music by Al Piantadosi*)
6. "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows" (*words by Joseph McCarthy, music by Harry Carroll*)
7. "When You Know You're Not Forgotten by the Girl You Can't Forget" (*words by Ed Gardenier, music by J. Fred Helf*)
8. "Be My Little Baby Bumble Bee" (*words by Stanley Murphy, music by Henry I. Marshall*)
9. "Grizzly Bear" (*words by Irving Berlin, music by George Botsford*)
10. "Be My Little Baby Bumble Bee"— First Reprise (*words by Stanley Murphy, music by Henry I. Marshall*)
11. "Becky's Got a Job in a Musical Show" (*by Irving Berlin*)
12. "Be My Little Baby Bumble Bee"— Second Reprise (*words by Stanley Murphy, music by Henry I. Marshall*)
13. "Second Hand Rose" (*words by Grant Clarke, music by James F. Hanley*)
14. "Ballin' the Jack" (*words by Jim Burris, music by Chris Smith*)
15. "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows"— Reprise (*words by Joseph McCarthy, music by Harry Carroll*)

(Continued)

ACT II

16. "You Made Me Love You" (*words by Joseph McCarthy, music by James V. Monaco*)
17. "Don't Go in the Lion's Cage Tonight" (*words by John Gilroy, music by E. Ray Goetz*)
18. "Sadie Salome Go Home!" (*words and music by Edgar Leslie and Irving Berlin*)
19. "The Sheik of Araby" (*words by Harry B. Smith and Francis Wheeler, music by Ted Snyder*)
20. "The Sheik of Avenue B" (*words and music by Kalmar & Ruby and Friend & Downing*)
21. "My Musical Comedy Maiden" (*words and music by George M. Cohan*)
22. "Singin' the Blues" (*words by Sam M. Lewis and Joe Young, music by Con Conrad and J. Russel Robinson*)
23. "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody" (*by Irving Berlin*)
24. "Ja-Da" (*by Bob Carleton*)
25. "My Man" (*English lyrics by Channing Pollack, music by Maurice Yvain*)
26. "Won't You Come Back to Me?" (*by George M. Cohan*)
27. "My Man"—Reprise (*English lyrics by Channing Pollack, music by Maurice Yvain*)
28. "Rose of Washington Square"— Reprise (*words by Ballard Macdonald, music by James F. Hanley*)
29. Bows: "Rose of Washington Square" (*instrumental for curtain calls; music by James F. Hanley*)
30. Exit Music: "The Band Played On" (*music by Charles B. Ward*)

SETTINGS

(Defined by simple set pieces and lighting. It is 1937.)

On stage at Winter Garden Theatre, New York; outside the theatre; Lindy's restaurant; Borach's Saloon; Keeney's Vaudeville Theatre stage; theatres out on the road; Charles' apartment; dressing room and stage of the Ziegfeld Follies in New York; Fanny and Nick's new home; a big Cadillac convertible; questioning by the Feds; a warden's home in Leavenworth.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: An older FANNY stands before a microphone, ready to perform on the stage of the Winter Garden Theatre in New York. In the background is radio host WALTER WINCHELL at a table with an old-fashioned microphone.)

(SONG #1: "ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE")

FANNY: *(Sings.)*

ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE,
A FLOWER SO FAIR
SHOULD BLOSSOM WHERE THE SUN SHINES.
ROSE, FOR NATURE DID NOT MEAN
THAT I SHOULD BLUSH UNSEEN,
BUT BE THE QUEEN OF SOME FAIR GARDEN.

(Instrumental break, while the PIANIST plays the music corresponding to the lines: "Rose, I'll never depart, / But dwell in your heart, / Your love to care." This will serve as underscoring while Fanny speaks the following lines, before going back to singing the song.)

FANNY: *(Speaking to the audience, over the underscoring.)*

Can you believe it, folks? It's been 25 years since I first appeared in the Ziegfeld Follies. Some of my co-stars in this year's Follies – like my good pal Gypsy Rose Lee – were just kids when I first introduced this song. Just kids. Time sure flies, don't it, folks? Time flies.

FANNY: *(Sings.)*

I'VE GOT THOSE BROADWAY VAMPIRES LASHED TO THE MAST.
I'VE GOT NO FUTURE BUT OH! WHAT A PAST.
I'M ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE.

I'M ROSIE, THE QUEEN OF THE MODELS.
I USED TO LIVE UP IN THE BRONX.
BUT I WANDERED FROM THERE
DOWN TO WASHINGTON SQUARE
AND BOHEMIAN HONKY TONKS.
ONE DAY I MET HARRISON FISHER.

FANNY: *(Cont'd.) (Spoken aside.)* –the artist!

SAID HE, "YOU'RE LIKE THE ROSES, THE STEMS.
I WANT YOU TO POSE FOR A PICTURE ON THE COVER
OF JIM JAM JEMS."
AND THAT'S HOW I FIRST GOT MY START.
NOW MY LIFE IS DEVOTED TO ART.

THEY CALL ME ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE.
I'M WITHERING THERE.
IN BASEMENT AIR I'M FADING.
ROSE, WITH PLAIN OR FANCY CLOTHES;
THEY SAY MY ROMAN NOSE,
IT SEEMS TO PLEASE ARTISTIC PEOPLE.
BEAUX, I'VE PLENTY OF THOSE,
WITH SECOND-HAND CLOTHES
AND NICE LONG HAIR.

(Dance break, while the PIANIST plays the music corresponding to the lines: "I've got those Broadway vampires lashed to the mast. / I've got no future but oh! what a past. / I'm Rose of Washington Square.")

I'VE GOT THOSE BROADWAY VAMPIRES LASHED TO THE MAST.
I'VE GOT NO FUTURE BUT OH! WHAT A PAST.
I'M ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE.

(SHE raises a hand to her brow, winks, and offers a salute to the audience. That little wink and salute was a signature gesture of Brice's, a way of appreciatively acknowledging her public.)

WALTER WINCHELL: *(Speaking into a microphone.)* That was Miss Fanny Brice, ladies and gentlemen, singing one of the many songs that she's made famous – "Rose of Washington Square." And I, your humble servant Walter Winchell, remember it like it was yesterday, seeing her introduce it in the Follies so many years ago. In fact, I remember when the great Florenz Ziegfeld first discovered Fanny Brice working as a "singing newsboy" under the Brooklyn Bridge. He immediately put her into his famed Follies, and the rest is history....

End of Freeview

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