

Kurt Weill
Suffern, N.Y.

Sept. 14, 1940

Dear Ira,



I am disappointed that you didn't answer my last letter. I'd love to know your reaction to the different problems I talked about.

We are working very hard to get the cast lined up before Moss is leaving for the try out of his show next Friday. I have been in town every afternoon in the last two weeks and at the same time I have been working on the piano score.

I think we'll have a very good cast. Moss wanted for Maggie and Allison two very good actresses and has found and signed them (Margaret Dale and Virginia Schaffer). So we can take for Miss Forster exactly the person we need for Miss Elliot's maid in the first dream. I have found (through Cheryl Crawford who, by the way is planning a revival of "Porgy and Bess") a young actor whom we all like very much for Charlie Johnson. His name is Macdonald Carey. We also found an actor called Randolph for the doctor, and we have several ideas for Nesbitt. Our main difficulty is, of course, Randy Curtis. We have seen a number of people, but they are either too operatic or they cannot sing. The nearest to what we are looking for is Ronald Graham (the DuBarry boy) who sang yesterday. He has a lovely voice and is not bad looking. His reading was rather poor, but Moss will work with him a few hours to see what he can get out of him. Could you look up John Carroll and tell us what he is like? Also George Houston whom I met in Hollywood some years ago and who might be a possibility if he is not too old and hammy. Maybe we could find somebody among those young singers who are under contract at the different studios in Hollywood. To-morrow Leif Erickson is giving an audition....

We had another session about the dreams and Moss asked me to write to you and tell you about it. We all like the idea of using the Cowboy song and San Fernando Valley for the Hollywood sequence in the second dream. It seems to work out very well, but we would like to know what you have to say about it. - We also talked about the Circus dream and I pointed out that Randy has nothing to sing in the second act since we've cut out the Hollywood dream. So Moss and Hassard suggested that we give the Zodiak song back to Randy and I thought this might be good news for you because that's what we always wanted. Here is Moss'idea:

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the Zodiak song would become Randy's defense speech, just the way you had originally conceived it, but we should try to work Gertie into it. Everything could stay as written up to where Nesbitt says: "If you can prove that, I'm Barnum - and Bailey. Proceed." Then Randy, instead of Liza, would sing "No matter under what star you'n born". Then when Charlie asks: "Who can prove this whimwham about no one being responsible?" Liza answers: "We can" and sings her Gipsy-tipsy stanza. Then Randy sings the Zodiak couplets with the help of Gertie. Moss' and Hassard's idea was that Randy should start:

Aries' children
Find life bewildrin'

then, instead of repeating the thought of the first two lines, Gertie should make a witty remark about Aries children which would be the third and fourth line, in place of:

There's no doubt that to Aries' children
Life's bewild'rin'.

and so on through the song. If we make this change I would also change the tune for the couplets, make it lighter and more on the line of a patter. ~~Something like this~~

At the end of the Zodiak couplets Liza and Randy sing "No matter..." as a duo (with Chorus) and now, when they have won over everybody to their cause, Liza should go into a triumphant song, maybe something about a woman's ability to win battles (I'm just making that up) and at the end of this song (which might become a dance) Nesbitt interrupts. That would give Liza her show-stopping (??) song near the end of the dream and at a moment where she is triumphant and which allows her to be as gay or sarcastic as you want. If we would do this we would cut out the entire recess and do the whole trial in one big crescendo up to this climax.

So, all we'd have to do, is: the patter for "One life to live", the changes in Zodiak with the new song for Gertie and a new song for the Highschool dance (I don't think we could use "Unforgettable" for that spot; do you?) That is really not too much, but we should allow ourselves enough time to get it ready the week before rehearsals start.

Well, that's about all for the time being.
Please let me hear from you and give my best to Lee.

As ever,

Went

