

35 CENTS

Theatre Arts

September 1942

A
SCRIPTWRITER'S
SAMPLE
BOOK



Norman Corwin
RADIO



William Saroyan
FILM



Sylvia Fine
Max Liebman
SOLDIER REVUE



Michel Carré
Ashley Dukes
PANTOMIME



Martha Graham
DANCE

Bill Anderson

Theatre Arts

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Soldier Revue

Local Board Makes Good,

by Sylvia Fine and Max Liebman

(Six Songs and Sketches)

THE ART of writing comedy sketches and supplying lyrics for the songs that heighten them is a special art. It is a highly technical and sophisticated art when it must answer the needs of a comedian as expert, for example, as Danny Kaye. He can do so much with rich material that it takes a rich talent to feed him the madhouse songs and sketches he performs in the country's leading nightclubs, and in such shows as *Lady in the Dark* and *Let's Face It!* Sylvia Fine (Mrs. Kaye) and Max Liebman, who have long filled this large order to the supreme satisfaction of Danny Kaye and audiences alike, have now turned their talents for a moment to something which is — paradoxically — more difficult because the result is so much simpler. This task is writing a soldier revue to be put on by the men in the armed forces. Here speed and facility of mounting become paramount; lines must be short; humor and rhymes must be easy both to recognize and to remember, appropriate to all kinds of moods and men, not subtle yet always fresh. More than almost any other dramatic writing, this material is meant to be heard and not read, for literary value is probably the least pressing of all a soldier show's requirements. But Sylvia Fine and Max Liebman can make you hear their words, even on a printed page.

Local Board Makes Good

SYLVIA FINE AND MAX LIEBMAN

The following songs and sketches are chosen at random from the revue which Sylvia Fine and Max Liebman have written for soldiers themselves to produce. The drawings are by Harry Horner. — Editors' Note.

Opening: At Ease

(Scene: In front of painted flat with inset row of doors. Soldiers enter in uniform to introduction.)

SOLDIERS

If you please
We're at ease!

No guard duty —
Hard duty —
It's our night of nights — we're at ease!
No second looey —
To holler phooey —
No officers round us to please.
It's the night for a gallant rookie
To take a cookie to dine —
To bask in music and wine —
To sing out
And swing out!
No rough sergeant
No tough sergeant
To tell us our left from our right —
No drill formations —
No regulations —
We're strictly at ease for tonight!
We're gonna paint the town —
We'll do it brown —
Mr. Mayor, give us the keys!
Hey there captain!
Hey there colonel!
We're at ease!

LOCAL BOARD MAKES GOOD

(Pantomime to music, looking at wrist watches, knocking on doors, tapping foot — another knock — girls [It's the boys, of course, in female attire] come through doors.)

Hi Susie!

Hi Fanny!

Hi Mabel!

Hi Annie!

(Offering arm)

If you please

We're at ease!

(Boys and girls dance — finish in clinch — officer enters.)

OFFICER

'Tention!

(Girls and boys snap out of it and salute; then —)

SOLDIERS AND GIRLS

Hey there captain!

Hey there colonel!

We're at ease! *(Dance off to tag)*

Christmas Party

(SAM is seated — A, B and C are pleading with him.)

A. Don't go, Sam!

B. There's no sense to it.

C. Do you know who'll be there? — Liars — Murderers — Bandits —

B. Hirohito and Mussolini will send special greetings.

C. You're sticking your neck out.

B. How do you come to people like that?

C. What got into you?

A. Don't go Sam!

B. Do you expect to eat their sandwiches?

SAM. No.

B. You think you'll enjoy the music?

C. Or the surroundings?

B. You think anyone will dance with you?

C. Even if you wanted?

A. Don't go Sam!

D. *(Enters)* Where does he want to go?

C. To a Christmas party for Hitler.

D. DON'T GO SAM!

B. Where did you ever get the idea?

C. Will you feel comfortable?

D. Will you want to hold a conversation?

B. Do you think they'll give you presents?

SAM. Of course not!



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- d. Then why do you want to go?
c. For God's sake, Sam, tell us — Why do you want to go to a Christmas party for Hitler?

SAM. I got my reasons.

(*Sam goes to hat tree to get his hat and coat. As he turns, a huge sprig of mistletoe is seen pinned to the seat of his pants.*)

Blackout

Blithe Spirit

(*Scene: Headquarters of HITLER. Officers and Nazis at attention. Enter CAPTAIN.*)

CAPTAIN. Heil Hitler! (*Enter Hitler*)

SOLDIERS. Heil Hitler!

VOICE. (*Over loudspeaker*) [A Bronx Cheer]

HITLER. Who was that?

CAPTAIN. That's the ghost of General Grossmeyer.

HITLER. Ghost? — What ghost?

CAPTAIN. We thought you knew about that, your Excellency.

HITLER. Know? know? I know nothing.

CAPTAIN. Yes — your Excellency.

HITLER. What is this ghost? — Well — well? Don't stand there — tell me.

CAPTAIN. You remember General Grossmeyer, your Excellency?

HITLER. Of course, I remember. I had him shot two weeks ago.

CAPTAIN. Ever since he departed, his voice has been heard in this room every night at midnight. It is now midnight.

HITLER. What does he say?

VOICE. (*Over loud speaker*) Oooo — Oooo — Oooo —

CAPTAIN. There he is now.

HITLER. Is that you, General Grossmeyer?

VOICE. Ja! Ja! — your Excellency.

HITLER. Do you wish to speak to me, General Grossmeyer?

VOICE. Ja, your Excellency.

HITLER. You'll have to get an appointment.

VOICE. Ah — but I have an appointment every night at midnight.

HITLER. What is it you wish to say to me?

VOICE. I want to tell you that I find it very delightful here.

HITLER. More delightful than in Deutschland?

VOICE. Ja! More delightful than in Deutschland.

HITLER. But that is impossible!

VOICE. But it is a fact!

HITLER. Then you are happy, General Grossmeyer?

VOICE. Very — very happy, your Excellency.

HITLER. I cannot believe it!

VOICE. But it is true!

LOCAL BOARD MAKES GOOD

HITLER. Happier than you were here with me?

VOICE. Ja, your Excellency — Far, far happier!

HITLER. That can't be — No! — Not even in Heaven!

VOICE. Your Excellency — I am not in Heaven!

Blackout

Boy Meets Girl

(Scene: A moving picture studio. Paraphernalia about — cameras, lights, etc. In a small set HE and SHE are performing a scene which is being shot. Cameramen, directors and assistants stand about. All is dark except the small set where the scene is being played. HE and SHE are in evening clothes.)

SHE. Cast off! Cast off like an old dish rag! Why, John? Why must you do that to me now?

HE. That's life, Mary. Our emotions cannot be controlled by our minds. A thing like this just happens.

SHE. Happens! It doesn't happen if you don't let it happen.

HE. I couldn't help it, Mary.

SHE. *(Beating her breasts)* What will I do? Where will I go? What's to become of me?

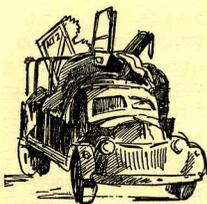
DIR. CUT! —

(Lights up — Orchestra strikes up introduction — All on stage come forward and sing:)

Here in the land of Zanuck
Where it's normal to be manic,
Where they take the imitation for the pearl,
Boy meets girl, boy loses girl — (Brilliant!)
There's a knot in the plot
But don't worry a jot
'Cause you know no matter what,
Boy gets girl.
Whether Western or dramatic,
Whether comic or ecstatic,
They will find the same old story to unfurl:
Boy meets girl, boy loses girl — (Astounding!)
From the play or the book
They rewrote when they took,
So, by hook or by crook,
Boy gets girl.
And the bigger the star,
The more careful they are
To look carefully careless and frowsy.
And it's quite understood
Nothing's bad, nothing's good,

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It's sensational or super lousy.
They get different projectors,
Russian directors —
Always in a stew
For something new to do.
But you must please the creatures
Who adore double features,
So with Gable, Taylor, Tone, or Milton Berle,
It's boy meets girl, boy loses girl.
It's the same plot — so what?
So it's the only one we've got.
What can you do with a mustache and a curl?
There was no interest in Adam
Until he met his madame,
So it's plain you can't raise Cain
Till boy meets girl.



The Back Slappers

(American diplomat is seated at the desk. The wall calendar reads 'Dec. 7th, 1941'. Enter two Japanese emissaries, SOOKIE and TOOKIE.)

- SOOKIE. Good day, Mr. Hill.
HILL. Good day, Mr. Sookie.
TOOKIE. How do you feel, Mr. Hill?
HILL. I feel fine, Mr. Tookie.
SOOKIE. Japanese emissaries happy indeed to talk about peace with America.
HILL. That's fine, Mr. Sookie. America is always willing.
TOOKIE. We more than willing. Japan love peace.
HILL. You have a message from your government?
SOOKIE. *(Taking out paper)* Ambassador Sookie and Ambassador Tookie most honorably present message from big shot. *(Hands over paper)*
HILL. Thanks very much. I'll look it over.
SOOKIE. Much obliged.
TOOKIE. Much obliged.
HILL. *(Sees them to door)* Come back and I'll let you know America's answer.
SOOKIE. *(Patting him violently on back)* We get along fine, Mr. Hill, No?
TOOKIE. *(Also patting him on the back)* Always friends, Yes?
SOOKIE. *(Another pat on the back)* We can always discuss matters, no?
TOOKIE. *(Also another pat on the back)* And find solution, yes?
HILL. I'm sure we can.
SOOKIE. Thank you, Mr. Hill, and goodbye. *(Another slap on back)*

LOCAL BOARD MAKES GOOD

TOOKIE. (*Also with pat*) Always friends, Mr. Hill. Goodbye.
(SOOKIE and TOOKIE exit — HILL turns around to go to his desk and displays two knives in his back.)

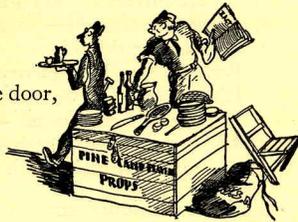
Blackout

To Be Continued

(Four famous movie serial heroes, in appropriate costumes, are discovered. They are:

JACK ARMSTRONG
THE LONE RANGER
DICK TRACY
BUCK ROGERS)

- ALL. We are tops in the picture world today.
They need cops in the theatres that we play.
We made William Powell throw in the towel
And Mr. Clark Gable is going back into the stable.
We were started for children's matinees
But Mom and Pop have taken up the craze.
- ARM. Nuts to Ty Power, his acting is lacy —
- LON. Nuts to wine —
- TRA. Nuts to song —
- ROG. Nuts to wenchery.
- ARM. Hooray for Jack Armstrong —
- LON. Lone Ranger —
- TRA. Dick Tracy —
- (*The next is a strange faraway voice from a mike off stage.*)
- VOI. And Buck Rogers in the twenty-fifth century.
- ARM. You coward! I've got you mastered.
- LON. Reach up, you yellow dastard!
- TRA. I've got you covered, you dirty rats!
- ROG. Come out from behind that mustache or I'll disintegrate your spats!
- ARM. The sheriff is killed in bed,
When he wakes up he's dead.
What to do, there is no clue,
But Armstrong goes ahead.
And then I find a deposit
Of a body in every closet,
Blood on the floor, a knife in the door,
Somebody done it, who was it?
The butler's malicious,
The maid is suspicious,
His uncle is loony,
His daughter is moony —



THEATRE ARTS

I break down defense —
It begins to make sense — — — —

Chorus

ALL. To be continued next week —
To be continued next week —
You must all wait and see what the finish will be —
When it's continued, next week

LON. Heigho Silver and away —
That's all I have to say —
Mrs. Astor and the pastor and the plumber yell hooray.
Oh the audience may be flooded —
But I am goddam bored
With hiding and riding and riding and hiding
And hiding and riding and riding and hiding and
Ho hum on the range.
But hark, I hear screaming,
No, no I'm not dreaming,
They're throwing our Nell
In a bottomless well —
It's a horrible trick
But we're there in the nick — — — —

ALL. To be continued next week —
To be continued next week —
You must all wait and see what the finish will be
When it's continued, next week.

TRA. I wake up with a groan —
The chief is on the phone —
Hello Dick, get goin' quick —
Get after No-nose Cohen.
Machine gun under my arm —
Just as a good luck charm —
I stalk him there up to his lair —
On a Sullivan County Farm.
I creep up the hill —
I peek over the sill —
Boy, oh boy, I see plenty —
It's one against twenty!
But me I'm undaunted —
The law has been flaunted —
So drawing my gun with the odds ten to one — — — —

ALL. To be continued next week —

LOCAL BOARD MAKES GOOD

To be continued next week —
You must all wait and see what the finish will be
When it's continued, next week.

ROG. We're zooming through the air —
Up to the Sun God's lair —
His rays are hot, but I am not —
I'm wearing a Frigidaire.
I start a wintry breeze, the Sun God starts to sneeze —
His breath forms ice and in a trice
The sun begins to freeze.
I've caught him a-dozin',
His assets are frozen,
But he makes a dash and releases a flash of frost-eating Sterno
That starts an inferno.
My space ship is burning,
My death ray is turning —

ARM. Who done it?

LON. Who's lookin'?

TRA. Am I saved?

ROG. What's cookin'?

ARM. Who's the villain?

LON. Who's the Ranger?

TRA. Where's the killer?

ROG. Where's the danger?

(Business of sirens, machines, airplanes, noises, etc., over mike)

ALL To be continued next week —

To be continued next week —

You must all wait and see what the finish will be
When it's continued, next week.

