

Brook House
South Mountain Road
New City, N.Y.

June 10, 1941

Dear Ira,

my correspondence with you is a rather one-sided affair because I never seem to get an answer to my letters. But something urgent came up yesterday and that's why I am writing again.

Harold Freedman sent me the script of a comedy "Away from it all", and also the outline of a new version which the authors are working on now. It was written as a straight comedy, but Harold thought it would be a very good subject for the kind of "Music comedy" which we want to do and he thinks he could get the authors' agreement to this kind of a musical treatment, as long as it is not an ordinary musical comedy. The play has a very amusing idea and some excellent dialogue. We could treat it on the line of our Hollywood dream for "Lady". You remember we always felt that we should do a complete show in the style of our dreams? Here may be an opportunity to do it. We have the great romantic background of the South Sea Island, but we make fun of it. When you read the script you will easily see the possibilities for good satire and for a funny mixture of Hula Hula and New York slang. My idea is to have a small orchestra in the pit and a few musicians (Guitar, Flute, Drums) on the stage and there would be music almost through the whole show: songs, chanting, recitative, parlando and incidental music under the dialogue. I thought of opening the show this way: the stage is dark, we hear romantic island music, then we see a projection of a Gauguin painting and we hear the voice of Jon James who is lecturing on Gauguin; then the scene changes to the South Sea Island - which is not at all what we and Jon James expected. The second half of the play (which is very weak in the present form) will be completely changed.

Here is the situation: Otto Preminger got hold of



the script, is very enthusiastic about it and wants to do it around Christmas. He liked very much my ideas about how this show should be done and he said that was exactly what he wanted to do. He would be very happy if you and I would do it and he wouldn't make any decision before he has heard from us.

I still hope that my meetings with Moss will finally have a result (so far we haven't found the right idea and Moss is busy with his summer plans as an actor) and I also ~~hope~~ wish that the Behrman show or another project I'm working on ~~would~~ would work out. But in case that nothing ~~like~~ comes about I thought "Away from it all" could make a very fresh and original show for us for next season and we probably could have fun doing it.

In any case I would like to know what you think about it. Would you please read it immediately and let me know at the earliest possible what you think. Preminger would like to know soon because he wants to start work on the show.

We are in our new house - and what a mess of a mish-mash this is! But it will be lovely in a few weeks and we love the place. Of course I am spending three times as much as I thought.

The show is doing terrific business this week. I just heard from Bennett Cerf that they had to cancel the special edition because Gertie refused to sign! Isn't she a nice girl!

Please let me hear soon about the play, even if you don't want to answer my letters.

Love to you and Lee from Lenya
and

Lenya

