

This will be an experimental session because I am going to find out, I hope, between last week and today, how you learn the best and you better help me. If you don't understand something, if I'm going at something too long, if I have told you something before and I don't remember it, tell me "you said that." I don't mind. I want to learn as you learn. I want to learn how to teach. All right?

Now, tonight you are going to suffer a little -- I am going to sing a little. What we are going to do tonight is try to cover, if we can, the beginnings of what became musical comedy, which as you know, is an indigenous form -- an indigenous American form. There is no such other thing in the world. English musical comedy is a fairly stilted form.

You don't have to write all of this down, unless you love it. Just in case you're all nervous, I have bibliographies for everybody. These are not required reading. This is where I get some of my -- let me tell you about me. I know -- I have forgotten most of what I know about musical comedies, it's been so long. But I do know a lot about it. What I don't remember -- I don't remember the dates of various European

treaties, although I know who Bismarck was and what he did. I sometimes forget, was it 1908, 1909. And I think that a song from "Sing Out The News" was " On Pins and Needles" and they say "oh, no," "oh, yes" and everyone bets a quarter and Adolph Green wins because he remembers everything. But these are the sort of books, for instance, the first one I have here is the "Musical Comedy in America" by Cecil Smith. You are all going to get a copy of this. Don't write any of this down. I can't stand to see you working so hard. I'll make you work later.

This is the most readable of the books and will give you a wonderful, comprehensive feeling of the developments. He was a newspaper man of great style, a theater critic and a very good one, in London; and I wish he hadn't died and I wish he had written a more up-to-date book. But it goes into the late fifties which isn't bad. That's a good one.

Now, "The World of Musical Comedy" enlarged and revised edition is by Stanley Green and he treats it composer by composer. (Interruption because of hearing, seating in class).

The Stanley Green book, he attacks the subject by composer. I know he covers an awful lot of musical comedy that way -- he covers all of it that way. It's like one of those things, like

those Budweiser beer rings. You start here and you go back over, and go back over, and over and I think after a while a book like that you'll find very interesting for reference and continuity. You know, if you want to go back and refresh your memory or follow the career of a writer because some of them are very interesting. Some of them developed a lot, some of them stayed just the same. So, I think it would be interesting for you to read a little bit later, but I wouldn't suggest it just this minute.

The most complete book here is the third one, that's the Ewen book. It is an encyclopedia of the musical theater and it is -- it goes into everything in great detail. The only bothersome thing about it is, that by the time he gets finished telling every plot they all sound the same. Because he uses the same adjectives, always, and uses the same verbs, always, and it drove me up the wall and I think they would you. But they do tell the story and you get to know them and you get to be familiar with things you've never seen and possibly will never see. So that's what's like having a Britannica in your hands.

Now, when we get to the Gershwin pieces, which will be

next week and the following week, you will find this next book absorbing and invaluable. Without it I couldn't teach this course -- oh, yes I could. It's the very personal reminiscences of the Gershwins and very accurate. I have read it and checked it through. It's very accurate and it shows its (musical comedy) development as history. It's like reading the life of Cezanne. You get to know Monet, you get to know Manet, you get to know Van Gogh -- all of them are around all the time. That's a very nice book.

Max Gordon who talks until his breath runs out -- I wish I could imitate him, Danny does, and he speaks when he's excited: "Listen Harp, I-want-to-tell-you-so-and-so-and-so-and so -- (big gulp of breath) "and-so-and-so" -- and he goes on and on with no punctuation but his breath. Well, he writes his book that way. He just goes on and on and on but there's some very interesting stuff in it and you get a feeling of his period in the theater. He was a very good producer of musicals in the thirties. As a matter of fact, he produced after "The Little Show" which was the first big intimate revue -- in other words, the first intimate revue on Broadway, Gordon presented. What the devil was the name of that show --

well, here I am -- it was a Schwartz and Dates show with Clifton Webb and Libby Holman and what the devil was the name of it? "Flying Colors?" No. Well, whatever, it was the next show after "The Little Show" and he did three or four in a row that were just great reviews. Then he did book shows and he had a terrible flop with an operetta and then he went on to produce comedies like "Born Yesterday" and things like that. He's a very good theater man and he knows the theater very well.

Now, "The Merry Partners" which I can see wasn't put where it belongs -- this belongs way up here where we're talking about today. If you ever get curious about the beginnings of the American Variety Theater, because that's what it was from 1879 through 1910. Harrigan and Hart -- how many of you have ever heard of them? Anybody know them? No, it's not Moss Hart -- that's Tony Hart. Ned Harrigan and Tony Hart were a very, very famous team of comedians. They were also producers. Ned Harrigan, if this means anything to you -- do you know who Josh Logan is? -- yes, well his wife, she's Ned Harrigan's daughter -- now, if that makes it any clearer (class response "now I know" and laugh).

Harrigan and Hart were absolutely idolized in that time..

As a matter of fact, there was -- we'll go into this a little bit today. They wrote a show called "The Mulligan Guards' Ball" that was the first big show. Then came the "Mulligan Guards' Picnic" -- the Mulligan Guards on the roof, the Mulligan Guards in the cellar, the Mulligan Guards go marching, they go tramping, whatever, there were about ten Mulligan Guards pieces. But the original one is quoted in "Kim" in the Kipling book -- Kim is singing the actual lyrics of the first song in the "Mulligan Guards' Ball" -- that's how famous it was, and that's how fleeting fame is in the theater. If you want to take it to heart (laugh) remember Shakespeare (laugh). Anyhow, "The Merry Partners" is about Harrigan and Hart and it gives you a good picture of the period. Anything I've left out, he'll get to. I'm afraid that if I go into the kind of detail that these books go into we'll be through with this course in two years, and I'd like to cover it for you in twelve to fifteen sessions.. So I just suggest these as supplements and I hope, I know it's a vain sort of hope, but I hope that whatever I teach you or whatever I start to get you interested in this semester, you will remember two years from now and ten years from now it may come back to you sometime in another context

and do something to open the world a little for you. That's really the most I hope to do in this and so these books will be supplementary for you, if you want them.

Now, Weber and Fields. You know about Weber and Fields? (Class discussion) You don't know about Weber and Fields-- all right (class laugh) no, well that's all right. This goes right with the beginnings of the American theater, so let's start from the beginning and I'll continue this run-through a little bit later.

The first musical done in the English language (you mean I sound official -- everybody's bending to the paper) was the "Beggars' Opera" by John Gay in the 15th century and the "Threepenny Opera" is based to a large extent on it even though the "Threepenny Opera" broke new ground. I remember you asked me last week if we were going to study new things like "Company" and "Follies". Well, "Company" and "Follies" are very fresh and they have marvelous things in them. But they are following a pattern set by Brecht and Weill in Germany. They're breaking new ground for Broadway possibly for those who haven't seen "The Threepenny Opera." But the style of

using a story, an intimate story, to tell a large piece --.

Now Hal Prince is coming to to take one of the classes (class reaction). Oh, I have some nice people lined up.

Hal Prince is going to come and take one of the classes and talk about directing and producing. He produced "Company" as you know, and "Follies" and he's very, very proud of them and if I pick at him, and if you give me away (class response) boy, you're going to get terrible marks. But I have to. I mean there are wonderful things in them and then there are some things that I quarrel with and I can't teach you fairly without telling you what I quarrel with. Then you're free to disagree with me. We'll play the things and you'll make your own judgment. But "Follies" for instance was about (as far as Steve Gonheim is concerned and Jim Goldman and Hal) was about the United States of America. It was about the disintegration of our country. It was about the promise of our youth and the disappointment of our middle-age. Now I agree with them about the country. This country has gotten middle-aged in no time flat. You know it was a very young country for 150 years and then all of a sudden -- wham -- it was middle-aged. That does tell the story but it's a pity they

didn't tell everybody. Because it doesn't say, because there's almost no clue in the songs or in the story. You have to say this must be about something, you know, if you're thinking; and maybe you'll think it's that or maybe you'll think it's something else, but that's one of the rules I'll put down: if you want to say something, say it. Don't send me postcards later saying what I really meant was so and so. Get it in somewhere, somehow. Of course, in the theater you have to leave a great deal to people's imagination or it wouldn't be theater -- you have to start that kind of magic, but you have got to open the door for them. You have to show them where they are going, or point down the road for them at least. Anyhow, that's Brecht, Weill and "Threepenny Opera" was directly patterned after the John Gay "Beggar's Opera."

You're very fortunate that I don't know any music from that and I'm not going to sing it. (Class response and question about composers mentioned). That was Kurt Weill W-E-I-L-L. He was one of the two successfully transplanted German composers. He came over here -- you will see when we do Weill, some of his pieces, that he started -- did you know that he wrote the "September Song" for instance? And if you play it as I have always heard it in my ear -- I play

very much by ear, and I'm sure a lot of you think that way, you hear the music the way you're accustomed to hearing music but if you sit down and play K&rt's piano copy, it is German, it is very, very German. The harmony and the structure of the chords are very German. But then ten years later he was writing very much in the idiom of the Broadway theater. When he wrote "One Touch of Venus" he was writing totally in it. It was a very dreadful thing that he died so young and so suddenly. He was a very nice man -- he wrote the music to "Lady In The Dark" and that's how I know him.

Anyhow, our next bridge to the musical theater is going to be Gilbert and Sullivan who, in my opinion, made the American musical possible. Next week I hope to have for you something that will delight your souls as it did mine. Lenny Bernstein did a marvelous television program in 1956 --(it was on musical comedy) and in the course of it he did a step by step comparison of the first act finale of "The Mikado" with the first act finale of "Of Thee I Sing" and he had a whole cast and he had an orchestra, and this morning I asked him could I have it and he said he would send it out to me. So, we'll have it next week I hope and you can see it and hear

it. Many people don't see the junk that I see, and I think it only fair to tell you that all of us who think about this, talk about it or have opinions, have our own opinions and you're listening to mine, and you don't have to listen as if they're gospel -- except I think it is. But if you've read somewhere or you've heard somewhere or you feel that you disagree with me, feel free to say so. I don't -- I encourage it, as a matter of fact. I don't like rowdy interference, but I like conversation.

Anyhow, between the time of "The Beggar's Opera" and the time of Gilbert and Sullivan coming to this country, the stage was not a blank. The musical stage was not a blank. As a matter of fact, there was something done in this country in 1735 called "Flora" (you don't have to write this down either. It's not that important, I'm saying it in passing) which was performed in a courtroom in Savannah, Georgia, and it was a play but they put into it some of the popular songs of the day. They didn't necessarily have much to do with the plot, but they were there. It was the first time a musical performance was put on in any American theater. Now, the one that every history will refer to, or used to, as the beginning of the

American musical comedy was something called "The Black Crook" which was in 1866 or 65 or 54, depending upon which book you read, they all disagree. It accomplished a lot of things and the story of how it got there sounds like an early motion picture plot. But there were two troupes booked in, one to Niblow's Gardens and one to some other place. One was a dramatic show called "The Black Crook" which was very like "East Lynn." You know "East Lynn? You know, the mortgage, the villain with the moustache, and the heroine on the railroad tracks and the hero comes in and saves her at the last minute. That kind of thing, that kind of plot, all black and white. There was also a ballet troupe booked in from Europe and they got there and the other place -- somebody else's gardens -- were full up or they were tearing it down, no, they had a fire, and the man demanded that his company be allowed to play because he had come all the way over here.

So somebody had the brilliant idea of combining the two shows. Now if this doesn't sound like a Warner Brothers musical -- but this is exactly what happened. And they took "The Black Crook" -- the whole plot, the moustaches and the plotting and the wringing of the hands and I don't know what,

and the trap doors, and they combined it with a French ballet troupe and to make it even more of a presentation the stage was given ...I must tell you and it may come as a shock to you that in the late 19th century there was more spectacle and more extravaganza in the theater than there has ever been since. The kind of great effects that you see only on the screen and you think you occasionally get on television, is trick shots -- they use miniatures -- nothing. They had a fire, they set something on fire, they bring in a fire-engine with horses. This is absolutely true. Harrigan and Hart did it. They had waterfalls, they had anything you could think of. Anything you could think is impossible in a theater, they did. And remember, this is before Edison, this is before electric light. I don't know how they did it, and they're welcome to it.

In "The Black Crook" because of this combination -- and they dressed up the chorus great and they had pretty sexy girls but they were a little more covered up than they usually are -- and that ran -- a long run until the middle 1930's, a long run in the theater was two or three months: "Connecticut Yankee" two months, "Dearest Enemy" two months; Dick Rogers wrote four shows a year but he had all hit shows, but that was it, that

was as much as the theater held and they went on from there -- but "The Black Crook" ran for about five years. They couldn't get enough of it. I'm probably wrong, it probably ran for a year and a half but it seemed like five years. I didn't bring any of my books tonight and I can't check it.

The show was five hours and it ran four and something hours on opening night -- nobody left. It just continued running and it did a remarkable thing. It made it respectable for the first time for women to go to the theater. Because before that, they mostly had what they called living statues and the living statues didn't have too much on by their standards, and acting was considered a terrible profession and women and children never went to the theater. But I'll tell you what did more for it than the "Black Crook" actually the one that really made the theater really respectable was "Dinafore". That was the one where they started bringing the whole family -- but "The Black Crook" was the one ~~that~~ they brought their wives to. It's a good thing I correct myself or you'd all believe me.

(In response to question re motion pictures going through same thing). I hope to ~~say~~ that they went through the same

thing. That's why I'm having pictures in conjunction with this. Because the musical picture went through almost the same steps as the musical theater but in a shorter time. But when they began they began with these great big things until they finally got them down to size. It's funny, for any new director that comes into the business, any new motion picture director, immediately wants to do tricks. He won't hold the camera still. If I'm warning you, I'm warning you. Everybody did it, we all did it, when we started. We said wouldn't that be ^a great shot, you know, and you just moved it and you moved it and you go around and you shoot it from underneath, and you shoot it through a hard boiled egg and then, finally, you get down to the business of doing a picture so that people can follow the story so that it has some meaning. I don't care whether the meaning is comedic or sad or whatever it is, but it has to have some continuity and some meaning and it can't all be these crazy things. As a matter of fact, this business of jump cutting, which while I approve of a lot of it, it's how pictures started because they didn't have dissolves and fades. That took a little

craftsmanship and a little thinking, so they went through years to get good dissolves, good fades and good iris outs, they way they did on the stage, and suddenly a whole new team came in about fifteen years ago or ten years ago and, all of a sudden, they had jump cutting and it was a new thing. Well that's nice. No, I'm not being funny about this. That's nice because I like people to learn for themselves. They learn best by learning for themselves. You have to go through it.

Question: Do you think that maybe one reason why they went through all this great extravaganza was because they didn't really have faith in their material and didn't really trust the show to sell itself?

Answer: And they weren't wrong because I'm going to play you a record that's going to prove it.

Question: Is this from "The Black Crook?"

Answer: No. I have some music from "The Black Crook" -- you want to hear a song from "The Black Crook"? You won't believe it. The hit from "The Black Crook." Oh, my god. You don't know where I went to xerox these things, I want you all to admire this work. I'll tell you the title, it's

"Oh, You Men, You Naughty, Naughty Men," and that's most of the lyric. Well, here we go (at the piano). I'm not related to Chico Marx. There are two ways of looking at this. If you can't hear me, you're lucky. Where are we? Somebody mixed this up. There it is. Now, I'm going to play this exactly as written. I'm even going to get my glasses so you don't think I'm making it up. I know I brought a pair of glasses. I have very peculiar eyes. I see out of one eye at a time. (Music). Like it so far. You want the lyrics?

(Piano). I will never more deceive
 you, nor of happiness bereave you, but
 I'd die a maid to grieve you
 Oh, you naughty, naughty men
 You can talk of love and dying but
 from lust you're nearly dying, all the
 while you know you're trying to deceive
 you naughty men.

That's the big hit from "The Black Crook," and I'm not kidding, that's it. This was sung in New York for years and years and years so if you think they were self-conscious about their material, you can bet your ass they were.

Question: I don't know, maybe I'm entirely wrong, but the English musicals that are going on right now, it's the same thing.

That's why I said the American musical comedy. The American musical comedy is totally so many cuts above any other country in the world, while France doesn't even attempt it. The only country that attempts it is England, but England is great in operetta, comic operetta. They're very literate. Do you know many English? Personally? They are very articulate. Their working vocabulary is much larger than ours. They cultivate it, they encourage it. I believe it. I lost my vocabulary when I started working in pictures. I had to and after a while it becomes a habit. You can't know any more than the people who are listening especially if you are writing comedy. And after a number of years, like twenty-five, you've lost it and the words just don't come when you want them. They're not there.

Now, they did have a lot of extravaganzas and their material was quite poor. Life was simpler those days. I don't mean to get bucolic here, but aside from the water being clean, and the air being clean, nobody travelled much beyond their home towns and their backyards. You know, a trip from Brooklyn to New York was a great event, and a trip from

New Jersey to New York was prepared for for weeks. I'm not making this up, it's absolutely true. The very, very rich travelled and that's all and the very, very poor on steerage, who came from Europe, the immigrants. Only the very, very rich travelled and people had to get their diversion in their parlor, in their backyards, whatever, so they'd see a couple of songs and they'd hear "In The Good Old Summertime" and, by god, they sang it for ten years, and they were crazy about it because they knew it as well as they knew their names and familiar music is always more satisfying.

If you go to see a picture for the first time, or a show, and you hear the score, you will possibly carry away a tune and think, well yeah, that's pretty good but it's not until you hear the whole thing a couple of times and it begins, you know, the harmonic changes begin to get into your head as well as the melody and the lyrics begin to have some significance and you really begin to love the song, and they had a lot of that then. We don't have a lot of it now because there are so many songs being written and ~~they're~~ thrown at us from so many places, and so much goes on on television and so much goes on in the movies that who can bother to go to

the theater or who can be bothered to remember the song unless it means a lot to you personally. But in those days they were simple-minded, outside of people like Bismarck and Jefferson. I mean they had great minds and they had people of great education, but the majority of the people laughed at very simple things like people slipping on a banana peel, which I laugh at too. I think that's pretty funny -- depends on who slipped. But it all depends on the -- you have to put yourself back in their mood because I want to play for you now a couple of the great, great, great people from the end of the 19th century. I don't have any records before that and I think it's a very good thing. Now you have to remember when you hear this the kind of conditions under which they were recorded. They had this little wax roll and they had a speaker with a fairly big mouth. Steve, you know more about this than I do, so check me on this. And it went down to a narrow neck so by the time the sound got on to the roll, it had narrowed down. They didn't have any capacity for picking up the lows, the highs or the overtones. And you know, anybody's voice depends on the overtones. (Demonstrating at the piano) -- but they're singing here and what you hear is if I hold it long enough, all

you will hear is the bottom note. And so, without those over-tones, you don't get any sound worth talking about. Now, these poor bastards -- I'm sorry, I'm using some very bad language -- these poor creatures had to scream into these horns and so their voice quality suffered. Did you ever hear a Caruso record? Well, you know how pinched his voice sounds when it gets up into the high notes and you wonder why anybody ever bothered to listen to him. Now one of the saddest things about this is that some of the greatest performers came off the worst. And let me say a word about what makes a star.

Stars have something they're born with. You can't give it to them, you can't teach it to them, you can't wish it on them, you can't take it away from them. Only time will take it away and by time I mean their spirit goes and so the spark goes. Many of them keep it until the day they die, until they're 90 something. Sarah Bernhardt obviously had it, Sir Harry Lauder kept it until his eighties and it's the kind of thing -- the best example I can give you is -- I've known Ethel Merman from the day I fell into show business, the day after I was married. That was in 1940, my god.

Question: How old were you when you got married?

Answer: Twelve

Now Ethel Merman used to come to the Martinique where Danny and I worked and Sunday nights was anybody-get-up-and-perform-who-wanted to-night. So Ethel would get up to sing and I'd have to play for her because I was once a good pianist. Well, you are when you practice -- when you don't play you're not. And I used to play for her and my heart used to break because she had a vibratto you could drive a truck through. You know -- that kind of voice. I'd say, gee, I always heard she was such a great singer, poor thing, you know here voice is gone -- she's not that old and I'd say to Danny, gee isn't it awful about Ethel, you know, I'm embarrassed when she sings. Then I'd go to the theater and I'd see her in "Panama Hattie" or "DuBarry Was A Lady" or something and by god, you don't feel sorry for her. That woman walks in, and I saw here at a benefit two years ago and it's still true, she walks on to the stage and she owns that theater. Nobody else exists. You don't know how old she is, the bags disappear from under here eyes, you don't hear the vibratto in her voice, her posture -- you know, she suddenly stands differently and she has something. It's a magnetic force which goes "wham" to the audience and

its there.

Question: Did you see here do the Gershwin show?

She's not as good on television. I want to tell you sadly, the greatest performers are never as good in pictures or television as they are in the theater because you need that whole thing. Like for instance, when Khrushchev came to visit in Hollywood. I never go to studio luncheons for visiting queens, I don't know, it's kind of silly, kings and princes and their off-spring. But I was really curious to see Khrushchev because I had a feeling that seeing him in movie newsreels and on television, you just sort of got a feeling of the man but not enough -- there wasn't enough to explain the kind of power he had gathered and kept in Russia. So, I got curious and I went to the lunch and he walked in and it was not only electric but you can almost feel the steel in that man. He was tough. God, he was the toughest man I have ever seen. And we worked in Chicago once and I saw some very tough characters. He was rough and he gave it to Spyro Skouras, and he had a great peasant sense of humor, Khrushchev had. He was being terribly funny, but it wasn't funny at all. And you can only feel it when you're in the room. There's

something that emanates, it's like horses know when you're afraid. You know when you see a star, you know when you see a powerful man. You can't miss it, you walk into a room and there nothing, there nothing but "he" or "she" there's somebody -- you don't know who it is. Well, that goes a thousand times for the theater.

So, a lot of these people who will sound like absolutely nothing but I wanted you to hear the kind of thing they sang and the kind of thing that made them famous, to see what kind of a jump we're going to take as we go. Some of the best of them will sound the worst because nothing is on that record but this much of their talent, just a little piece, just the voice distorted, and a little bit of the fire, but...

We'll start with George M. Cohan. Now, on the record Chamberlain Brown, he sounds like a cross between Alfred Hitchcock and somebody who just came out of a dentist's office. He does a long narration. If it intrigues you, we'll listen. If you want to get on with it, just wiggle me a signal. I've heard this, so it's all right.

Do you know who Chamberlain Brown was? You don't have to write this down -- he was a great producer, he produced

"Mourning Becomes Electra" in the theater, he produced, what-
ever. (Recording). That's not Chamberlain Brown, that's the
audience. Let's see what he's going to say. (Voice of Brown.)
Remember, he could have been teaching you instead of me. This
is interesting (voice of Brown) and that's where the name
vaudeville came from -- now let's skip over to where George M.
Cohan starts to sing. (Cohan singing). This ran and ran and
ran and ran. George M. Cohan was one of the greats in the
American theater.

Now, the next one we're going to pick up ... George M.
Cohan later and I'm going to tell you a little about his shows,
then at the end of the hour I'm going to run (a film). I
wanted you to hear this to see what a good job Jimmy Cagney
did because they made "Yankee Doodle Dandy" in 1942 and Cagney
played Cohan and he did a brilliant job. He had watched him
and watched him and what you'll see will be a lot better --
a much better production than you would have seen in the
theater, heaven knows, and the sound will be far better and
I wanted you to hear the orchestrations because the orches-
trations are totally different. There'll be a change in the
orchestrations which nobody notices much, and you'll hear

these songs later anyhow, that's why I'm taking them off.

What are we going to hear next? Lillian Russell -- you can hear three notes just for the sake of history. Lillian Russell was a girl by the name of Helen Leonard and she appeared one night at Tony Pastor's and she sang this song and I know you're going to think it should have chased everybody out and her back to New Jersey, but it made her a star over-night. They changed her name to Lillian Russell and she became a great celebrated beauty. Now, she must have been a very, very beautiful woman and I'm sure her voice was not as bad as this, but you can listen to "Evening Star."

She probably had a very true voice, but listen to the orchestration. They had big holes. They have a fiddle up here and the woodwind down here and the singer comes in there and there's no support underneath. Because that's what you're all accustomed to hearing. You're all accustomed to hearing the singer really supported. Okay? Now, do you want to hear any more old performers? (Answering a question) you don't have to listen to anybody. This is for historic interest only. I just wanted you to hear, oh, I know what I wanted you to

hear. This was one of the most famous skits of Weber and Fields. Now let me tell you about Weber and Fields before you play anything. Hold everything. Weber and Fields were a team of Irish comedians, one was very tall and skinny and the other was very short and fat. And I think more people have come to masquerades dressed as Weber and Fields -- well, for fifty years, not any more -- than almost anything except the Marx Brothers -- from then on everybody was Groucho Marx. They were Irish comedians and they were playing in sort of cheap things and now we come to one of my great pronouncements. One of the factors that went very much into making musical comedy was what was then called burlesque. Now Burlesque then was not what Burlesque became. Burlesque was not a strip show. It was true they featured some very beefy girls in tights but Burlesque meant parody and they were even more famous for their parodies sometimes -- well, one man in 18__ something or other, very early, 54 I think it was, did a parody on Hamlet that ran for a long time. That was the first Burlesque. Then there was "Evangeline" -- they did a burlesque of "Evangeline" that was early on, but that wasn't musical. They had a few tunes played but it wasn't musical.

But the first, Weber and Fields came a little before Harrigan and Hart, and then they went simultaneously, and they were Irish comics like Harrigan and Hart and somebody wanted them for a burlesque house, but they didn't need Irish comics, they had an Irish comic on the bill. So, they became what was called Dutch comic which was German, and they stayed that way for the rest of their lives. They did only German dialect. They were considered among the funniest people alive and this was one of their famous sketches. They all had music to bring them on just like they do in television, and the music was just as famous as they were. They all had themes. (Record.)

That's how it goes. Who do you recognize from that. That's right, Laurel and Hardy -- and every team in which one browbeats the other. They set the pattern for that kind of comedy. And the other famous team which you probably don't know about was Lou Costello and Bud Abbott -- Abbott was the straight man and the routine was "Who's On First" and it was very like that.

(Answering question about Rowan and Martin.) Yes, Rowan and Martin -- Rowan browbeats Martin, that's true, but the difference is that they would do this same sketch year after year after year for twenty years -- thirty years. The same

audience came, they laughed just as hard, they applauded just as much and they came back the next year. That was the tempo of the theater, of show business really. So that Burlesque had a lot to do with combining comedy for the first time -- their comedy Weber and Fields was -- Harrigan and Hart were much more rough and tumble; Harrigan was a composer and he wrote "The Mulligan Guard's Ball." But there was a great group in England called the "Crazy Gang" and they used to do just what Harrigan and Hart did. They would write stage directions, they'd get some great scents, you know, they wanted to get the Mulligan Guards to a ball, but they wanted the ball to really take on life, and they were just dancing around, and the plot was about that there was a whole hotel full of ballrooms -- there was a ballroom here and on the next floor there was a ballroom. But on the floor above them was occupied by what was then called quite happily coons -- because all folk humor has now disappeared from the scene and we now call them blacks; but the Jews were called kikes and Italians were called dagos or spics -- they went on like ~~that~~ and nobody minded it, that was it, nobody meant anything, they were just designating them by neighborhood, race, whatever. In show business there

was very little discrimination, very little feeling of any kind and to this day for the most part. There are exceptions. Anyhow, this tradition of doing comedy sketches -- they had a beginning, a middle and an end with girls which led to the revue. And if you look hard at the construction of the musical comedy later you will see that a good musical comedy scene is written almost like a sketch or like a small play. It has to have a beginning, a middle and an end. The end, the beginning and middle should and could lead to songs or ballet or something. But you have to have the feeling that an emotion has been expressed, a problem has started or that a problem has gotten over but you can't be left hanging. It's what my father used to call loose talk. There's no place for loose talk in the theater. It either has to advance something, it has to be funny -- if it's going to be funny, you have to build it. You can't have joke lines without feed lines. So if any of you intend to be book writers, one of the gravest mistakes made is that they figure musical comedy book can be sort of anything -- you know, you just slap it together and throw in some songs and if the songs are good enough, and you have a star in the cast, and somebody's funny, they're going to go.

That's the story of all the flop shows. You take "My Fair Lady" for which George Bernard Shaw wrote the book and his scenes were pretty complete and it did pretty well, it did very well indeed.

I think you can start rolling the record and tell me what time it is because we had better get on with this.

Well, and then came Gilbert and Sullivan. I'm bypassing and I'm very conscious that I'm bypassing, in case anybody asks you what didn't she know, I'm bypassing Singespiel in the German theater which came right before Mozart. Until the time of Mozart there was a series of songs -- they'd get up and sing songs and maybe they'd say a word or two between -- but the Germans loved it and they came and everybody sang.

Mozart added some genius to it and you got the first operas; "The Marriage of Figaro", "Cosi Fan Tutte" (which I called tu@te's cozy fanny because it's very long). You hear it in German, you hear it in Italian, whatever, and the music is lovely, it sings and it's lilting but it has character. It begins to tell its story and it has the character of the people in it. I'm skipping that. I'm skipping opera, unless you want to hear me sing some opera. I'm going to do you an opera by

and by -- in two minutes or one minute.

Then came opera buffe in France, then came Viennese opera which was all over Europe. They called it Viennese opera but they all had a whack at it. It was done mostly by Johann Strauss, particularly the very good ones. But they sounded very like opera, especially if they're sung in German. I'll tell you something about opera. If you don't understand Italian, you think they're about something. It's true. These things that they sing you know they emphasize, and should, because that's a play being sung and being totally sung, that's what opera is, so the most important thing is the music. Now there was a legend and for all I know it had foundations in truth, that the way the opera started -- Mozart started in Germany but simultaneously in Italy -- is that they were very -- had a great paucity of actors, of speaking actors, but a plethora of singers. So, somebody very bright said the hell with it, let's put the singers to work and we'll tell the story with music. I don't know whether to believe it or not, it's very convenient and it may be true.

But the difference between opera and operetta is sometimes very slight, and I wrote something for you today, and I'm not

sure whether you're going to like it, I'm not too sure I'm going to like it but I'll try to show you what the difference is. Suppose you had a situation in which there is a ball that night and somebody can't find his shoes. He left them at the shoemaker or the shoemaker only sent back one shoe or something. This becomes a great catastrophe in the opera because if you think some of the time they're singing about something more important, you're wrong -- they're not. They sometimes communicate the news of the day. You know, they come in and sing the recitative and all they're saying is do you know that Giusseppe lost two horses in the night and he says oh, too bad and then he says "ah dio," which means "oh, god". I once wrote a chorus for a picture for an Italian opera that just went "ah, dio" -- those were all the words for four pages. Sam Goldwyn said to me I understand it and I like it. It's true, absolutely true.

I didn't write the music, I'll have to make it up as I go. All right, the shoes are missing and there's a ball that night.

(At piano) Ah, Gilda, my life is full of tragedy. I see by the calendar that tonight is Saturday, the night of the ball. Ah dio. Ahhhhhh. And I have only one shoe back from the shoemaker and I fear he did not give my shoes his all.

Now, following that, it goes something like this:

(Piano -- change tempo) Ah dio, Ah dio, etc.

The song's about how he's not going to be able to go to the ball because he doesn't have his slippers and somebody's going to put the poison in his girl's glass and he's not there and he's not going to be able to stop them. And very often that's what opera is about because it is necessary that he doesn't come to the ball so that somebody can poison her so she can die, because if it ends happily it's not an opera. That's true.

I think one opera has a happy ending -- I think it's "Girl of the Golden West" and I don't think it lasted more than two performances. A handkerchief is necessary at the opera and it should be. An operetta, a Strauss operetta, on the other hand, will have an awful lot of stuff like this: recitative is not too different from this at all, but it will come into this(music) that's prettier than that and it makes it almost operetta and then with Straus, the other Straus, when he started to write operetta, and in German, they all started to sound just like this. I put a record on today and I was going to bring it down. I put on the "Gypsy Baron" and put on "Gypsy Love" and they all sound alike.

They all sounded like "Ah, Gilda, my ~~life~~ is full of tragedy" so the hell with it, I didn't bring it.

When you get to operetta, that is the operetta of our time, the operetta that started in this country but was not as good as Gilbert and Sullivan, it's totally different. I've written this deliberately, I've never written the music for the verse part. Verses were very, very important in operetta. This is for the soprano which I can't sing, but they're very tinklymusic then you know it's an operetta: Music -- "I have a pair of dancing shoes, etc." and it goes on and on like that and when she gets to the chorus it goes like this

Music -- I've got no shoes for the ball at all. I've got no shoes for the ball. On a night that is as magical as maytime, how can I wear shoes that I have worn in the daytime.

Now that's deliberate because maybe they're not funny but I did it to amuse myself and you, but in no show today would they do anything like that. This is typical of some kind of American operetta -- not very often in Victor Herbert, he's pretty good, but he did this sometimes. Let's take a simple one likemusic the next one will be a bit

different music an extra bar:

Music: Tell me what will my Prince Charming
Say when I appear looking so outre.

That's deliberate. They talk about things like prince charming, this is what makes it different from the musical; she talks about a dainty pair of slippers, talks about prince charming and uses a word like outre which was very, very popular in operetta. If you used a French word, you were in. This was part of the patternmusic and some day I'll play the rest of the song, I have it all here.

Now, along comes Gilbert and Sullivan, and they are totally different. Sullivan is a serious musician and to me he sounds, and maybe to you he'll sound, a lot like Mozart in places. As we listen to some of it, you will see that a lot of his little incidental music sounds very Mozartian. A lot of his musical intervals that are not sung are Mozartian. But then he had this genius for scoring a comedy lyric. Now that is very difficult to do; To support a lyric, to not spoil it, to not rush it, to not make it too slow, to make sure you get the point and for the first time, and the only time in a long time, until Ira Gershwin came along, a man who did the kind of rhymes that nobody had heard before. They

were so brilliant -- and a man who was not afraid to say... to be funny in the opening chorus.

Now, I think the reason Gilbert and Sullivan are not popular in this country is that they're preserved like museum peices. Now the British understand the British far better than we do. When a British company has done a play in Loddon and the same cast is going to come over here, they rehearse for weeks and weeks and weeks trying to Americanize or to tone down their British accent because they're very, very difficult to understand to the bulk of the audience. And particularly they have a tendency to speak more quickly than we do so they're hard to hear. You will hear in the D'Oyly Carte performance that you can't hear, that the lyrics just go by too fast. So I'm going to play a little of it for you. How many of you have ever seen "The Mikado" performed? Oh well, we don't have to go through this very much. Do you know "The Mikado" well? I'll tell you what, let's do -- we'll stop and start as we go. Let's start with "You Want To Know Who We Are, We're The Gentlemen of Japan." Shall I tell you the lyrics first? (Lyrics) but the next line gives it away: "you're wrong if you think we ain't." Now this is Gilbert and he tells you

right in the opening chorus and then the second one goes -- "perhaps you suppose this throng can't keep it up all day long if that's your idea, you're wrong --- ah." He gives it straight in the opening verses that it's going to be funny. Now, he's the first one who ever did that. Everybody else did lush opening choruses with girls tripping in, but Gilbert and Sullivan's girls always have a delayed entrance, everybody waits for them because they're very funny.

Music -- overture..... now this is one of the reasons it doesn't work. The orchestrations were made in 1878 or earlier. They have never changed one note. Nobody plays this way any more, nobody orchestrates this way any more. (Question). Nobody will play that in that tempo any more -- we're used to much quicker tempi. (End Part I-cassette.)

I'll play for you right after I play some of the Mikado. I'll tell you later. I have a totally different version of this. Nobody's ever tampered with it. Okay, let's go to the opening chorus. Music..... I used to know this in my sleep -- that's Mozartian, did you hear it? Because he used strings the way he did and that's why the orchestra sounds so other century. Very Mozartian. All right, the thing opens and **all** the gentlemen

are standing with jars and Japanese costumes, and Japanese wigs and fans.....Music.....Who understood anything? You know "Wandering Minstrel" all of you, right? So we don't have to play that, and do you know much about it or just the tune? "Wandering Minstrel" has some very funny lines in it. Do you know it at all -- oh, it's a nice tune.....Piano then it gets down to:

"If you want a song of the sea, yo ho.....
with his nancy on his knee, yo ho, with his
nancy on his knee."

He never lets a lyric go without sum. Now, after that what I want you to play is "When...A Virtuous Man." Oh, there's a great line -- the first indication of the kind of comedy song that Gilbert was going to write and notice how the music goes with it and flips it out.....Music nobody does that any more, when they're finished, they're finished. Can you hear the words clearly on that?.....Music..... Now if that were being done today in the same tempo, not trying to make it swing or rock or anything, just in the same tempo, but if that were done in the theater today and a man had a line like that, he wouldn't keep going in a straight tempo. That's an operatic hangover and that's because -- for two reasons:

because Sullivan was such a strict musician. You know he wrote "The Lost Chord" and he always wanted to write a symphony and he and Gilbert didn't talk the last ten/fifteen years of their collaboration. But I'll tell you that story if you want to hear it -- if you have two more hours.

Piano.....I know it from the beginning -- I'm like a thing you turn on, like one of those mechanical toys..... piano..... That's what we would do to make the line stand out. But they do it like operetta. But the writers who heard that and the kids who started to hear that, like Ira Gershwin, you know when he was growing up, it made an enormous impression because they took a jump like from "Archie & Mehitabel" to Shakespeare. You know there was just nothing to prepare you for the jump that those kind of English lyrics took. There just weren't any. Now there were some funny Italian lyrics and they were inside jokes to the Italians, in "The Marriage of Figaro", and a couple of those mixed up things, like "The Barber of Seville" had some funny jokes, it had some funny recitative but they're very hard to follow because they all go very fast and unless you're really expert at Italian, you don't know what the devil they're singing about.

But this is the first time the English language was used this way for lyrics in the theater and it had an enormous influence.

Now you have to watch me because I'm crazy about Gilbert and Sullivan and I'm liable to play it for three hours and I'm sure you don't want that. I want to play for you a record we made in about 1948 and I did something terrible -- I was barely spoken to and they threatened to extradite me from England. I took the view that -- you know "Trial By Jury" at all? Do you know "Iolande" at all -- do you know the "Nightmare Song"? Do you know any of the Gilbert and Sullivan patter songs that have become so famous? You don't know. Well, let's go to "Pirates of Penzance" and let's pick out "I am a Major General" -- do you know that? Good -- we're ahead.

(Question about availability of records in music library for listening). They should be and if not, you know what I'm going to do, I'm going to run this off on the tape. What I'm going to do is ask them to make me a cassette along with my reel and leave the cassette in the library. And I have a bibliography of records for you, too. Believe it or not. I got so efficient(You did your homework.) All right, I'll tell you about Gilbert and Sullivan while he's finding it (record).

Gilbert usually wrote the lyrics first and he also wrote the book and he was a rather sloppy and happy with his sloppiness fellow -- his dinner was all over the table -- and he wrote what he wrote and then he turned it over to Sullivan and Sullivan did the music. Well, Sullivan got married and he and his wife didn't very often invite Gilbert to dinner because his manners weren't all that good, they thought. He had perfectly good manners but Sullivan wanted very much to be knighted and he didn't feel that Gilbert added anything to his luster. And they finally had a terrible fight about it and Sullivan's wife contributed to this too, and so for the last twelve/fifteen years of their collaboration they didn't speak at all. And Gilbert would write the book and he'd write the lyrics and he'd send them over to Sullivan who would set them to music. The composer like that today is Dick Rogers who usually sets to music, usually the lyricist writes first and then Dick writes the music.

Question: When did they die?

That's a good question and I wish I knew the answer. I know that Pinafore, Mikado were written about in the 1870's which is pretty early, but they didn't get here until eleven

years later. And the one that hit this country was "Pinafore."

(Selection of records - pieces to play) Well, I'll tell you you're going to skip hearing D'Oyly Carte -- he wrote very beautifully for sopranos. I wanted you to hear a patter song. I'll tell you what, "The Mikado" has a patter song -- there was a patter song in every single one of them. But I want you to hear a Gilbert and Sullivan patter song as done by the D'Oyly Carte.....Music.....He did that deliberately -- first they're praising pirates, now they're praising major generals. This is a very satirical piece Music....."I Am The Major General".....This is atypical he almost never slows them down, he must have liked that lyric.....Music.....

Question: It's sort of like, there's a song in "Music Man" that does something like that, isn't there. A lot like Marx Brothers.

Well, Groucho is crazy about every bit of Gilbert and Sullivan. I'll tell you what I did here and I brought this along to show you, not to show off, but to show you what I think. It should have been done in this country and that's why Gilbert and Sullivan isn't better known. People's ears

get accustomed to a different sound, they get accustomed to different orchestrations, they get accustomed to a clearer rendition and I have often felt -- now that one's all right. Everything that's in that is still understandable and funny. In many of the songs like "I've Got A Little List" in "The Mikado" that Coco sings and even "The Mikado's" very long patter song, you don't understand one joke because they're all about typical things that will mean absolutely nothing to you.

So, taking my courage in my teeth, along with my pencil I took the "Nightmare Song" and some of the others, and I did only -- I added only the last verse, the first two are Gilbert's. This is what they almost threw me out ~~for~~ England for. Then they got to like it and let me back.....(Danny Kaye record)Johnny Green did the orchestrations and we deliberately left out strings, we used brass, we used saxes, we used everything with which you support a singer, so the chords under Danny are fat and thick and they hold it, so you don't need as much music going. So for a comedy song, I never let fiddles play the melody because all you need -- this is for those of you who are going to do musicals, produce them or

direct them, whatever you're going to do -- if you did.....
 at piano..... under the singer you wouldn't hear much of what
 he was saying, you wouldn't get the sense of drive, but when you
 did this.....piano.....and if you wanted to move even
 faster, if you wanted to give it a sense of movement after a
 while, you do this.....piano.....but you don't start with
 them, you build.

I wanted to do, I wanted you to hear "Moon and I" as
 it's sung in the original version and then I wanted you to hear
 the ballad which Johnny Green and Danny and I did. We
 orchestrated it like "Body and Soul.". Because Sullivan wrote
 gorgeous melodies, because he was really a cut above everybody
 and they can be set to anything. It's very hard to take Victor
 Herbert and move him out of his metier, but you can take
 Sullivan and move him.

Can we get "The Mikado" for a second. The "Moon and I"
 is in the second act and it comes around the second song.
 First the girls are braiding their hair and then she sings
 "The Moon and I."

...He wasn't above that, you know they used some of
 this from opera which they're back to now with Bach, and was
 despised for years. They'd do thispiano "raven hair"

this was out until rock came along and they started -- which is not bad, because there's some music wants to wander around a little bit. It helped.

5 Did you find it? First should be the opening chorus "Braid The Raven Hair". Shall I tell you how I fell on to Gilbert and Sullivan, while he's looking for the record?

I was a counsellor at children's camp and I was all of 18 years old. I had very long hair that I wore in braids wrapped around my head so that they all thought I was 27. So they gave me ~~the~~ senior girls, as I told you last week, I was music and drama counsellor, and I had boys and girls. The owner of the camp came to me and said what are you going to put on at the end of the session as a musical. Now, I had never been to a camp before, so I said, you mean I write it, and she said, no, no. I didn't know and I said well, how long do they usually run. She said, well the children have to get to bed so a half hour -- an hour at the most. So I wrote to Schermer and asked what they had that was a short operetta. And they sent me two. One was the first American operetta ever written, which you can see didn't make an impression on me, and it's in all the books and you will find it, it's

called "Robin Hood." It's not terribly good. The other was "Trial By Jury" which I had never seen in my life, I had never heard Gilbert and Sullivan in my life. I was a classical pianist and I wasn't allowed these little excursions. I played pop music on the side where nobody heard me, but I wasn't taken to Gilbert and Sullivan. I read through "Trial By Jury" and I thought it was absolutely hilarious. But I had absolutely no notion of the tradition behind it, the staging is traditional too. Everybody moves exactly as~~was~~ directed by the first D'Oyly Carte Company. So I didn't know what the tempi were. I had no idea. And songs like they had go like a bat out of hell, I had taken at a nice pretty tempo and it was very successful. I used the counsellors to sing the major parts and it turned out great.

Anyhow, when I finally got to hear the D'Oyly Carte Company, I couldn't believe it because I knww every word and I couldn't understand them. That's how I got my notion of how Gilbert and Sullivan would have been popular in this country and would be if anybody dared. Nobody dared. Anyhow, we got to the^{song} that starts with "The Sun and I" and ends up with the

"Moon and I" and it's a lovely song and everybody wishes we had songs as pretty today, so I said why not anddid you find it yet, I'm talking my head off.

Music.....End of the opening chorus. They're combing her hair and getting her ready for her wedding. It's not an easy one to sing, either. It's a murderous key for a soprano, it sits very difficult, a very difficult tessitura. Do you know what a tessitura is? I'll tell you later. No, everybody has several ranges to their voice and your voice changes in quality as you sing, like your lower notes have a heavier tone, then you get to the middle and it has a different tone. Each one is a tessitura -- that is in a difficult tessitura. Like it's very bad for a clarinetist to play between F sharp and B. That's their worst place. That's badly sitting for a soprano. I'll say for Gilbert and Sullivan they didn't care much for the singer, by the way. Some of this stuff is very difficult to sing.

Question: Is this bad for a soprano because it's between two?

For most singers it lies in a very difficult place to keep. He wants this on a very even flow, he demands it -- that's the way the song goes.

Question: nobody ever considers changing keys?

Except me. These records belong to Frank McCarthy -- mine are 78's/ I have his whole library sitting in my pantry, you should see it. All his records.

Frank McCarthy produced the motion picture called "Patton" and he loves musical comedy. When I told him I was teaching this and I was looking for records that were hard to find, he said take my whole library. So, the gardner went up with the truck and collected it and it's all sitting in my pantry.

Music - Danny Kaye.....I could have taken any one of the ballads, I don't know why I picked this one, it was a challenge I think.....music.....it doesn't take much to change the ambiance of the song. It's what you play under it, where you put it and the attitude of the singer. That was one of the fights between Gilbert and Sullivan. He wanted them to sing as carefully as they sang in an opera.....Now I tampered with the words.....Johnny does something

marvelous in here.....that's what I did...that's a typical Johnny Green.....It's just what he puts underneath it, it's in the thickness or thinness of the chorus that your getting. Well, that's about the essence of it.

Would you like to hear some of "Triäl by Jury"? Oh here is a patter song of Gilbert's that is not that much of a patter song, but it's done in a totally different form which was adapted by our writers that came on and by Ira and by me and Frank Loesser liked it too. We like people who like language. It's a much shorter form and it's been used. It was used a lot in "Of Thee I Sing".....Student: I keep expecting to hear Deanna Durbin in this.

Deanna Durban, no, that's Danny Kaye.....Music..... That's a short verse with the joke at the end repeated by the chorus. Cole Porter used it in "DuBarry Was A Lady."; "Friendship". . . . music.....he has a great economy of phrase which is the essence of good writing of any kind..... music..... I'm going to play only one more thing. I'm going to skip over eighteen things I was going to show you and maybe we'll show you next time.

But while Gilbert and Sullivan were making this impression on the writers and a very great part of the public, the people who were more educated, the people who were tickled by humor and who were literate, Victor Herbert was flourishing in this country. This is years later now. This was 1878. Now in 1906 he wrote, Victor Herbert wrote, one of his few comedic operettas. It wasn't all comedic but much more so than the others, called "The Red Mill". And this is a very famous comedy song from "The Red Mill." -- as best I remember it because I don't have the lyrics.....piano ("Every Day Is Ladies' Day With Me).....still going along the path that was set in this country by the not-terribly-funny funny songs. Because it took time from Gilbert and Sullivan, it took until the really gifted lyricists and composers had started to come along, the ones who had gotten totally out of the influence of the European operetta. Because Gilbert and Sullivan is a clear break. So you can put me down as saying that the two most important influences on musical comedy in America, which is the only kind, were so far, Burlesque and Gilbert and Sullivan. The most important being

Gilbert and Sullivan, they just marked a total change and it was a big watershed, it was a giant step, but it took them years to catch up, because Victor Herbert kept writing his way and other people wrote sort of imitations. There's only one other operetta that I want to talk about quickly. Do you want to postpone this until next time? Because I was going to get into the music from 1910 to 1920. We're now, I'm talking now about music from the very beginning up to about 1906. Would you like to continue this a little bit. Anybody in a hurry to leave? Now that I made that big announcement.

Franz Lehar came up with an operetta which you have heard, the name of which is "The Merry Widow" and the thing which distinguished that is the most curious thing. The high point -- and that ran longer than anything had run before and it ran and ran and ran, and that song song was sung, and sung and sung, and changed the whole nature of the waltz as used in the theater. Before that the whole base was the Viennese waltz. For instance, in the "Red Mill" -- you know "In Old New York".....piano.....it still has the Viennese, even when they're being more serious.....oh, I skipped such beauties as this.....piano --"Ah, Sweet Mystery"..... now that was the

opera left over in operetta. When "The Merry Widow" came along this came in the high moment of the show and was the thing that sold it and it's amazing and very, very important.

No chorus, no chorus people dancing, no anything. The juvenile and the what-do-you-call-her --heroine -- ingénue are alone on stage and dance about ten choruses of "The Merry Widow" and that was the most exciting thing because what it did was it told the story that the romance was finally going to be all right after many terrible misunderstandings -- because this thing was full of mistaken identity. Do you know the story of "The Merry Widow." You've seen the Lana Turner picture maybe? Mae Murray did it originally even before my time. But the thing is that she's a very, very rich widow whose husband was a native of some Croatian country, some made-up country, and they need money desperately and they convince her that they're putting up a statue in his honor and what-not, be a great thing -- and she's bored anyhow -- she's quite beautiful and very sexy, so she goes off with her sort of prissy ladies' maid and companion. They get there and there's a double identity mix-up -- she thinks the prince they want her to marry is the fellow she hates -- he thinks

that she's the maid and he thinks that the other one is the rich widow because she looks so terrible so she must be. And this goes on and on and on until they finally come through a lot of things, until finally at the ball (which is how I got the idea today for the shoes) and they dance "The Merry Widow." This started the importance of using dance in the theater to forward story. Before this, it was just a divertisement, you know, they just came out and danced -- it was a pony chorus or there was a ballet or whatever. But this told that everything was going to be all right and it got more and more sexy as it went. You know how the song goes don't you. You all know it. You don't know?.....piano.....well that tempo became the tempo of the American waltz and then it was picked up in Europe too, and the next time this was done in the theater, I figure was, in "The King and I" in which "Shall We Dance" told the same story except that it had a slightly different ending, but there was a sex attraction between Anna and the King of Siam and that he wanted to hold her and she wanted to be held by him. They had this all in the dance and then had it disappear in the night because the thing couldn't

be. But it was the most exciting moment in the show. Fortunately Yul Brynner had a great sex quality and so did Gertie Lawrence -- which is the same story that I told about stars.

Gertie Lawrence could not sing her way out of a paper bag. She couldn't stay on key, her voice wobbled around, it was embarrassing, but she was a marvelous dancer. She was full of grace but she wasn't really beautiful but she had that quality that makes women beautiful. She was very soft, seductive looking and very -- terribly funny, but that's aside from music -- a great comedian. But she had this great quality so that when she sang off key, nobody minded because they didn't hear her. She was just great and Yul has a good enough singing voice -- he's not really a singer but he's all right. But the two of these people had such ~~force~~, they had such kinetic force that no matter who does the polka now -- because I've seen a revival at the City Center and they're not nearly as good, but it has the same excitement, it's there.

(Question about Patricia Morrison and Deborah Kerr).
She's a lovely girl (Morrison) but compared to Gertie -- a Gertie comes along once every hundred years. Deborah Kerr

is a very good friend of mine and I like her very much and she's a very good actress but she can't sing and they had somebody dub her voice, and when they dub a voice something happens -- the audience doesn't know what's wrong but something disappears. Something doesn't quite meet. It doesn't work.

Question: Well in films they really always dub it since they always prerecord it.

Answer: Not if its your own voice.

Question: Well they're still singing a play-back.

Answer: It doesn't matter. If you yourself sing and you sing to your own voice what happens is you sing wight with it. You don't mouth it. They sing with it and so whatever a singer would normally do -- singers move differently from other people. The only ~~actress~~ I know who ever got away with that because she was a first-rate dancer was Rita Hayworth, she had her voice dubbed but she came from a theatrical family and she was so good in musical theater that she got away with it. She moved like a singer -- she held her throat like a singer, she used her arms like a singer and it worked.

The things ~~that~~ make it not work are imperceptible. I had to do a play-back with Danny and Louis Armstrong and you

know Louis Armstrong was always on pot. You know, he was always sort of stoned. Oh, he was a darling man, he was marvelous but it was hard to get Louis to concentrate. But he got intrigued by this and as long as he could sing to it and they did it over and over again and I said for go's sake let him do a direct recording and Louis said -- no, Mom going to do it Mom, I'm going to do it.

If you'd played something, if you'd sing something, if you'd recited something or made a speech -- enough is in your own head somehow and because its your own voice, you can do it pretty much the same. But the only thing that's difficult is timing it exactly the same. But if you had to speak with my voice it wouldn't come out because you'd be using your voice and your throat wouldn't work the same. Just wouldn't do.

Where was I? The Merry Widow.....question: did you mean that it wasn't used between the Merry Widow and King?Not that way. The only way I can think of and you can check me up on this, but I thought immediately last week that there's an enormous similarity between the two and I don't

remember -- now dance has been used since, of course, and dance has been used for principals since. There have been ballets, but these were two ordinary ballroom dances -- one a waltz and the other a polka -- danced by people who were not necessarily dancers. They're dancer, singer, actor, whatever, but because of the situation, because what was built up -- now, if Gertie and Yul had come out and just done that cold it would mean absolutely nothing, but there were all those things, all those scenes that were built up to it, and built to it, and built to it until you wanted them to do this. And the same thing must have happened in the Merry Widow or people wouldn't have stood and cheered and stopped the show.

Now, I'm going to tell you what I have in the next room. I have in Room 108 what some other people regard as the beginning of musical comedy and is in a way, in some aspect and that's George M. Cohan. He was an original and moving force and you begin to get the difference in a funny kind of way. Now, Lanny Bernstein in his book says that the difference between an operetta and a musical is that an operetta always has to take place in some foreign **country**clime and that makes it operatic and when it's in the vernacular and when it's laid

in New York, that's a musical. Well, "Zorba the Greek" wasn't laid in New York and it was a musical and "Fiddler on the Roof" wasn't laid in New York and that was a musical. It wasn't a musical comedy but it was in places a musical comedy. The music was half in the New York vernacular and half back in the folk routes but nevertheless, it had the soul of a musical. That's really what tells the difference. In that respect, George M. Cohan did begin it. But you will see that he had some hangovers of the variety stage left. Variety by the way is an English term and we use vaudeville from the French. I don't know why.

Let's just run a few of them because I don't think I can get the picture again from Warner Brothers. We'll run just a few of them and I want you to see the bridge -- he was one of the bridges between Gilbert and Sullivan to what we're going to get to.

Question: Was there any important part about "Merry Widow" except the dance.

Answer: Oh, there were lovely songs and they did the waltzes in those tempi. There was another great song in it called "Villia."

Question: What I was wondering you said it was a landmark --

Answer: That made it the landmark.

Question: But it didn't have much of an influence.

Answer: But it did. Principals started dancing after that.