

THE MUSIC OF LOUIS A. HIRSCH

by Rick Benjamin

Introduction

I came into the field of historic theater music in a very unusual manner: As a teenager I found and acquired a vast collection of antique orchestra scores which had belonged to one of the world's first recording companies. This material included orchestrations of music from hundreds of American musical theater productions from the 1870s through the late '20s—the creations of dozens of different composers. Later, as a young Juilliard student I started the Paragon Ragtime Orchestra to bring these scores to life through actual performances. During twenty-five delightful years of exploration, I've come across wonderful music by brilliant composers who have somehow not made it onto the modern "official list" of Broadway Greats. One name that I encountered frequently as I pulled out armloads of material to study was "Louis A. Hirsch." I quickly found his music to be lovely, technically advanced, and emotionally wide-ranging. In short, marvelous—yet no one remembers him. We hope that your surprise at Hirsch's existence will serve as an exciting reminder that the full and *definitive* history of our nation's music has yet to be written.

Louis A. Hirsch (1881–1924) was one of the most significant and innovative composers in the development of the American theater. Between 1907 and 1924 he wrote music for more than forty productions—revues, operettas, and musical comedies. Several of these were the biggest artistic and commercial successes of that seminal era. By the late 1910s, Hirsch was one of America's most popular composers. The top producers vied for his services, and his songs propelled legendary shows from which a galaxy of stars emerged. Louis Hirsch also brought new sounds to the American musical theater. Indeed, he pioneered the use of several features of the typical modern "Broadway show tune" we now take for granted: ninth and thirteenth chords (and other advanced harmonies), "blue" notes (a year before W.C. Handy broke into print), rhythmic figurations derived from African-American and Latin-American styles (including ragtime and tango), syncopated dotted sixteenth and triplet melodic lines (before their appearance in late 1910s "novelty" music), and more. None of these elements were themselves new, but they were not familiar to early 1900s theater audiences, and especially not in the forms into which Hirsch was able to meld them. Contemporaries found his music compelling, modernistic, and distinctive; it still sounds so today. Louis Hirsch's influence is just beginning to be understood, but it is not an exaggeration to say that without him, the music of Broadway's "Golden Age" would not have developed in the way that it did. He was the link from Victor Herbert and George M. Cohan on to Jerome Kern and George Gershwin.

Louis A. Hirsch's music was once enjoyed by millions of people across the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia. His name in lights on theater marquees sold tickets in cities great and small. Sheet music for many of his songs were the best-sellers of the era. The Edison, Columbia, and Victor phonograph companies all issued many recordings of Hirsch compositions (there were forty-three releases on the Victor label alone). Player-piano rolls of Hirsch tunes were also sought-after. The period's top music and theater critics were vigorous in their acclaim: Burns Mantle called Louis Hirsch "One of our foremost light opera composers." Carl Van Vechten, writing in the April 1917 issue of *Vanity Fair*, hailed him as one of the three ". . . best contemporary American composers. . ." who were ". . . expressing the very soul of a nation and an epoch. . ." Van Vechten concluded that Hirsch would be one of "the true grandfathers of the great American composer of the year 2001." American and British newspapers, musical journals, and trade magazines regularly reported on the composer's activities. One asked Pablo Casals for his opinion on current theater music; jokingly, the great 'cellist replied, "I don't like Hirsch's

music. Because I can't get it out of my head." Years later, George Gershwin devoted an episode of his NBC radio program *Music by Gershwin* to the music of the late Louis Hirsch. Posthumously, Hirsch's songs were used (without screen credit) in nine major Hollywood movie musicals, including *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *Hello Frisco, Hello*. More recently, Robert Russell Bennett (1894–1981, the distinguished orchestrator of more than three hundred Broadway shows), fondly recalled Louis Hirsch as the creator of “. . . some of the loveliest music I ever heard on the Broadway stage.”

So why is Hirsch and his music totally forgotten today? The first reason is bad timing: still young, he died in 1924, just before the advent of network radio broadcasting and “talking” motion pictures—the modern “mass media.” These two awesome new technologies—with their almost unimaginable power to reach millions—gave an unprecedented, incalculable boost to the music of Hirsch's surviving competitors. With radio network broadcasting (inaugurated in 1926), a new song could be heard *instantaneously* by hundreds of thousands of people over vast geographical areas; previously it could have been heard only once a night, in a single theater, by a few thousand listeners. Similarly, through sound films, mass exposure for new music was facilitated in even a larger way, especially after Hollywood movie musicals began to appear in the late 1920s. Both of these new mediums reached far larger markets than sheet music, the player piano, or even the phonograph ever had. Mass exposure always boosts popularity, and had Louis Hirsch lived on into this new age of electronic mass entertainment—with its insatiable appetite for fresh “content”—he would now likely be included in the pantheon of honored Broadway composers.

The second reason for Hirsch's current obscurity stems from the fact that we are still in the very early days of research into the history of the American musical stage. More than seventy-five years of powerful mass media presentations of exciting music by Gershwin, Kern, Berlin, Porter, Rodgers, et al., has created millions of fans for these composers, inspiring some to write books and articles about the sounds they find so attractive. By the 1950s the first of these authors had essentially determined which composers were important to the “narrative” of our musical theater. In turn, the next generation of writers, influenced by available texts and what they heard via radio, TV, and LP recordings, largely continued to solidify this “accepted” view. But a wider study of first-generation materials—particularly the scores themselves—reveals that much of tremendous value has been overlooked.

Biography

Louis Achilles Hirsch was born in New York City on November 28, 1881, the first child of Isadore and Henrietta Hirsch, a genteel and artistic couple who resided at 227 East 24th Street. His father, Isadore (1846–1925) was an immigrant from Hatten, Bas-Rhin, in the Alsace region of France. Isadore Hirsch immigrated to the United States in 1865 and was naturalized in 1872. Like many Jewish immigrants of that era, he lived on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, working first as a clerk in an auction house, then running an auction firm at 46 East Houston Street. But he was a skilled cabinetmaker, and later started a company that specialized in the building of lavish barrooms for New York's grand hotels. Isadore met and courted Henrietta Hayman (1857–1931), the American-born daughter of German immigrants. The couple were married in Manhattan on February 20, 1881.

By the time of Louis Hirsch's birth the following fall, his family was economically comfortable and had rising prospects. Their home life was cosmopolitan: French and German were spoken, as was English. Extended family members from Europe visited and sojourned there. The Hirsches, although not wealthy, had servants. Music and other arts were cultivated. Mrs. Hirsch was a pianist, and was astonished one day when two and a half year old Louis toddled over as she practiced and began playing along with his harmonica—in the right key. Within six months he was climbing up and playing the piano himself. A favorite aunt began to give him lessons, which Louis quickly outgrew. His parents were delighted at his precociousness. They arranged for the boy to study with one of the city's leading pedagogues, Gustave Levy, at the New York College of Music. Not long afterward, Louis began instruction in harmony under

Max Spicker (1858–1912), a faculty member at the National Conservatory. Also around this time, Louis's parents began taking him to the many classical concerts and recitals being presented around the metropolis. Perhaps not surprisingly, the child was now seized with the ambition to become a concert pianist.

In 1888 the Hirsch family moved uptown, to 409 East 56th Street. Isadore Hirsch's main impetus probably was to live in a nicer place, but this relocation just may have also altered musical history. As the teamsters struggled to bring their furniture and piano into the new home, the Hirsches met their next-door neighbors at #411—Henry and Fannie Kern. The Kerns had three boys, the youngest of whom was a toddler named Jerome. The families had much in common. And Mrs. Kern, like Mrs. Hirsch, was a pianist, and one of considerable accomplishment. Soon the Hirsch household was unpacked and daily routine was under way. Louis, age seven, resumed his piano practice; Czerny etudes and student pieces by the Masters began to cascade out the open windows of 409 East 56th Street, adding to the atmosphere of culture already established next door by Mrs. Kern. There can be little doubt that there was much contact between these two musical boys. Neither Hirsch nor Jerome Kern left a written account of their early lives, but there are glimpses. In 1917, Kern was interviewed for *The Musical Courier*: “At the name Louis Hirsch, Mr. Kern smiled and said: ‘You know Louis Hirsch and I were neighbors. When I was in my cradle, I used to hear him practice. In spite of that we are still friendly and I like his work.’” In time, little Jerome began piano lessons with his mother, while Louis started studies with the acclaimed Hungarian virtuoso and composer Rafael Joseffy (1852–1915). In 1897 the Kerns moved to Newark, New Jersey, after nearly ten years of living next door to the Hirsches. During that time Louis had grown from the age of seven to sixteen; Jerome, from three years to nearly twelve. Given this extended length of contact and strongly shared interests, it seems quite likely that Louis A. Hirsch had some influence on the life and future trajectory of Jerome D. Kern.

In the 1890s new syncopated music of African-American origin was becoming all the fashion. Called “rag-time,” it manifested itself not only as a keyboard style, but also as a rhythmic form of pop song. Although ragtime originated in the Midwest, the craze hit New York strongly. It was the exciting new sound of minstrelsy (then in its final days), variety, and vaudeville. And through the promotion of white performers like George M. Cohan, it was fast becoming *au courant* for the musical comedy stage as well. Louis Hirsch—now a teenager—was the perfect age to be bitten by the ragtime “bug.” He loved the new sound, and eagerly sought it out wherever it was being played or sung. His teachers probably disapproved, but there can be little doubt that Hirsch also began to play ragtime piano during this period, and to collect sheet music for it as well.

Louis Hirsch entered City College of New York sometime in the mid- to late-1890s. Preliminary research at CCNY seems to indicate he enrolled in 1896 for the “Class of 1900.” But that would have meant he was attending college at age fourteen. In any case, Hirsch did not finish a degree at CCNY. The 1900 Census reveals that he continued to live at home, and worked as a piano teacher. In the spring of 1901, tragedy struck: Hirsch was bicycling with a friend when his companion, also on a cycle, was struck by a truck and instantly killed. Hirsch was deeply disturbed by this event. His concerned parents decided that in order for their son to regain his emotional equilibrium, he needed a complete change of setting. Taking action, they enrolled him in one of the world's foremost music academies, the Stern Conservatory in Berlin, Germany. His new teachers there were to be the famous pianist Ernst Jedliczka (1855–1904) and theorist Robert Klein.

Louis Hirsch, accompanied by his father, departed for Germany on July 25, 1901. From Louis' passport application we learn that he was tall—5'10", had black hair, brown eyes, a dark complexion, and a “prominent nose.” We also discover that he planned to remain at the conservatory for two or three years to “complete my preparations for the concert stage.” His arrival in Berlin must have been very exciting and full of promise. But he was probably relieved to find many other young Americans also studying there.

His fellows in Jedliczka's piano studio included Charles Tomlinson Griffes and Leonard Liebling (1880–1946, later a distinguished critic.) For a year Hirsch worked hard, practicing the piano for seven hours a day and giving at least two formal recitals. As he later recalled:

Then two things happened. The most important was that I heard Moriz Rosenthal play. I figured that it would take years of my life before I could obtain such perfection, and then I couldn't be sure. It all seemed so uncertain. All my efforts could be rendered useless by the adverse criticism of one performance. I decided to give up the idea of ever being a concert artist. Another thing happened, not so distressing. I met numerous American students of the convivial class and for the next few months the sum total of my practicing may have been seven hours, the equivalent of what previously had been a day's work. My greatest worry was how I could get my teacher to postpone my lessons.

One of Hirsch's larks during what he called his "wild and woolly days" in Berlin was the presentation of an American minstrel show—the first apparently ever seen in Germany. This performance, given in blackface, was presented at Berlin's *Künstlerhaus* on March 3, 1902. Hirsch himself played a minstrel "end man." One of his "co-conspirators," Frederick Wiley, recalled that Berlin's newspaper critics regarded the event as ". . . one of the unique, if not quite artistic, events of the season, [and] ventured to predict it would popularize the Negro motif in music both on the German stage and dance floor."

But Hirsch had not quite abandoned dreams of the concert stage. His exact whereabouts from 1903 to early 1905 are unclear. He seems to have remained in Germany, probably still at the Stern Conservatory; his summers were spent back in New York. Unfortunately, in August 1904 Jedliczka suddenly died. This seems to be the final blow to Hirsch's classical aspirations. He may have spent the next year with relatives in France and Germany. But by September 1905 he had definitely returned to New York: "When I arrived my future was an indefinite quality. While debating what to do, I gave piano lessons." He also began to play ragtime and Tin Pan Alley numbers at friends' parties. Hirsch was a very impressive "tickler," and word soon began to circulate about his brilliance at the keyboard. He found work accompanying theater performers for their rehearsals; singers were especially fond of his accurate, sensitive playing and the fact that he could "sight read" and transpose. His reputation as a theater pianist grew, bringing him into contact with Gus Edwards (1879–1945), an enormously popular vaudevillian and songwriter. Edwards was then riding high on the success of his song, "In My Merry Oldsmobile," and had just started a publishing company to market his new creations. Edwards told Hirsch that his new firm was in need of an expert pianist to demonstrate their product line. However overqualified, the young musician was at loose ends and accepted the job. But working for a music publisher stirred in him an itch to compose; one of the first Hirsch pieces to appear in print—"Midnight Eyes: Intermezzo for Piano" was issued by the Gus Edwards Music Publishing Company in 1907.

Not long after accepting the Edwards job, Hirsch was hired as "staff composer" for another start-up firm, Shapiro Music Publisher. It was a promotion from song-plugger. In this hustling, jangling environment, Hirsch continued his experiments in composition, writing songs as well as "instrumentals." Many were now spiced with raggy syncopations. Shapiro published several Hirsch numbers, including the delightful "Indian Intermezzo" "**Wildflower**" (track 13). Apparently his contract with Shapiro was not exclusive: during 1907 and '08 he "placed" his numbers with several other New York publishers, including Jerome H. Remick & Co., Helf & Hager, M. Witmark & Sons, and F.B. Haviland.

During this period Hirsch became increasingly interested in writing music for the stage. From 1906 to 1909 he composed and arranged for the famous Lew Dockstader's Minstrels company. Minstrelsy was America's first theatrical genre, and Dockstader's was one of the last professional touring troupes. Lew Dockstader also published many of Hirsch's snappy minstrel songs, furthering his name in "the show business."

In 1907 the Shubert brothers engaged Louis Hirsch as their “musical advisor.” Messrs. Shubert were just beginning their meteoric rise as producers and theater owners. They would eventually become the most powerful theater magnates in the world (their holdings by the 1950s were worth a conservatively estimated \$500,000,000.00). But in 1907 they were relative newcomers, and ones targeted for destruction by the potent Theatrical Syndicate. But Lee (1871–1953) and J.J. (1880–1963) Shubert, immigrants from East Prussia, were tough customers. They shared a maniacal drive, Machiavellian cunning, and an absolute genius for spotting new talent that could be put to use at low cost. Somehow, Louis Hirsch came to their attention. He would have been attractive to them because of his unusual background and skill set: Here was a classically trained virtuoso who also understood ragtime and the other “darkie” music then becoming commercially valuable. The young musician was quickly put to work writing new songs for insertion into the inexpensive pastiche-type of show scores that the Shuberts usually favored. This system involved buying existing songs (or stage rights thereto) and creating from these a “score,” rather than commissioning an original one from a single competent composer. This plan worked well enough for revue (a Shubert specialty), but was less desirable for musical comedy, which required continuity of style. Hirsch’s new job required him to stand by at the rehearsals of new shows and, in the event of need for a new song, to write one. The first production Hirsch contributed to was *The Gay White Way*, which opened on October 7, 1907. Following this he wrote additional music for six more Shubert “extravanzas.” This was an excellent training ground for the neophyte theater composer. The influential *Music Trade Review* opined that Hirsch’s “. . . pen was responsible for a great many interpolations that added greatly to the success of their [the Shubert’s] productions.” But Hirsch, while on the rise, was not yet reaping great financial rewards: the 1910 Census reports him living at home and working there as a “piano teacher.” But this was soon to change.

By 1910, J.J. Shubert was impatient to remold and upgrade the Shubert revues to more-or-less imitate Florenz Ziegfeld’s popular *Follies*. First they needed a new venue. At J.J.’s urging, the Shubert firm acquired the old American Horse Exchange on 50th Street and Broadway and converted it into a fine modern theater, which they called the “Winter Garden” (it is still in business today). The brothers planned to use the new Winter Garden as their factory for assembling new shows, which would then be sent on tour across the Shuberts’ growing circuit of theaters. Their press department crowed that the Winter Garden would present “. . . the American version of the gay life of Paris, Berlin, London, Vienna. Ballet—Spectacle—Musical Comedy and European *Variété* features all under one roof.” As widely predicted, the opening production on March 20, 1911 proved that J.J. Shubert was not another Ziegfeld: He presented a four-hour mish-mash. Critics and audiences liked the new theater, but were lukewarm about the show, which featured music by Jerome Kern. The only onstage highlight was the antics of a newcomer from Dockstader’s Minstrels named Al Jolson (in his Broadway debut).

Some years previously Flo Ziegfeld had made headlines and piles of money by his importation and exploitation of the curvaceous French stage sensation Anna Held (1873–1918). J.J. Shubert, still attempting to follow the Ziegfeld template, decided to engage the latest model French bombshell, Gaby Deslys (1881–1920) as the star of his Winter Garden Company. In early 1911 he traveled to Paris with an offer of \$4,000 per week, special costumes, a promise to maintain her entourage, and a \$10,000 signing bonus. After some wooing, Mlle. Gaby (who spoke almost no English) deigned to come to New York. Now J.J. needed a theatrical “vehicle” for her. He hired Edgar Smith, Jean Havez, and Leo Donnelly to write the book; Shubert staff lyricist Harold Atteridge (1887–1938) was assigned to write the song lyrics. But securing the proper music for this show would be trickier: a pastiche of Tin Pan Alley tunes would not suit Mlle. Gaby at all. And the Shubert’s usual contract composers, Manuel Klein and Gustave Kerker, were becoming noticeably obsolescent. Then J.J. remembered Louis Hirsch—the talented young staffer writing up-to-date yet “classy” music. And who spoke French! Hirsch was quickly assigned to the Winter Garden. There, still believing in safety in numbers, J.J. teamed him with pianist/singer/songwriter Melville Gideon (1884–1933) for the Deslys project. Hirsch, Gideon, and Atteridge got down to work over the summer of 1911 and created twelve songs. The new show, dubbed *The Revue of Revues*, opened

on September 27. Fortunately, American audiences liked Gaby Deslys very much. Reviewers however, were less impressed. The whole evening had been contrived around the fact that Mlle. Gaby could only perform in French. But foreign exoticism could not sustain *The Revue of Revues*, and it closed after only fifty-five performances. Very little evidence of this production survives, and its score appears to be lost—almost. The exception is a piano/vocal score I found in my collection: the beautiful “**Cupid’s Lane**,” heard here on track 11.

With the sudden demise of *The Revue of Revues* rumors began to circulate that the Winter Garden was in financial trouble. Broadway insiders clucked contentedly at Jake Shubert’s apparent comeuppance. In truth, J.J. was spending an absurd amount of money to engage Gaby Deslys—a leading lady who could not speak the native language. And she had a three-year contract! J.J. pondered this difficult position and then made a decision: to provide some “natural habitat” for Deslys, the next Winter Garden offering had to be a European operetta, and one with a solid box office record. He chose the 1907 Viennese success *Vera Violetta*, by librettist Leo Stein and composer Edmund Eysler. It fell to Louis Hirsch to revise Eysler’s waltz- and *schmaltz*-heavy score for ragtime-crazed American audiences. In mid-November 1911 the Winter Garden Co. opened its Americanized *Vera Violetta*. Within minutes of the overture it was obvious that a hit was being born: the audience loved Mlle. Gaby, who now spoke and sang in good English, and were convulsed by the blackface antics of Al Jolson, who played an African-American waiter named “Claude.” The critics were happy too. Although Eysler received composer credit, Louis Hirsch had in fact written a third of the score. But the young American’s name soon became better known when his catchy “The Gaby Glide” emerged as the smash number of the show. Historically, this number represents two “firsts”: it was Hirsch’s first nationwide hit and, more important, it was the very first Broadway song to use “blue” notes in its melody.

As *Vera Violetta* sailed on into 1912, plans were being laid for the next Winter Garden spectacular. The house had finally found its “groove.” It had also found a new star in Al Jolson: On the strength of his popularity, Jake Shubert knew the next show would *have* to be a Jolson vehicle. And so it was—a cumbersome yet successful tripartite entertainment called *The Whirl of Society*, which opened on March 5, 1912. Louis Hirsch was now the Winter Garden’s credited composer-in-chief. *The Whirl of Society* required him to write in a wide variety of styles, including music for a faux minstrel show and ragtime parody of Max Reinhardt’s play *Sumurun*. Despite Jolson’s habit of discarding the score (and script) whenever other material struck his fancy, several Hirsch songs from *The Whirl of Society* became substantial hits, including “My Sumurun Girl” (with lyrics by Jolson), and the delicious, minor-keyed “How Do You Do, Miss Ragtime?”

Thus far, all of Jake Shubert’s Winter Garden productions had been one-offs rather than an annual “brand” event like Ziegfeld’s *Follies*. But in early 1912 J.J. decided to go into direct competition with an annual Winter Garden revue. He would call it *The Passing Show*, and it would be “. . . a satire on passing events—theatrical, political, and otherwise—of the current year.” With a book by George Bronson-Howard, lyrics by Harold Atteridge, score by Louis Hirsch, stage direction by the brilliant Ned Weyburn, and a strong cast, the first of the series, *The Passing Show of 1912*, was a sensation. Opening on July 22, it set into motion an annual Winter Garden signature event for the next dozen years. Significantly, special praise was directed at its composer. The critics were very impressed, typified by *The New York Times*, which ended its long, glowing review thusly: “The music by Louis A. Hirsch deserves special mention for its brilliancy and cleverness. There is much of it that will be whistled soon.” Several hits did indeed emerge from this score, including “**The Wedding Glide**” (track 12). The song was a ragtime duet for a pair of comic lovers, “Weelum” and “Bunty.” It ends with a kiss that brought the house down at every performance. And one of Hirsch’s most beautiful songs, the mystical 9/8 meter “**Was There Ever a Night Like This?**” (track 2) was also much admired. It accompanied a harem scene featuring “a lot of pretty girls in meager costume” diving into an onstage swimming pool!

The success of *The Passing Show of 1912* finally cemented J.J. Shubert's position as a major Broadway producer. But as the applause resounded, no one realized that it would be many years before Louis Hirsch's music would again grace a Shubert production. Not long after the opening of *The Passing Show of 1912*, Albert De Courville slipped into a seat at the Winter Garden. The young British theatrical manager had made a name for himself as the man who had first brought both Leoncavallo and Mascagni to London to conduct their own operas. Now, De Courville wanted to produce American-style revues in London. He knew that British audiences were developing a strong taste for ragtime and American performers. Louis Hirsch, through his hit songs (and the press they generated) had become a celebrated exponent of ragtime. And so De Courville (1887–1960) came to New York in the summer of 1912 to see and hear for himself. As he explained in his memoirs, "It was about this time—1913 [*sic*]*—that ragtime in music had made its first appearance. . . . The new rhythm fascinated me. It seemed to fit into the atmosphere of revue marvelously, as its tempo was so suitable for chorus work. I approached Irving Berlin, who was at that time writing songs for a music publishing firm . . . I also approached Jerome Kern. But I decided in the end to engage Louis Hirsch to compose the music of my first revue. Louis Hirsch wrote some of the most wonderful melodies of his day."* The ever-volatile J.J. Shubert did not react well to the news of his star composer's departure. The exact details are no longer known, but *The New York Times* later referred to the break as a ". . . rather stormy event." There is also ample evidence that the producer had considerable difficulty in finding a replacement for Hirsch; a year and a half elapsed before J.J. would choose his new musical chief, an immigrant former café musician named Sigmund Romberg (1887–1951).

The fall of 1912 must have been an extraordinarily exciting time for Louis Hirsch. He was leaving behind success in his native city for a new creative life in one of the world's greatest metropolises—London. And as composer, lyricist, and musical director for one of that city's grandest theaters, he would be inspired by a world of talented new collaborators. Meanwhile, Albert De Courville had been busy preparing the London Hippodrome for his American invasion. The leading lady he had engaged was the famous American comedienne Ethel Levey (1881–1955, a major star and former wife of George M. Cohan). Not surprisingly, the new show, dubbed *Hullo, Ragtime*, leaned heavily on Hirsch's songs from his Shubert revues. Rehearsals were difficult—there was tension between the almost entirely American cast and the rather stodgy British production staff and stage crew. The Hippodrome's orchestra too, had trouble playing Hirsch's swinging score. De Courville—after much remonstrance—was forced to import a New York drummer and cornetist to inspire ". . . the proper sense of rhythm and syncopation." But success was in the air, and upon opening on December 23, 1912, the new revue made a sensation unlike any ever seen on the West End. *Hullo, Ragtime* was huge. London's critics were stunned but generally positive in their notices. Such was the public clamor that day after the premiere, *The New York Times* was moved to run a special bulletin:

LONDON PIECE ALL RAGTIME—Dec. 23.—Londoners who have fallen under the spell of American ragtime had a feast of syncopated music, dancing, and singing to-night in a new revue of the Parisian type, entitled 'Hullo, Ragtime,' produced at the Hippodrome by Louis Hirsch . . . Critics describe it as a gargantuan feat of fun. All the American artists concerned won much praise.

And so it continued for four hundred fifty-one performances which was, for many years, a London West End record.

Such was his fame with *Hullo, Ragtime* that Hirsch began to receive offers from other London revue producers. He accepted several of these, to the great discomfiture of Albert De Courville. (One was presented in direct competition at the rival London Opera House!) In the fall of 1913 *Hullo, Ragtime* was still playing to capacity crowds, and its producer reined in his wayward Yankee composer and put him to work on a sequel. For this, De Courville engaged another hot American "property," top Broadway

choreographer/director, Ned Weyburn. Hirsch and Weyburn (1874–1942) had worked together frequently in New York, and their new collaboration, *Hullo, Tango* was another smash sensation when it opened at the Hippodrome on December 23, 1913.

By the winter of 1913, Louis A. Hirsch was one of the most famous theater composers in Britain. Such was his prominence that the editors of the renowned British reference book *Who's Who* included him in their 1914 Edition. On January 10, 1914, the London *Times* commented, “Louis Hirsch, the American composer of ragtime . . . must be a proud man, this day, for he has just been awarded a definite certificate of greatness in Great Britain . . . his name and biography have been added to the roster of the famous which is enshrined between the covers of that vastly dignified work of reference, ‘Who’s Who,’ to be in which, along with the royal family, the peerage, and all sorts of big-wigs of one kind or another, is a kind of fame in itself.” However, the British press’s astonishment over the editorial policies of *Who’s Who* was soon pushed aside by a far more serious matter: The dark clouds of what would become World War I were gathering ominously over Europe. In London Hirsch kept on working, creating scores for two more revues. He also developed a busy sideline writing songs for insertion into other composer’s scores (“interpolations”). In June 1914 he signed a ten-year exclusive contract with America’s leading theatrical sheet music publisher, M. Witmark & Sons. Despite the war jitters that had begun to negatively affect the English theater business, Hirsch’s music was now being heard in *fifteen* different productions then running throughout the British Isles (including both complete scores and interpolations). But with family and friends in both Germany and France, he must have been deeply troubled about the possibility of war. And when in August 1914 Europe finally exploded, Hirsch left immediately for New York “without a reservation, ticket, or a single piece of baggage.”

Louis Hirsch had spent a very productive, nearly two-year period in London. But a closer examination reveals that he traveled between New York and the British capital with considerable frequency. Considering that in those days this involved long and expensive steamship voyages, one realizes how important Hirsch’s connection to New York remained to him. His primary reason for these long commutes was his growing involvement in a movement to advance the rights of American composers, lyricists, and their publishers. Hirsch’s time in England had opened his eyes to an important economic issue: British and European copyright laws gave the creators of musical compositions more legal rights and avenues of compensation than did those of the United States. Old World countries also had “industry trade groups” to police the fields of performance and publication. In contrast, American composers and lyricists were obliged to muddle through with weak copyright laws, fewer streams of revenue, and no protective associations to help improve these conditions.

Publisher George Maxwell and attorney Nathan Burkan were convinced that America’s music creators deserved better. They saw that U.S. copyright laws needed to be modernized and more rigorously enforced. But to accomplish this reform, an organization would have to be created to lead the way. In 1913 they enlisted the like-minded Victor Herbert (1859–1924) to head the formation of such a group. Nationally known and respected, Herbert set about with enthusiasm. His first step was to invite America’s leading composers, lyricists, and publishers to a meeting to discuss the idea of forming a protective society. A date in October was picked, and thirty-six invitations were sent out. But on the appointed day Herbert, Maxwell, and Burkan were disheartened to see only six attendees: composers Louis Hirsch (the youngest), Gustave Kerker, Silvio Hein, and Raymond Hubbell, librettist Glen MacDonough, and publisher Jay Witmark. There was a move to cancel the event, but Herbert cajoled everyone to remain while Burkan unveiled his blueprint for a society of composers, writers, and publishers. By the end of the evening “The Nine” as they would become known, were energized. They agreed to proceed and planned a second, larger meeting.

On February 13, 1914, an invited group of one hundred notable music creators gathered in the banquet room of New York’s Claridge Hotel. As they dined, Nathan Burkan passed out a proposed set of articles

for a new organization. A name was decided on—The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. Officers were voted in. And Louis A. Hirsch, as a “Founding Father,” was elected to ASCAP’s first board of directors. Formalities completed, ASCAP now began its rather desperate struggle for survival. By the spring of 1914, the Society had one hundred ninety two members. It also had *lost* nearly all of the numerous lawsuits it had filed to protect them from copyright violators. As cases failed and legal costs spiraled, nervous members began to abandon the fledgling organization. Louis Hirsch, however, remained steadfast, and was the figure most closely associated with Victor Herbert during ASCAP’s difficult early years. At last, in 1917, the Society’s make-or-break test case, *Victor Herbert vs. Shanley’s Restaurant* arrived at the U.S. Supreme Court, which unanimously affirmed all of ASCAP’s legal positions. But this victory did not end resistance and years of further litigation. Hirsch and ASCAP’s other leaders battled on, warding off a near-fatal 1921 anti-trust suit brought by the motion picture industry and, during 1923-24, an even larger confrontation with the titans of broadcast radio.

The name “Ziegfeld” remains one of legend in the pantheon of American entertainment. The man behind that name—Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. (1867–1932)—was a showman extraordinaire.

Much of his justified fame comes from his best-remembered creation— a lavishly mounted New York revue he called the *Follies*. These appeared annually in new editions from 1907 until 1925, and sporadically thereafter. Their fine quality and high artistic values made them internationally famous. In 1914 Flo Ziegfeld decided to create a “spin off” attraction to complement the *Follies*. To house it he built a new entertainment emporium on the roof of the New Amsterdam Theatre, which he called the “Ziegfeld Danse de Follies.” This new enterprise was New York’s first “night club”—a combination restaurant, ballroom, and theater. Created by the brilliant Viennese designer Joseph Urban, it was an *Art Nouveau* wonderland. Each evening the Danse de Follies would be opened immediately after the performance downstairs in the New Amsterdam had finished. For an additional fee, theatergoers would be whisked to the rooftop club for a smart champagne supper while enjoying another Ziegfeld presentation—the *Midnight Frolic*. At the conclusion of this performance the dance floor opened, allowing revelers to dance until dawn to the electrifying sounds of Ford Dabney’s celebrated Clef Club orchestra, playing delights like the “**Ziegfeld One Step**” (track 17).

Construction on the Danse de Follies was completed before Ziegfeld had a *Midnight Frolic* ready to put on its stage. The producer wanted his opening there to be breathtaking; he had acquired the best of everything, but he did not yet have a composer worthy of the setting. This was a difficulty—he needed *chic*, and the current crop of Broadway tunesmiths was somewhat lacking in that department. And so in the late summer of 1914, Ziegfeld was delighted to learn that Louis Hirsch had moved back to New York. The showman quickly fired off a telegram to the composer with a commission. Hirsch accepted. Work began in the fall of 1914 with librettist/lyricist Gene Buck and director Ned Wayburn. On the stroke of twelve on January 5, 1915, the premiere *Midnight Frolic* opened. The entertainment was given in two twenty-minute acts. Its main attraction was the beautiful *showgirls* in elaborate costumes (not “chorus girls,” as they were referred to in other productions) who performed not only onstage, but also directly *over* the audience on a glass-floored catwalk!

From the first Flo Ziegfeld used his *Midnight Frolic* as a test for new talent. Artists who made a hit there were usually moved downstairs into his next summer *Follies* run. Many legendary performers had their first “big break” as performers in the *Frolic*. This audition process was also used to test new designers, directors, and composers. Ziegfeld was well pleased with Hirsch’s work on the first *Midnight Frolic*. Seeking now to re-energize the ninth edition of his *Follies*, he quickly signed Louis Hirsch to compose the entire score for the upcoming 1915 edition. This was a major milestone for the thirty-four year old musician. In addition to Hirsch, Ziegfeld assembled an ace creative team of mostly new faces. The cast was extraordinary as well: the *twenty-two* headliners included Ina Claire, Mae Murray, Anna Pennington, Justine Johnstone, Olive Thomas, Bert Williams, Leon Errol, Ed Wynn, and W.C. Fields (in his *Follies* debut).

The *Ziegfeld Follies of 1915* opened in New York on June 21st. Running almost three hours, the revue was given in two acts with nineteen scenes. For the audience, it was a sumptuous feast of visual extravagance, delightful comedy, and extraordinary music. From opening night it was a staggering success: Ziegfeld had surpassed himself. Tightly integrated both musically and visually, the *Follies of 1915* has become known by theater historians as “The first of the great *Follies*,” and even as “the greatest of the *Follies*.” Hirsch’s score received tremendous praise—it was considered sleek, modern, and beautiful. And from it emerged several enduring song hits. One of the best of these is “**Hello Frisco!**” (track 3), which celebrates two of the year’s landmark events, the inauguration of the first transcontinental telephone line and the San Francisco “World’s Fair.” The number featured Charles Purcell and Ina Claire on opposite sides of the stage, singing into prop telephones, backed by a giant map of the United States which lit up with a string of tiny light bulbs as the lovers made their coast-to-coast “connection.” And the **Overture** (track 1) recorded here for the first time, is a true revelation. It includes nine of Hirsch’s songs from the production, including the gorgeous and impressionistic “Marie Odile,” introduced by the trombone and then pensively taken up in slow waltz time by the violins.

Louis Hirsch did not rest on his laurels. Even before the opening of the *Follies*, he was at work on a score for a new musical comedy, *Molly and I*. Produced at the La Salle Opera House in Chicago, the show opened there in September 1915. Sadly, there seems to be no trace of it today. More survives of another show from the fall of that year—*My Home Town Girl*. “A Comedy With Music,” it was produced by Perry J. Kelly as a touring attraction built in New York for the husband and wife comedy team of Leila McIntyre (1881–1953) and John Hyams (1869–1940). This production included eleven songs by Hirsch, including the exquisite “**My Home Town**” (track 6). This one, with its delicate shading and heart-rending refrain (which repeatedly leaps downward a major seventh!) was extremely sophisticated for its time. Indeed, Hirsch’s entire score was so nuanced that the show toured with its *own* orchestra to play it—an expense almost unheard of in that era.

Through attendance at his shows and the purchase of sheet music and recordings, by mid-1915 Louis A. Hirsch had become one of America’s most popular composers. The public now wanted to know about the man behind the music. In September, the first Hirsch feature story appeared in a national magazine—*The Dominant*. The author of this piece introduces his subject as “One of the rising young composers of light music in America today, whose career during the past year seems to point to a future of unusual brilliance and promise. . . .” Hirsch once again is introduced as an expert on ragtime:

It is of little use decrying the taste for ragtime music. It is here, And here to stay. It is essentially American, so why abuse it? Those who seek to improve its quality and take it out of the tin-pan class with which it has been too long associated are deserving of commendation. Of these, Mr. Hirsch is one. He really stands today as the best example of a writer who can employ the ragtime muse to advantage and the edification of its hearers. There is a finish and polish to his work that commend it. Not that Mr. Hirsch can write nothing but syncopated measures; much of his work bears evidence to the contrary. But it is in his happy, sparkling treatment of a theme with the ragtime twist that he is seen—and heard—at his best.

The years 1917 and 1918 were Hirsch’s zenith as a composer for the Broadway stage. During these two years he created a staggering amount of marvelous music for an impressive number of shows. Further, he was making an important artistic transition, moving from the “shifting sands” of revue to the more plot-driven world of musical comedy. Hirsch’s success at this time is even more impressive when one realizes that these two years were ones of unprecedented competition on Broadway. In the 1917-18 season some thirty-eight musicals were opened or running in New York—almost double the number of previous

seasons. This was due to the economic boom that America was enjoying as a supplier of war materials to the Allies. In New York, this surplus of shows meant a shortage of theaters in which to stage them. The upshot: productions that were not immediate hits were closed quickly. In this pressured atmosphere, Louis A. Hirsch seemed to thrive. On September 26, 1917 his publishers, M. Witmark & Sons, announced their publication of scores from six upcoming Hirsch musicals, *The Grass Widow*, *The Beautiful One*, *Kiss Me Again*, *Going Up*, *The Rainbow Girl*, and *In Old Cathay*.

The first of these to actually reach the stage was an unusual musical by the librettists/lyricists of the *Follies of 1915*, Pollock and Wolf. Years previously, the duo had written *The Grass Widow*, a serious story they wanted to juxtapose with light, happy music. Eventually they convinced Hirsch to take on the challenge, and the resulting score was delightful. *The Grass Widow* opened on December 3, 1917. But despite good reviews, it lasted on Broadway for only forty-three performances. Three weeks later, the curtain rose on the next Hirsch musical. This one—*Going Up*—became one of the biggest successes of his career. It too had a long genesis, starting as a comic play called *The Aviator*. In 1910 Cohan & Harris produced it on Broadway, where it failed. Seven years later, publisher Isadore Witmark commissioned Hirsch and veteran librettist/lyricist Otto Harbach (1873–1963) to make a musical out of it. The duo began their work in the spring of 1917; in July Cohan & Harris, who had surrendered their rights to the work years before, surprisingly announced that they would produce it. Under a new title—*Going Up*—the show opened with great fanfare on Christmas night, 1917. It was a spectacular triumph. Set in the future (1919), the plot involved the hilarious intrigues of “Robert Street,” the author of a best-selling book of airplane adventures called *Going Up*. Street falls in love with “Edith Day,” a fanatical admirer of his book. The girl demands that Street prove his love by entering an air race against the daring French flying ace “Jules Gaillard.” But Street has a secret: He is not really a pilot; in fact, has never even been *near* an airplane. However, armed with love and sheer American Determination, Street learns how to fly and finally wins the girl. Delighted audiences and critics were loud in their praise. From the score emerged several sensational songs, including the bouncing “Tickle Toe.” By the time *Going Up* had opened, America had entered the World War, and a military draft was negatively affecting theater attendance. Yet *Going Up* was sold out for weeks in advance and made huge profits. The **Highlights from *Going Up*** heard here (track 16) certainly demonstrates why.

While composing, casting, rehearsing, and opening *The Grass Widow* and *Going Up*, Hirsch was simultaneously at work on a third musical comedy—*The Rainbow Girl*. Commissioned by Klaw & Erlanger, the very powerful producers who led the Theatrical Syndicate, this new play was a tale of romance and mistaken identity: Vaudevillian “Mollie Murdock” falls in love (and vice versa) with “Robert Dudley,” who is in actuality a wealthy English nobleman. The fun begins when the newlyweds return to Dudley’s vast ancestral estate, where it is discovered that all of the servants are Mollie’s relatives! Production on *The Rainbow Girl* took place at Philadelphia’s Forrest Theater, where it opened the first week of December 1917. It was well received, with the *Music Trade Review* reporting: “As usual in all productions where Mr. Hirsch is responsible for the score, the music of ‘The Rainbow Girl’ constitutes one of the most agreeable features of the show. Every one of the twenty-odd numbers is replete with the Hirsch effervescence. . . . Life, vigor and melody ran riot throughout the score.” Here on track 5 you can sample some of this with our performance of two songs from the show, “**My Rainbow Girl**” (the solo is played on an authentic 1917 Conn “New Wonder” cornet), and the bumptious “**Alimony Blues**.” Both demonstrate Hirsch’s characteristically adventurous harmonic sensibility.

All of Louis Hirsch’s high-profile activity during this period continued to generate media attention. On January 6, 1918 *The New York Times* ran a feature article on him entitled “A COMPOSER-MUSICIAN.” This piece discusses the success of *Going Up*, details Hirsch’s classical training, and draws connections between his music and that of Victor Herbert, Rudolf Friml, and Jerome Kern. A month later, an extended interview with Hirsch appeared in *The Musical Courier* magazine. This begins by relating that the composer’s schedule was so busy he had declined repeated interview requests. Persevering, the *Courier*

sent a lady reporter to the New Amsterdam Theater disguised as a chorus girl. Slipping through the stage door with the cast, she located the composer in the wings. After revealing her true identity, Hirsch good-naturedly agreed to speak with her. In addition to biographical details, the woman journalist (identified only as “C.R.”) revealed that Hirsch “. . . has a very infectious and expansive smile.” And at the conclusion of their talk, the bachelor composer invited the writer out for a “cup of hot chocolate.” She agreed, coyly concluding the article, “Discretion forbids me to write everything. . . .”

There was not however, much time for such flirtations. In addition to composing demands, Hirsch spent time donating his services as pianist for various “all star” benefit concerts, and also in organizing free vaudeville shows for U.S. servicemen on their way “Over There.” Against this bustling background Flo Ziegfeld reappeared; he wanted Hirsch back for the 1918 *Follies*, but the composer, launching three musicals for other producers, demurred. Ziegfeld must have applied considerable pressure, however, because Hirsch finally agreed to sign on again, most likely with the understanding that some contributions would be made by other composers to reduce the otherwise daunting *Follies* workload. And so that spring the composer shuttled back and forth between rehearsals in Philadelphia for Weber & Fields’ *Back Again* and New York for the *Follies of 1918*. The Weber & Fields show opened first, on April 29th. Hirsch’s score for this included eighteen songs, and it was reported that “The house was packed to the doors and divided its enthusiasm between the work of Weber and Fields, the Dolly Sisters and Mr. Hirsch’s songs.”

Louis Hirsch probably finished his contribution to Flo Ziegfeld’s twelfth *Follies*—about a dozen songs—by the beginning of April 1918. Rehearsals began in early May, and the show opened at the New Amsterdam on June 18. This was a mammoth production, with a cast of one-hundred-fifty performers cavorting across twenty-seven fanciful scenes. The featured stars included Will Rogers, Eddie Cantor, W.C. Fields, Ann Pennington, and Lillian Lorraine. Several song hits came from this score: “**When I Hear a Syncopated Tune**” (track 9) was introduced by a *Follies* newcomer—Marilyn Miller. And Will Rogers, playing against type clad in white tie, top hat, and tails, serenaded the lovely Lillian Lorraine with “**Any Old Time At All**” (track 7). The sold-out house loved the performance, and *The New York Times* reviewer declared, “It is a brave, bountiful, and beautiful show this season, possessed of all the gorgeousness of its predecessors and perhaps a little bit more. . . . Beyond a shadow of a doubt, it will delight the soul of every ‘Follies’ lover.”

The *Follies* safely launched once again, Hirsch delighted his own soul by falling in love. On July 11 the thirty-six-year-old musician married Genevieve L. Hall, a twenty-five-year-old English girl and cast member of *Going Up*. The ceremony was held at the Hebrew Tabernacle on West 130th Street; only immediate family members were invited. Afterward, the newlyweds left for a honeymoon in the wilds of Long Island. Upon their return the couple took up “housekeeping” with Hirsch’s parents in their large apartment at 1361 Madison Avenue. The Hirsch family was a very tightly knit one: Louis and his brother Lawrence (1893–?) had always lived with their parents, and Louis continued to do so after his marriage to “Gennie.” The new Mrs. Hirsch retired from the stage soon after her marriage, taking up a new role as the wife of a Broadway celebrity.

In the late summer of 1918 Louis Hirsch entered into a noteworthy creative partnership with two rising theatrical authors. Unfortunately, the resulting show, *Oh, My Dear!*, has been used by several modern commentators to discredit Hirsch’s skill as a composer. But this charge is so mistaken—and so often rehashed—that rebuttal is now required. The setting was New York’s tiny Princess Theatre; the “cast” included Jerome Kern, librettist Guy Bolton, and lyricist P.G. Wodehouse. Since 1915 Kern and Bolton had been creating a series of intimate musicals for the Princess; Wodehouse joined them in 1917. These historically important productions are *always* highlighted in present-day references regarding this “trio of musical fame” or the evolution of the American musical theater. The Princess series came to its seeming conclusion in the summer of 1918, when Kern quit the project. Producer Ray Comstock, eager to continue the successful “brand” in his 299-seat house, approached an acclaimed “top gun”—Louis Hirsch—to take

Kern's place. From an economic standpoint this offer had to have been of little interest to Hirsch. He was then very busy working for much more important producers on expensive shows in far grander venues. (Composers were paid a percentage of the box office receipts; Hirsch's productions typically played in 1,700- to 2,000-seat theaters.) But from an artistic perspective, Hirsch must have relished this opportunity. The Princess shows, though very modest in production values, were critically acclaimed and extremely *chic*. Hirsch accepted. Jerome Kern made no public mention of any displeasure at the substitution and indeed, the boyhood chums remained collegial. But some of Kern's friends, especially the writer Dorothy Parker, took the move to be a presumptuous one on the part of Hirsch. In any event, Bolton, Wodehouse, and Hirsch very quickly came up with a new Princess musical called *Ask Dad*. It previewed in Toronto's Royal Alexander Theater on September 20, 1918. Far from being the musical fiasco described in some modern texts, the new show sounded well. *The Washington Post* for example, reported: "Up in Toronto where *Ask Dad*, the new Elliott, Comstock & Gest musical play had its initial hearing last week, both the public and professional reviewers express delight over the music by Louis A. Hirsch." And Canada's leading music critic Hector Charlesworth (1872–1945) wrote in his country's largest paper, *Saturday Night*: "The score of Louis A. Hirsch is marked not only by fresh melodic inspiration, but by rare delicacy and finesse in harmonic and rhythmical treatment. His tunes are pulsating and infectious, yet invariably refined." There were problems however, with *Ask Dad*'s book and lyrics. Casting changes, cuts, revisions, and additions were made, and the show's title was changed to *Oh, My Dear!* Under this banner, it opened at the Princess Theater on November 26, 1918. Metropolitan reviews were generally positive (*The New York Times* headlined its praise for the music). The production continued on for one-hundred-eighty-nine performances, making back its investment with a profit. This was a longer run than half of the other Princess shows, not even including its subsequent eighteen-month-long U.S. tour. So by all reasonable measures, *Oh, My Dear!* was a success. Yet modern-day writers have repeatedly cited it as a "failure," supposedly due to Louis Hirsch's inadequate score!

The discussion of *Oh, My Dear!* provides a logical place to remark on Louis Hirsch's working methods. Show songwriting is almost always a collaborative process: one person composes the tunes and another writes the words. (The teams of Gilbert & Sullivan and Rodgers & Hammerstein are two fine examples.) In the creation of a new song, Lou Hirsch preferred to compose the music working from finished verse provided to him by his lyric writers. For example, to create "Hello, Frisco!" lyricist Gene Buck sat down first and wrote a poem and then handed this text to Hirsch, who went to a piano and "set" these words to music. The result was a finished song. Many lyric writers prefer this method because it enables them to use the words they *want* to use for poetic reasons rather than the words they *have* to use in order to fit the rhythm of a preexisting tune. This text-set-to-music method was a traditional one in classical music, which may well be why Hirsch adopted it. In contrast, in the making of a "Kern song," Jerome Kern always *wrote the music first*. He had total power over the shaping the melody, the harmony, and essential rhythmic flow of the song. When Kern was satisfied, he handed his score to a lyricist to have words *fitted* to his melodies and rhythms. "Plum" Wodehouse preferred this latter system; he was inspired and guided by Kern's melodic contours and rhythmic "patter." Knowing this, it is easy to see how the songs for *Oh, My Dear!* must have been born with more than usual difficulty: Hirsch and Wodehouse were simply not used to each other's working methods.

Bigger and better things were in store for 1920. In that year Hirsch resumed collaborations with *Going Up*'s producer George M. Cohan and librettist/lyricist Otto Harbach. For Cohan, the Actors' Equity strike in the summer of 1919 had been a bitter experience: Both a performer and a manager, he had sided with the managers. After their defeat, he angrily announced his retirement from the theatrical business. But he did not stay away for long; sometime later in 1919 or early 1920, he started "George M. Cohan Productions" as a separate business from the well-established Cohan & Harris firm. Cohan made this move so that he could declare himself an "independent producer," allowing him to operate outside the jurisdiction of Actors' Equity. Simultaneously, Louis Hirsch and Otto Harbach had on their own account written a new musical they called *The House That Jack Built*. Cohan, looking for a first show for his new

firm to produce, grabbed it. To avoid the prying eyes of Equity and the palpable bad feelings still hanging over Broadway, Cohan began work on this new production in Washington, D.C. He presided over the rehearsals, changing quite a bit of the action and quickening its pace (a process he called “Cohanization”). He also changed the show’s title to the snappier *Mary*. It opened in Washington, D.C. in late March 1920. After a week there he moved *Mary* to Philadelphia, where it played for a month, and then to Boston, where it ran for four months. Soon it became obvious that he had a huge hit on his hands, so Cohan created four road companies to tour *Mary* across the United States, Britain, and Australia! Hirsch’s own Victoria Publishing Corporation handled the sheet music of the songs from the show, and sales were outstanding. Several phonograph labels also began to release recordings of these, as did the various player-piano-roll companies. By midsummer, Louis Hirsch’s music from *Mary* was nationally known and spectacularly popular. And their composer was growing very rich: George Gershwin related a story of meeting Hirsch as the latter was leaving his office one afternoon. When Gershwin asked how things were going, Hirsch silently showed him his royalty check for first quarter sheet-music sales from *Mary*: It was for an astonishing \$26,000 (\$297,072 in 2010 Dollars)!

On the crest of this considerable wave, on October 18, 1920, a well-honed *Mary* finally opened in New York. Anticipation was high, considering—in what was novel for a Broadway premiere—many first-nighters already knew and liked the score. The story was a simple romance telling of the trials and tribulations of “Jack Keene,” the young inventor of mass-produced, inexpensive “portable houses” he calls “Love Nests.” Jack is pursuing “Madeline,” a seductive divorcée. He is, in turn, secretly loved by a young secretary name “Mary Howells.” Inevitably, Jack and Mary are united, and live happily ever after. Many critics grumbled about the book, but considered the score to be Hirsch’s very best. *The New York Times*’ opening night review was typical: “. . . Of the three collaborators, it is the composer who has done the most for the piece. Mr. Hirsch has written a consistently tuneful score, in which “**The Love Nest**” (track 15) achieves one of those instantaneous hits which happen about two or three times a season. . . . It is a number which promises to be just as popular—and therefore just as unpopular—as the same composer’s ‘Tickle Toe’ in *Going Up*, and, therefore, all honor to Mr. Hirsch.” The song, a duet for Jack and Mary is a beautiful one by any standard. (It was later the radio and TV themes of the beloved comedy team of George Burns and Gracie Allen, and has been “covered” by dozens of artists, including Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass!) In attractiveness, the bouncing title number “**Mary**” (track 8) follows at a close second. **Selections from *Mary*** (track 10), heard in its original 1920 Robert Russell Bennett arrangement, gives an excellent sampling of the melodies from what has long been regarded as one of the era’s top Broadway shows.

Sometime early in 1922 the resplendent, lavender-shirted Flo Ziegfeld sailed back into Hirsch’s orbit. He had a novel idea for the upcoming *Follies of 1922*: the score would alternate between new material written separately by Victor Herbert and Hirsch, sequenced to create a sort of “tradition-meets-today” theme. Intrigued, Hirsch accepted and got back into *Follies* mode—the usual strenuous routine of writing, consulting with collaborators, rehearsing, and revising. Many historians view the result—the 1922 edition—as the last of the “great” *Follies*. By that year most of the major stars of past years had gone on to other things; Will Rogers was the only true remaining headliner. The show opened on June 5 debuting the still-legendary *Follies* slogan, “A NATIONAL INSTITUTION GLORIFYING THE AMERICAN GIRL.” Disappointingly, Herbert’s contribution ended up being only three songs and a bit of ballet music (he was busy with a new operetta, *Orange Blossoms*). The performance itself was extremely long, with more than twenty musical sequences, and it did not finish until after 1:00 A.M. But *The New York Times*’ reviewer stayed awake enough to identify the “hit of the evening” as Hirsch’s “**Neath the South Sea Moon**” (track 4) as introduced by Alexander Gray. And, with its Morse code–like woodwind figurations, “**List’ning on Some Radio**” (track 14) also received favorable press attention. Both songs became more or less 1920s pop “standards,” selling large quantities of sheet music and recordings. And the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1922* ran on for an astonishing series duration record of four-hundred-twenty-four performances.

By 1922 the success of the *Ziegfeld Follies* had inspired many imitators. Artistically, most of these could not touch the creations of the veteran showman. Some came close, especially by the '20s. One of these was John Murray Anderson (1886–1954), a brilliant, multi-talented writer, director, choreographer, and producer. Beginning in 1919, Anderson presented his own off-Broadway revue downtown at the modest Greenwich Village Theater. Simply called *The Greenwich Village Follies*, the theme of these new fall annuals was the artsy-chic “Bohemian” atmosphere of the Village. They were a fresh, youthful, and exciting alternative to the usual glamor-soaked revue “formula,” and attracted much positive attention. In 1921 Anderson allied himself with J.J. Shubert and moved his whole production up to the Shubert Theatre on Broadway. Once under his auspices, J.J. began to suggest “improvements” for the shows. On the short list: better music. Sometime in the first half of 1922, Hirsch was approached with an offer to join *The Greenwich Village Follies* creative team. This invitation surely gave him pause. On the one hand, he was aware that working for Anderson (and by extension, Messrs. Shubert) would likely cost him the future patronage of Ziegfeld. (Ziegfeld, long a Shubert enemy, had also taken umbrage at Anderson’s use of the word “Follies.”) On the other hand, Hirsch also knew that Ziegfeld’s power—and that of the Theatrical Syndicate which financed him—was fading. They were fast losing economic ground to the Shubert brothers, who would soon own or control more than eight hundred American theaters. (There is also some evidence that Hirsch’s tenure with Ziegfeld’s 1922 production was not a happy one, providing further motivation for a change in allegiances.) In any case, Hirsch accepted Anderson’s job, and wrote a charming score with lyrics by an up-and-comer named Irving Caesar (1895–1996). *The Greenwich Village Follies of 1922* opened on September 12 and was a success. Indeed, the influential critic Alexander Woollcott pronounced it a better revue than Ziegfeld’s, which was running concurrently nearby. Hirsch stayed on with *The Greenwich Village Follies* for the 1923 edition as well; this one witnessed the debut of a young dancer named Martha Graham. But it was the last show Hirsch would live to finish.

On February 12, 1924, Louis A. Hirsch attended an interesting “Experiment in Modern Music” at Manhattan’s Aeolian Hall. His former rehearsal pianist, George Gershwin, was premiering a new piece—*Rhapsody in Blue*. Higher on the bill was a bigger keyboard star—Zez Confrey—who played his own flashy “Kitten on the Keys.” As the music flowed, the forty-two-year-old Hirsch could not have failed to hear strong echoes of his own work in both of these men’s latest compositions. Their “jazz” effects—impressionistic harmonies, “blue” notes, skipping triplet and dotted sixteenth “filigree,” toggling perfect fourths, and abrupt sectional tonal shifts—had all been introduced to the public by Lou Hirsch in the previous decade.

In 1924 the composer’s future certainly seemed to hold bright hopes and interesting challenges. He was at the top of his profession and financially secure. He had his health and a comfortable home life. In his capacity as an ASCAP director, he had been brought into contact with the new science of radio. This technology had only recently begun its advance from the transmission of simple Morse code (“dots” and “dashes”) to the *broadcast* of true “audio” —that is, human speech and music. In 1922 New York’s first radio stations began to transmit “programs,” and an exciting new area of entertainment was dawning. At the same time motion pictures, although silent, were becoming a serious competitor to live theater. Films also had an insatiable need for music, a fact Hirsch had experienced while adapting his *Going Up* score for its 1923 Hollywood movie version. And on his music desk was a project that had been on and off again since the summer of 1920—a show based on the fine Rex Beach–Paul Armstrong farce *Going Some*. While pursuing these and other projects in May of 1924, Hirsch caught a cold. He continued working, although his parents (with whom he still lived) pleaded with him to see his doctor. He did not, and soon was seriously ill. Hirsch was taken to Knickerbocker Hospital, where he died of pneumonia on Tuesday, May 13.

His death was announced the next day in *The New York Times*: “LOUIS A. HIRSCH— Was Famous as Composer of Musical Comedy Scores.” Similar headlines appeared in other metropolitan dailies and

theatrical journals. *Time* magazine marked his passing in its “Milestones” section. Curiously, there was no follow-up in the New York newspapers mentioning funeral services or burial. I would guess that the family was so devastated by this tragedy that they were simply unable to issue further announcements. Several of Hirsch’s fellows from the Friars Club, ASCAP, the Jewish Theater Guild, and the Society of American Dramatists were organizing their own service when another tragedy occurred: the sudden death of Victor Herbert. With the tremendous outpouring of grief for this beloved elder statesman of the theater, plans for a Hirsch memorial were moved aside and soon forgotten.

In September 1924, Jerome Kern was elected to take Louis Hirsch’s seat on the Board of Directors of ASCAP. A few days later, in the offices of Messrs. Shubert, producer John Murray Anderson signed a new composer for the next *Greenwich Village Follies*. His name was Cole Porter.

Louis A. Hirsch Musical Theater Productions—Interpolations & “Additional Music By”

The Gay White Way (revue)

Produced by Sam S. & Lee Shubert, Inc. at the Casino Theater, NY, October 1907.

Two Islands (musical comedy)

Produced by Mortimer M. Theise at the Circle Theater, NY, October 1907.

The Soul Kiss (extravaganza)

Produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. at the New York Theatre, NY, January 1908.

Nearly a Hero (farce)

Produced by Sam S. & Lee Shubert, Inc. at the Casino Theater, NY, February 1908.

The Mimic World (revue)

Produced by Sam S. & Lee Shubert, Inc. at the Casino Theater, NY, July 1908.

Miss Innocence (extravaganza)

Produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. at the New York Theater, NY, November 1908.

Mr. Hamlet of Broadway (musical comedy)

Produced by Sam S. & Lee Shubert, Inc. at the Casino Theater, NY, December 1908.

The Girl and the Wizard (musical comedy)

Produced by Sam S. & Lee Shubert, Inc. at the Casino Theater, NY, September 1909.

The Jolly Bachelors (spectacle)

Produced by Lew M. Fields at the Broadway Theater, NY, January 1910.

Up and Down Broadway (revue)

Produced by Messrs. Shubert & Lew M. Fields at the Casino Theater, NY, July 1910.

The Kiss Waltz (operetta)

Produced by Sam S. & Lee Shubert, Inc. at the Casino Theater, NY, September 1911.

Vera Violetta (operetta)

Produced by J.J. Shubert at the Winter Garden Theater, NY, November 1911.

Around the Map (revue)

Produced by Klaw & Erlanger at the New Amsterdam Theater, NY, November 1915.

Scores by Louis A. Hirsch

1910

Dick Whittington: The Stupendous Musical Pantomime. Music by Lou Hirsch and Melville Gideon. Likely an “Americanization” of one of several popular imported British productions. Opening reported in *Music Trade Review* on February 5, 1910; no further information available.

He Came From Milwaukee (musical comedy). Score by Louis A. Hirsch with Ben M. Jerome. Book by Mark Swan. Lyrics by Edward Madden. Starring Sam Bernard. Casino Theater, NY, September 21–December 31. Resumed same theater August 21–September 2, 1911.

1911

Revue of Revues (a.k.a. "In the Limelight"): *A Musical Satire in a Prologue and Two Acts*. Score by Louis A. Hirsch with Melville J. Gideon. Book by Edgar Smith, Leo Donnelly, and Jean Havez. Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Starring Gaby Deslys, Frank Tinney, Lydia Barry, Ernest Hare, Doris Cameron, and Harry Jolson (brother of Al). Produced by Messrs. Shubert at the Winter Garden Theater, NY, September 27–November 11.

1912

The Whirl of Society: *A Musical Satire in Two Acts* (revue). Music by Louis A. Hirsch. Book by Harrison Rhodes. Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Starring Stella Mayhew and Al Jolson. Produced by Messrs. Shubert at the Winter Garden Theater, NY, March 5–June 29.

The Passing Show of 1912: *A Kaleidoscopic Almanac in Seven Scenes* (revue). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book by George Bronson-Howard and Harold Atteridge. Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Starring Shirley Kellog, Eugene & Willie Howard, Ernest Hare, and Harry Fox. Produced by Messrs. Shubert at the Winter Garden Theater, NY, July 22–November 16.

Hullo, Ragtime! (revue). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book by Max Pemberton and J.M. Barrie. Lyrics by Louis A. Hirsch. Starring Ethel Levey and Shirley Kellog. Produced by Albert De Courville at the Hippodrome, London, England, December 23, 1912–c. April 23, 1914.

1913

Come Over Here (revue). Score by Louis A. Hirsch and J. Rosemond Johnson. Book by Max Pemberton. Lyrics by Louis A. Hirsch. Starring Bessie Clifford, Charles Hart, Oscar Schwartz, and Pearl Barte. Produced by Gus Sohlke at the London Opera House, London, England, April 19–c. December 12.

Hullo, Tango (revue). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book by Max Pemberton and Albert De Courville. Lyrics by George Arthurs. Starring Shirley Kellog, Frank Carter, and Violet Lorraine. Produced by Albert De Courville at the Hippodrome, London, England, December 23–April 23, 1914.

1914

The Honeymoon Express (revue). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book and lyrics by George Arthurs. Produced by Conrad & Zeitlin, Ltd. at the Oxford Theatre, London England, April 13–?

Dora's Daze: *A Musical Slumber in Seven Nightmares* (revue). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by George Arthurs. Staged & produced by Ned Wayburn at the Palladium, London England, July 6–?

1915

The Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic (revue in two acts). Music by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by Gene Buck. Starring Charles Purcell, Kay Laurell, Will West, and Miss Ray Cox. Produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. at the Ziegfeld Danse de Follies, NY, January 5–c. June ?

The Ziegfeld Follies of 1915 (revue). Music by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by Channing Pollack, Rennold Wolf, and Gene Buck. Starring W.C. Fields (debut), Ann Pennington, May Murray, Bert Williams, Ina Claire, Ed Wynn, and Leon Errol. Produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. at the New Amsterdam Theater, NY, June 21–September 18.

Molly and I (musical comedy). Music by Lou Hirsch and Melville Gideon. Book [& lyrics?] by Frank Adams. Producer unknown, La Salle Opera House, Chicago, September, 1915–?

My Home Town Girl: *A Comedy with Music in Two Acts*. Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by Frank Stammers. Starring Leila McIntyre and John Hyams, with Charles Horne, Maud Beatty, and Doris Vernon. Produced by Perry J. Kelly at The Empire Theater, Syracuse NY, November 13; U.S. tour through 1916.

1916

The Ziegfeld Follies of 1916 (revue). Music by Louis A. Hirsch, Dave Stamper, and Jerome Kern. Additional songs by Irving Berlin, Harry Carroll, Franz Lehár, and Leo Edwards. Book & lyrics by

George V. Hobart & Gene Buck. Starring W.C. Fields, Fanny Brice, Ann Pennington, Marion Davies, Bert Williams, Ina Claire, Ed Wynn, and Leon Errol. Produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. at the New Amsterdam Theater, NY, June 12–September 16.

1917

The Grass Widow: “*A Piquant Musical Comedy*.” Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by Channing Pollack and Rennold Wolf. Starring Natalie Ault, George Marion, and Howard Marsh. Produced by Madison Corey at the Liberty Theater, NY, December 3–December 19; moved to the Princess Theater, NY, December 24–January 5, 1918.

Going Up: “*An Uplifting Musical Comedy*.” Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by Otto Harbach, based on James Montgomery’s *The Aviator*. Starring Edith Day, Frank Craven, Ruth Donnelly, and Donald Meek. Produced by Cohan & Harris at the Liberty Theater, December 25–October 26, 1918. Revived at the John Golden Theater, NY, September 16–October 31, 1976.

1918

The Rainbow Girl (musical comedy). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by Rennold Wolf. Starring Beth Lydy, Harry Benham, Ethel Delmar, and Billy B. Van. Produced by Klaw & Erlanger at the New Amsterdam Theatre, NY, April 1–c. June 10; moved to the Gaiety Theater, NY, June 17–August 17.

Back Again: *New Musical Play*. Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by George V. Hobart and Frank Stammers. Starring Weber & Fields and the Dolly Sisters. Produced by Joe Weber and Lew Fields at the Chestnut Street Opera House, Philadelphia, April 29–c. June 3.

The Ziegfeld Follies of 1918 (revue). Music by Louis A. Hirsch, with additional songs by Dave Stamper, Irving Berlin, and others. Book & lyrics by Rennold Wolf and Gene Buck. Starring Marilyn Miller (debut), Eddie Cantor, Harry Kelly, Ann Pennington, W.C. Fields, Lillian Lorraine, and the Fairbanks Twins. Produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. at the New Amsterdam Theater, NY, June 18–September 14; the Globe Theater October 7–?

Oh, My Dear! (a.k.a. *Ask Dad*) (musical comedy). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by Guy Bolton and P.G. Wodehouse. Starring Ivy Sawyer, Joseph Santly, and Roy Atwell. Produced by William Elliott and F. Ray Comstock at the Princess Theater, NY, November 7–c. April ?, 1919; 39th Street Theater, NY, April 21–May 10, 1919.

1919

See-Saw (musical comedy). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by Earl Derr Biggers. Starring Dorothea McKaye, Frank Carter, and Elizabeth Hines. Produced by Henry W. Savage at George M. Cohan’s Theater, NY, September 23–November 29.

1920

Mary (musical comedy). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by Otto Harbach and Frank Mandel. Starring Janet Velie, Jack McGowan, and Florrie Millership. Produced by George M. Cohan at the Knickerbocker Theater, NY, October 18–April 23, 1921.

1921

The O’Brien Girl (musical comedy). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by Otto Harbach and Frank Mandel. Starring Elizabeth Hines, Truman Stanley, and Ada Mae Weeks. Produced by George M. Cohan at the Liberty Theater, NY, October 3–February 18, 1922.

1922

The Ziegfeld Follies of 1922 (revue). Music by Louis A. Hirsch, Dave Stamper, and Victor Herbert. Book & lyrics by Ring Lardner, Ralph Spence, and Gene Buck. Starring Gilda Gray (debut), Will Rogers, Evelyn Law, Lulu McConnell, and Gallagher & Shean. Produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. at the New Amsterdam Theater, NY, June 5–June 23, 1923.

Greenwich Village Follies of 1922 (revue). Music by Louis A. Hirsch. Book & lyrics by George V. Hobart, Irving Caesar, and John Murray Anderson. Starring John Hazzard, Savoy & Brennan, Carl Randall, and Lucille Chalfonte. Produced by The Bohemians, Inc. at the Shubert Theater, NY, September 12–March 10, 1923.

1923

Greenwich Village Follies of 1923 (revue). Music by Louis A. Hirsch with Con Conrad. Book & lyrics by Irving Caesar and John Murray Anderson. Starring Daphne Pollard, Tom Howard, Eva Puck, Sammy White, The Mandells, and Irene Delroy. Produced by The Bohemians, Inc. at the Shubert Theater, NY, September 20–c. January 30, 1924.

Going Up (motion picture). Score by Louis A. Hirsch. Based on the 1917 Broadway musical of the same name. Directed by Lloyd Ingraham. Starring Douglas MacLean and Majorie Daw. McLean Productions/Associated Exhibitors. Released September 30.

1924

Betty Lee (musical comedy). Music by Louis A. Hirsch with Con Conrad. Book (based on the Paul Armstrong–Rex Beach play *Going Some*) by Otto Harbach. Lyrics by Irving Caesar and Otto Harbach. Starring Hal Skelly, Gloria Foy, and Joe E. Brown. Produced by Rufus LeMaire at the 44th Street Theatre, December 25–March 21, 1925.

Based in historic Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, **The Paragon Ragtime Orchestra** is the world's only year-round, professional ensemble specializing in the authentic re-creation of "America's Original Music"—the sounds of early musical theater, silent cinema, and vintage ballroom dancing. PRO came into being as the result of Rick Benjamin's 1985 discovery of thousands of early 1900s orchestra scores of the Victor recording star Arthur Pryor. In 1988 the Orchestra made its formal debut at Alice Tully Hall—the first concert ever presented at Lincoln Center by such an ensemble. Since then PRO has appeared at hundreds of leading arts venues, including the Ravinia Festival, the Smithsonian Institution, Chautauqua, Philadelphia's Kimmel Center, the Brucknerhaus (Austria), the New York 92nd Street Y, and the American Dance Festival. In 1999, PRO's music inspired master choreographer Paul Taylor's new dance, *Oh, You Kid!*, which was premiered at The Kennedy Center jointly by the Paul Taylor Dance Company and the Paragon and has since toured the world. In late 2003 the Orchestra premiered Rick Benjamin's reconstruction of Scott Joplin's 1911 opera *Treemonisha* to acclaim at San Francisco's Stern Grove Festival. More recently, PRO had the honor of appearing twice as special guests of the Minnesota Orchestra in Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis.

In addition to its world-wide concert hall, university, and festival appearances, PRO has acquired a considerable following both here and abroad through its radio programs on the *New York Times'* WQXR, National Public Radio, the British Broadcasting Corp., and the *Voice of America* networks. Since 1989 the Walt Disney Company has relied on the Orchestra for the recorded theme music on *Main Street, U.S.A.* at Disneyland, Disney World, and Disneyland Paris, and in 1992 PRO proudly served as "Ambassador of Goodwill" for the United States at the World's Fair in Seville, Spain. Over the past twenty-five years the Orchestra has been heard on the soundtracks of several feature films and television programs, and its audio and video recordings have been widely praised and considered instrumental in rekindling interest in the rich history and tradition of the American theater orchestra. (Website: www.paragonragtime.com)

Conductor **Rick Benjamin** has built a career upon the discovery and performance of American music from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He is the founder and director of the Paragon Ragtime Orchestra, which uses his extraordinary 10,000-title collection of antique theater and dance orchestra music (c. 1870–1925) as the basis of its repertoire. In addition to his work with Paragon, Mr. Benjamin maintains active careers as a pianist, arranger, and tubist. As a conductor he leads many notable

ensembles, including the National Orchestra of Ireland (Dublin), the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the Aalborg and Aarhus Symfoniorkester in Denmark, the Olympia Symphony (Washington State), the National Orchestra of Iceland, the Erie Philharmonic, and Opera Memphis.

Mr. Benjamin is also a leading researcher in the field of silent film music; he has unearthed the original orchestral accompaniments to many great motion pictures of the 1900s, '10s and '20s, and has conducted for more than six hundred screenings across North America and Europe. His articles on historic music appear in several publications, and lecture tours have taken him to more than a hundred colleges and universities throughout North America. Mr. Benjamin's multi-year reconstruction of the Scott Joplin opera *Treemonisha* was premiered to great acclaim in 2003 at San Francisco's Stern Grove Festival, and was more recently performed by both the Cape Town Opera in South Africa and Opera Memphis. He is continuing work on his books *The American Theater Orchestra* and *Encyclopedia of Arrangers & Orchestrators: 1875–1925*. Rick Benjamin was educated at The Juilliard School in New York City. (Website: www.rickbenjamin.com)

Soprano **Bernadette Ulrich Boerckel** is Director of Curriculum for the Warrior Run School District in Pennsylvania. She is also a performer in musicals, operas, and operettas throughout the mid-Atlantic region. As a soloist, Ms. Boerckel has an extensive repertoire that includes the Mozart *Requiem*, the Rutter *Magnificat*, and Saint-Saëns's *Christmas Oratorio*. She has also made two acclaimed recordings with the Paragon Ragtime Orchestra for New World Records.

Baritone **Colte Julian** is a native of southwest Oklahoma, where he began his musical training as a pianist. He attended Oklahoma State University to study Ag Business, but returned to the piano and received his B.A. degree in Music. Catching the "acting bug," he then obtained his M.M. in Musical Theatre Performance from Arizona State University. He has recently relocated to New York City, where he is fast becoming part of the Broadway theater world. (Website: www.coltejulian.com)

The Paragon Ragtime Orchestra

Rick Benjamin, conductor

Caroline Chin, first violin and concertmaster

Bryony Stroud-Watson, second violin

Thomas Rosenthal, viola

Alistair MacRae, cello

Troy Rinker, bass

Leslie Cullen, flute & piccolo

Alicia Lee, clarinet

Paul Murphy, cornet

Nathan Botts, cornet

Tim Albright, trombone

James Musto III, drums, bells, and mallets

Diane Scott, piano

Additional Players for *Going Up and Follies of 1915*

Yuko Naito, violin

Francisco Salazar, violin

Arthur Sato, oboe

Carol McGonnell, clarinet

Damian Primus, bassoon

Mike Atkinson, French horn

Karl Kramer, French horn

Soloists

Bernadette Boerckel, soprano

Colte Julian, baritone

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The Paragon Ragtime Orchestra on New World Records

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From Barrelhouse to Broadway: The Musical Odyssey of Joe Jordan. New World Records 80649-2.

You're a Grand Old Rag: The Music of George M. Cohan. New World Records 80685-2.

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**MIDNIGHT FROLIC: THE BROADWAY THEATER MUSIC OF
LOUIS A. HIRSCH (1881–1924)**

THE PARAGON RAGTIME ORCHESTRA
RICK BENJAMIN, CONDUCTOR

80707-2

1. **Overture to the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1915*** 11:21
Introducing “A Christmas Eve Fantasy” (incidental music), “I’ll Be a Santa Claus to You,” “A Girl for Each Month of the Year,” “I Can’t Do Without Girls,” “Marie Odile,” “Hold Me in Your Loving Arms,” “My Radium Girl,” and “Hello, Frisco!”
2. **Was There Ever a Night Like This?** (from *The Passing Show of 1912*) 4:52
(words & music by Louis A. Hirsch)
Bernadette Boerckel, soprano
3. **Hello Frisco!—The Transcontinental Telephone Song**
(from the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1915*) 4:20
(words by Gene Buck)
Colte Julian, baritone, and Bernadette Boerckel, soprano
4. **’Neath the South Sea Moon** (from the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1922*) 3:02
(words by Gene Buck & Dave Stamper)
Colte Julian, baritone
5. **My Rainbow Girl & The Alimony Blues**
(medley foxtrot from *The Rainbow Girl*, 1918) 2:15
Paul Murphy, cornet soloist
6. **My Home Town** (from *My Home Town Girl*, 1915) 3:44
(words by Frank Stammers)
Bernadette Boerckel, soprano
7. **Any Old Time at All** (from the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1918*) 2:08
(words by Gene Buck)
Colte Julian, baritone
8. **Mary** (from *Mary*, 1920) 3:06
(words by Otto Harbach)
Bernadette Boerckel, soprano and Colte Julian, baritone
9. **When I Hear a Syncopated Tune** (from the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1918*) 2:23
(words by Gene Buck)
Bernadette Boerckel, soprano; James Musto III, xylophone
10. **Selections from *Mary*** (1920) 7:49
Introducing “That Might Satisfy Grandma,” “The Love Nest,” “Mary,” “Waiting,” “Tom-Tom-Toddle,” “That Farm Out in Kansas,” “Anything You Want to Do Dear,” “We’ll Have a Wonderful Party,” and “Love Nest—Reprise.”

11. **Cupid's Lane** (from *The Revue of Revues*, 1911) 3:19
 (words by Harold Atteridge)
 Bernadette Boerckel, soprano; Rick Benjamin, piano
12. **The Wedding Glide** (from *The Passing Show of 1912*) 3:17
 (words & music by Louis A. Hirsch)
 Colte Julian, baritone, and Bernadette Boerckel, soprano
13. **Wildflower: An Indian Intermezzo** (1908) 3:15
14. **List'ning on Some Radio** (from the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1922*) 3:19
 (words by Gene Buck & Dave Stamper)
 Colte Julian, baritone
15. **The Love Nest** (from *Mary*, 1920) 4:14
 (words by Otto Harbach)
 Bernadette Boerckel, soprano, and Colte Julian, baritone
16. **Highlights from *Going Up*** (1917) 9:18
 Introducing "Going Up," "I Want a Boy," "Kiss Me," "Everybody Ought to Know How to Do the
 'Tickle Toe,'" "Do It for Me," "Down-Up," "If You Look in Her Eyes," and "Tickle Toe-Finale."
17. **The Ziegfeld One Step** (from the *Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic*, 1915) 2:55

TT: 75:21

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