



Lowell Milken Center for  
Music of American Jewish Experience

# Jews in the Invention of the American Musical

## STUDENT WORKSHEET

סיפורי מוסיקה  
Stories of Music

**UCLA**

Herb Alpert  
School of Music



[NOTE: This worksheet will give you an outline and overview of the lesson, and will provide you with the materials that will help you to understand and integrate the lesson's major points. These materials include lyrics to songs that will be explored in depth, questions to consider while listening to some pieces of music, and more. This is not meant to be comprehensive, and your instructor may modify this lesson to enhance the learning experience for your particular class. Please notice that the Roman numerals along the way correspond to the Lesson Outline.]

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## Introduction

This lesson focuses on developments in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that led to the creation of the American musical theater as a distinct form, and the involvement of Jews at each stage.

### LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Prelude
- II. What Played on Broadway Before the American Musical?
  - A. Operetta (*Countess Maritza [Gräfin Mariza]*)
  - B. Other Forms of Musical Entertainment on Broadway
    1. Tin Pan Alley
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    3. Musical Revues

#### Summary of the First Half

- III. Towards the American Musical: Americanizing the Imports  
Edwardian Musical Theatre (*The Girl from Utah*)
- IV. The New American Musical: Beginnings (*Watch Your Step*)
- V. Developing the American Musical: The Princess Theatre Musicals (*Oh, Boy!*)
- VI. The Refining of the American Musical (*No, No Nanette*)
- VII. The Arrival of the American Musical: *Show Boat*
- VIII. Weaving Our Threads Together
- IX. Coda/Outro

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## I. Prelude

“**Ol’ Man River**” from the musical *Show Boat* (1927)

(Music: Jerome Kern [1885–1945]; Lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein II [1895–1960])

Dere’s an ol’ man called de Mississippi;  
Dat’s de ol’ man dat I’d like to be!  
What does he care if de world’s got troubles?  
What does he care if de land ain’t free?

*(Chorus)*

Ol’ man river, that ol’ man river  
He must know somethin’ but he don’t say nothin’  
He just keeps rollin’, he keeps on rollin’ along.

He don’t plant taters; he don’t plant cotton  
And them that plants ’em, are soon forgotten  
But ol’ man river, just keeps rollin’ along.

You and me, we sweat and strain,  
Body all achin’ and racked with pain.  
Tote that barge and lift that bail  
You gits a little drunk and you lands in jail

I gets weary, and sick of trying  
I’m tired of livin’ and scared of dyin’  
But ol’ man river, he just keeps rollin’ along.

Here we all work ’long the Mississippi  
Here we all work while the white folk play  
Pullin’ them boats from the dawn till sunset  
Gettin’ no rest till the judgment day

Don’t look up and don’t look down  
You don’t das make the white boss frown  
Bend your knees and bow your head  
And pull that rope until your dead

Let me go ’way from the Mississippi  
Let me go ’way from the white man boss  
Show me that stream called the river Jordan  
That’s the old stream that I long to cross. *(Chorus)*

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## II. What Played on Broadway Before the American Musical?

### A. Operetta

#### 1. “Finale” from the operetta *Countess Maritza* (1924)

(Music: Emmerich Kálmán [1882–1953]; Libretto: Julius Brammer [1877–1943] and Alfred Grünwald [1884–1951]; English adaptation by Harry B. Smith)

#### 2. “Drink! Drink! Drink! (Drinking Song)” from the operetta *The Student Prince* (1924)

(Music: Sigmund Romberg [1887–1951]; Lyrics: Dorothy Donnelly [1876–1928])

Ein, zwei, drei, vier—Lift your stein and drink your beer

Ein, zwei, drei, vier—Lift your stein and drink your beer

Drink! Drink! Drink!—To eyes that are bright as stars when they’re shining on me!

Drink! Drink! Drink!—To lips that are red and sweet as the fruit on the tree!

Here’s a hope that those bright eyes will shine

Lovingly, longingly, soon into mine!

May those lips that are red and sweet

Tonight with joy my own lips meet!

Drink! Drink! Let the toast start!

May young hearts never part!

Drink! Drink! Drink!

Let every true lover salute his sweetheart!

Drink! Drink! Drink!—To arms that are white and warm as a rose in the sun!

Drink! Drink! Drink!—To hearts that will love one, only when I am the one!

Here’s a hope that those soft arms will twine

Tenderly, trustingly soon around mine!

All I ask is the right to see

Those smiling eyes beguiling me

Drink! Drink! Let the toast start!

May young hearts never part!

Drink! Drink! Drink!

Let every true lover salute his sweetheart!

Let’s drink!

### 3. “Hamavdil” from the operetta *Der Rebetsns Tokhter*

(*The Rabbi’s Wife’s Daughter*, 1922)

(Music by Joseph Rumshinsky [1881–1956])

*Hamavdil beyn kodesh,  
beyn kodesh l’chol,  
Chatoseynu (3x) hu yimchol.  
Gut vokh (3x), a gute vokh,  
Gut vokh (3x), a tayere vokh.*

*Got fun Avrohom un Yitschok un Yakov,  
Bahit dayn folk Yisroel,  
Bashits dayn folk Yisroel.  
Der Shabes koydesh geyt avek,  
Di naye vokh zol kumen,  
tsu mazl un brokhe  
Mit alem gut und hatslokhe.  
Mir betn nor bay dir aleyn,  
Gotenyu! V’nomar: Omeyn.*

*Der vos makht a tsvishnsheyd  
beyn kodesh l’chol,  
Tsvishn Shabes  
un der vokhns,  
Hamavdil beyn kodesh l’chol,  
Oy, zareynu v’chaspeynu yarbe kachol,  
Mir zoln zikh mern,  
dikh nor gehern,  
Hamavdil beyn kodesh l’chol.  
Oy, guter boyre, oy, tayerer boyre,  
Zingt dem “Hamavdil,” zingt far Im.  
Loybt undzer boyre, loybt nor Im.*

*Got fun Avrohom un Yitschok un Yakov,  
Mir zaynen bay dir ale takif.  
Hit undz un shits undz,  
oy, fun a nayer brokh.  
Gib undz, un shik undz a naye, gute vokh.*

The One who distinguishes  
the sacred and profane,  
Will pardon our transgressions.  
A good week, have a good week.  
A good week, a pleasant week.

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—  
Watch over Your people Israel.  
Protect Your people Israel.  
The Holy Sabbath is taking leave;  
May the new week arrive  
with good fortune and blessing,  
with all things good and with success.  
To You alone we pray:  
Dear God! And let us say: Amen.

The One who made a distinction  
between the sacred and profane,  
between the Sabbath  
and the rest of the week,  
“*Hamavdil beyn kodesh l’chol,*”  
will multiply our seed and our means  
as the sand of the ocean.  
Yet belong only to you,  
“*Hamavdil ben kodesh l’chol.*”  
O, good Creator, O dear Creator,  
Sing the “*Hamavdil,*” sing unto God.  
Praise our Creator. Praise only the One.

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,  
our belief in You is strong.  
Watch over us and protect us  
from any new disasters.  
Give us and send us a new, good week.

#### 4. “Fifty-Fifty” from the show *Op-to’un un da’un-to’un (Uptown-Downtown, 1917)*

(Music: Joseph Rumshinsky; Lyrics: Louis Gilrod [1879–1930])

*Ikh hof, mir veln nokh derlebn—  
kumen zol di tsayt—  
ven es veln mer nit zayn  
keyn bosses un arbetslayt.  
Di sotsialistn veln makhn  
a sof tsu orem un raykh,  
Di bosses mit di arbeter  
veln zikh teyln glaykh!*

*Fifty-fifty, oy, fifty-fifty!  
Vanderbilt vet vi an oks  
zitsn, shvitsn, neyen cloaks;  
Fifty-fifty!  
Llomir tryen umetum,  
keyn tsayt farlirn,  
shnel aynfirn fifty-fifty!*

*Fifty-fifty, oy, fifty-fifty!  
Mayn bruder iz arumgegangen  
on arbet a lange tsayt;  
keyn zakh iz im ober nisht gelungen,  
vos er hot getryd.  
eyn mol kumt er aheym mit gelt  
un zogt tsu mir; “You see,  
ikh bin conductor af a trolleycar  
un teyl zikh mit der company!”*

*Fifty-fifty, oy, fifty-fifty!  
Ikh kling dem glock gor on a shier—  
A nickel far zey,  
a nickel far mir;  
Fifty-fifty! Es geyt bay mir geshmirt.  
a tsi dos shtrikl,  
fliet a nickel in keshene tzu mir.*

I hope we will live to see the day—  
the time should only come—  
when there will no longer be  
any bosses and workers.  
The socialists will make  
an end to poor and rich.  
The bosses and workers  
will share things equally!

Fifty-fifty, oy, fifty-fifty!  
Vanderbilt will sit and  
sweat like an ox, sewing cloaks.  
Fifty-fifty!  
Let’s try it everywhere  
and not waste any time,  
quickly enacting the “fifty-fifty”!

Fifty-fifty, oy, fifty-fifty!  
My brother went around  
jobless for a long time;  
but nothing worked for him,  
no matter what he tried.  
One day he comes home with money  
and says to me: “You see,  
I am a conductor on a trolley car  
and split it with the company!”

Fifty-fifty, oy, fifty-fifty!  
I ring the bell incessantly—  
It’s a nickel for them,  
a nickel for me.  
Fifty-fifty! It goes so smoothly,  
a tug on the bell rope,  
and a nickel flies into my pocket.

## B. Other Forms of Musical Entertainment on Broadway

### 1. Tin Pan Alley

#### “Honey Boy”

*(Music: Albert Von Tilzer [1878–1956]; Lyrics: Jack Norworth [1879–1959])*

Must you really sail away, my Honey Boy.

Must you go.

Don't you know

when your ship sails down the bay, my Honey Boy.

I'll be true to my Honey Boy, to you.

For I love you best of all, my Honey Boy.

Don't you sigh.

Time will fly.

When you're on the deep blue sea,

Try and think sometimes of me,

I'll be waiting anxiously, Honey Boy.

*(Chorus)*

Honey Boy, I hate to see you leaving.

Honey Boy, you know my heart is grieving

When you are sailing, sailing o'er the sea

Honey Boy, Honey Boy,

And if ever you should take a notion

To come sailing home across the ocean

Honey Dear, never fear,

I'll be waiting, waiting, waiting for you Honey Boy.

When you come back again my Honey Boy

You can guess, I'll say yes.

I'll walk down the village lane, my Honey Boy

To the church, my Honey Boy, with you

We'll be wed and settle down, my Honey Boy

With you dear always near

In a cottage all our own,

Just for you and me alone,

It will be our Home sweet Home, Honey Boy. *(Chorus)*

## 2. Vaudeville

### “Nobody Loves a Fat Girl But, Oh, How a Fat Girl Can Love”

(Music and Lyrics: Ted Shapiro [1899–1980])

Nobody loves a fat girl  
But, oh, how a fat girl can love  
Nobody seems to want me  
I'm just a truck upon the highway of love

I'm all alone inside of my form  
When ev'ry ounce of me is dyin' to keep somebody warm  
Nobody loves a fat girl  
But, oh, how a fat girl can love

Nobody loves a fat girl  
But, oh, how a fat girl can love  
Nobody seems to want me  
I'm just a truck upon the highway of love

The only game I can get the boys to play  
Is to have them sit around and try to guess how much I weigh  
Nobody loves a fat girl  
But, oh, how a fat girl can love, pretty mama  
Oh, how a fat girl can love.

## 3. Musical Revues

### “I Can't Give You Anything But Love” from the musical revue *Blackbirds of 1928*

(Music: Jimmy McHugh (1894–1969); Lyrics: Dorothy Fields, 1904–1974)

Well I can't give you anything but love, baby.  
That's the only thing I've plenty of, baby.  
You dream awhile and you scheme awhile  
You're sure to find happiness  
And I guess all the things you always pined for.

Gee I'd like to see you looking swell, baby.  
Diamond bracelets Woolworth doesn't sell, baby.  
Til the lucky day you know darn well, baby.  
I can't give you anything but love.



## **“Big Spender”** from the musical *Sweet Charity*

(Music by Cy Coleman [1929–2004]; Lyrics by Dorothy Fields)

The minute you walked in the joint  
I could see you were a man of distinction  
A real big spender  
Good lookin' so refined  
Say, wouldn't you like to know what's goin' on in my mind?  
So let me get right to the point  
I don't pop my cork for every man I see  
Hey big spender,  
Spend a little time with me

Do you want to have fun, fun, fun  
How's about a few laughs, laughs  
I could show you a good time  
Fun! Laughs! Good time!  
Let me show you a good time!

The minute you walked in the joint  
I could see you were a man of distinction  
A real big spender  
Good lookin' so refined  
Say, wouldn't you like to know what's goin' on in my mind?  
So let me get right to the point,  
I don't pop my cork for every guy I see  
Hey big spender  
Hey big spender  
Hey big spender  
Spend, a little time with me.  
Fun! Laughs! Good time!  
Yeah!

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## Summary of First Half

### “My Yiddishe Mama”

(Music by Lewis Pollack [1895–1946]; Lyrics by Jack Yellen [1892–1991])

Of things I should be thankful for I've had a goodly share  
And as I sit here in the comfort of a cozy chair  
My fancy takes me to a humble east side tenement  
Three flights in the rear to where my childhood days were spent  
It wasn't much like paradise, but amid the dirt and all  
There sat the sweetest angel, one that I fondly call:

*My Yiddishe momme—*

I need her more then ever now.

*My Yiddishe momme*

I'd like to kiss that wrinkled brow.

I long to hold her hands

once more as in days gone by

And ask her to forgive me for things

that I did that made her cry

How few were her pleasures,

she never cared for fashion's styles

Her jewels and treasures

she found them in her baby's smiles

Oh, I know that I owe

what I am today

To that dear little lady

so old and gray

To that wonderful *Yiddishe momme*

of mine

*A Yidishe mame*

*Zi makht dokh zis di gantze velt*

*A Yidishe mame*

*Oy vey, vi bitter, ven zi felt,*

*Ihr darft dokh danken G-t*

*Vus Ikh hot ihr nokh bay zikh*

*Oy vey, vi troyerik zu sein*

*Ven zi geyt avek tzu gikh*

*In vaser in fayer*

*Volt zi gelofn far ir kind*

*Nisht hubn zi tayer*

*Dus is gevis di greste zind*

*Oy vi gliklekh un raykh*

*Iz der mentch, vus hot*

*Aza shayne metune*

*geshenkt fin G-t*

*Nuch an altishke Yidishe mame*

*Mame mayn!*

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**“Here in My Arms”** from the musical *Dearest Enemy* (1925)

(Music by Richard Rodgers [1902–1979]; Lyrics by Lorenz Hart [1895–1943])

Here in my arms it's adorable!  
It's deplorable  
that you were never there.

When your two lips are so kissable  
it's permissible  
for you to ask your share.

Next to my heart it is ever so lonely,  
I'm holding only air,  
while here in my arms it's adorable!  
It's deplorable  
that you were never there.

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### III. Towards the American Musical: Americanizing the Imports

**“They Didn't Believe Me”** from the musical *The Girl from Utah* (1914)

(Music: Jerome Kern [1885–1945]; Lyrics: Herbert Reynolds [1867–1933])

(Chorus)

And when I told them how beautiful you are,  
They didn't believe me, they didn't believe me.  
Your lips, your eyes, your cheeks, your hair  
Are in a class beyond compare.  
You're the loveliest girl that one can see.  
And when I tell them—  
And I certainly am goin' to tell them—  
That I'm the girl whose boy (man whose girl) one day you'll be  
They'll never believe me, they'll never believe me.  
That from this great big world you've chosen me

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## IV. The New American Musical: Beginnings

**“Play a Simple Melody”** from the musical *Watch Your Step* (1914)

(*Music and Lyrics by Irving Berlin [1888–1989]*)

Voice 1

In days of yore, before the war  
when hearts now old were young,  
at home each night by firelight  
those dear old songs were sung.  
Sweet melodies, their memories  
around my heart still cling.  
That’s why I long to hear a song  
like mother used to sing

Won’t you play a simple melody  
like my mother sang to me?  
One with good old fashioned harmony—  
play a simple melody!

Voice 2

Musical Demon,  
Set your honey a-dreamin’  
Won’t you play me some rag?  
Just change that classical nag  
to some sweet beautiful drag.

If you will play from the copy  
of a tune that is choppy  
You’ll get all my applause.  
And that is simply because  
I want to listen to rag.

**“(I Wonder Why?) You’re Just in Love”** from the musical *Call Me Madam* (1950)

(*Music and Lyrics by Irving Berlin*)

Voice 1

I hear singing and there’s no one there  
I smell blossoms and the trees are bare  
All day long I seem to walk on air

I wonder why, I wonder why  
I keep tossing in my sleep at night

And what’s more I’ve lost my appetite  
Stars that used to twinkle in the skies  
Are twinkling in my eyes I wonder why

Voice 2

You don’t need analyzing  
It is not so surprising  
That you feel very strange but nice.  
Your heart goes pitter patter  
I know just what’s the matter  
Because I’ve been there once or twice  
Put your head on my shoulder  
You need someone who’s older  
A rub down with a velvet glove.  
There is nothing you can take  
To relieve that pleasant ache  
You’re not sick, you’re just in love.

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## V. Developing the American Musical: The Princess Theatre Musicals

**“Till the Clouds Roll By”** from the musical *Oh Boy!* (1917)

(Music: Jerome Kern; Lyrics: Guy Bolton [1884–1979] and P.G. Wodehouse [1881–1975])

I'm so sad to think that I had to  
Drive you from your home so coolly.  
I'd be gaining nothing by remaining  
What would Missus Grundy say?  
Her conventions, kindly recollect them!  
We must please respect them duly  
My intrusion needs explaining;  
I felt my courage waning  
Please, I beg don't mention it!  
I should not mind a bit  
But it has started raining.

*(Refrain)*

Oh, the rain comes a pitter, patter  
And I'd like to be safe in bed.  
Skies are weeping, while the world is sleeping  
Trouble heaping on our head.

It is vain to remain and chatter  
And to wait for a clearer sky.  
Helter skelter, I must fly for shelter  
Till the clouds roll by.

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## VI. The Refining of the American Musical

**“Tea for Two”** from the musical *No, No, Nanette* (1925)

(*Music: Vincent Youmans [1898–1946]; Lyrics: Irving Caesar [1895–1996]*)

You are revealing  
A scene so appealing  
I can't help feeling for you.

Darling, I planned it  
Can't you understand it  
It's yours to command it, so do.

All that you say I'm admiring  
It's worth desiring  
But can't you see.

I'd like to wait, dear  
For some future date, dear  
It won't be too late, dear...For me.  
And then just

*(Refrain)*

Picture me upon your knee  
Just tea for two and two for tea  
Me for you and you for me alone.

Nobody near us  
To see us or hear us  
No friends or relations  
On weekend vacations  
We won't have it known, dear  
That we own a telephone

Day will break  
and you'll awake  
And start to bake  
a sugar cake  
For me to take  
To all the boys to see

We will raise a family  
A boy for you, a girl for me  
Oh, can't you see  
How happy we would be?

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## VII. The Arrival of the American Musical

**“Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man”** from the musical *Show Boat* (1927)

(Music: Jerome Kern; Lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein II [1895–1960])

(Refrain)

Fish gotta swim, birds gotta fly  
I gotta love one man ’til I die  
Can’t help lovin’ that man of mine  
Tell me he’s lazy, tell me he’s slow  
Tell me I’m crazy, maybe, I know  
Can’t help lovin’ that man of mine.

Oh, listen, sista  
I love my mista man  
And I can’t tell you why  
There ain’t no reason  
Why I should love that man  
It must be something  
That the angels done plan (Refrain)

When he goes away  
That’s a rainy day  
But when he comes back  
That day is fine  
The sun will shine

He can come home  
As late as can be  
Home without him  
Ain’t no home to me  
Can’t help lovin’ that man of mine

(Additional verse)

The chimney’s smokin’. The roof is leakin’ in.  
But he don’t seem to care.  
There ain’t no reason  
Why I should love that man  
It must be something  
That the angels done plan (Refrain)

## **“Nobody Else But Me”** from the musical *Show Boat*

(Music: Jerome Kern; Lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein II)

I want to be no-one but me.  
I am in love with a lover who likes me the way I am.  
I have my faults; he likes my faults.  
I'm not very bright; he's not very bright.  
He thinks I'm grand; that's grand for me.  
He may be wrong, but if we get along  
What do we care, say we?  
When he holds me close, close as we can be,  
I tell the lad that I'm grateful and I'm glad that  
I'm nobody else but me.

I was a shy, demure type.  
Inhibited, insecure type of girl, a pearl,  
Of no great price was I,  
Til a certain cutie  
Called me sweetie pie.  
Now I'm smug and snooty  
And my head is high.

I want to be no-one but me.  
I may be wrong, but if we get along,  
What do we care, say we?  
When he holds me close, close as we can be,  
Say, I tell the lad that I'm grateful and I'm glad that  
I'm nobody else but me.

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## **VIII. Weaving Our Threads Together**

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## **IX. Coda/Outro**