ROGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN'S

"SOUTH DAKOTA!"

A radio/stage play

By

Eric Coble
SOUTH DAKOTA!

RUDMAN
FINALLY TONIGHT, WE HAVE UNEARTHED A HUGE DISCOVERY. IN A TRUNK IN AN ATTIC IN TEANECK, NEW JERSEY, A WOMAN RECENTLY DISCOVERED WHAT HAS NOW BEEN VERIFIED AS A LOST MANUSCRIPT BY NONE OTHER THAN ROGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN. IT WAS APPARENTLY THEIR EARLIEST COLLABORATION, AND WITHIN IT WE FIND A STARTLING NUMBER OF THEMES AND CHARACTERS THAT WOULD LATER COME TO FRUITION IN OTHER MUSICALS. WHILE THIS DISCOVERY HAS BEEN IGNORED BY THE REST OF THE MUSICAL THEATRE COMMUNITY, SOME WOULD SAY WITH GOOD REASON, TONIGHT WE ARE PROUD TO BRING YOU THE WORLD PREMIERE OF THE "NEW" ROGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN MUSICAL -- "SOUTH DAKOTA!"

ANGEL
MR. BIGELOW? BILLY BIGELOW?

BILLY
HEY, HANDS OFF, YA WINGED PALOOK. YOU WANTA MOUTHFULL OF KNUCKLES??

ANGEL
WE DON’T STRIKE PEOPLE IN THE FACE HERE IN THE AFTERLIFE, MR. BIGELOW.

BILLY
YEAH, WELL, THINGS ARE GONNA BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT NOW I’M HERE, SEE?

ANGEL
WHAT’S BOTHERING YOU, BILLY?

BILLY
WHO SAID SOMETHIN’S BOTHERIN’ ME??

ANGEL
(CHOKING)
MR. BIGELOW... PLEASE... LET GO OF MY HALO... I CAN’T...

BILLY
AH, CAN THIS, YA HARP-STRUMMIN’ PANSY. I’M JUST SQUIRRELY ‘CAUSE I MISS MY LITTLE GIRL.

ANGEL
(CHOKING)
IS SHE STILL DOWN ON EARTH?

BILLY
YEAH. RIGHT THERE. SEE? THAT HUGE FLAT CHUNK OF LAND IN THE MIDDLE OF GODFORSAKEN NOWHERE.
ANGEL

(CHOKING)
THAT’S SOUTH DAKOTA, MR. BIGELOW. CAN’T YOU HEAR THEM SINGING?

CHORUS

(IN THE DISTANCE, SINGING TO “OKLAHOMA!”)
“SOUUUUTH DAKOTA! WHERE THERE JUST AIN’T NOTHIN’ TO BE SEEN—”

BILLY

WHAT I’D GIVE TO HAVE ONE MORE VISIT WITH HER.

ANGEL

(CHOKING)
I THINK I CAN ARRANGE THAT... IF YOU JUST LET ME GO!!

BILLY

WOULD YA? AW, BOY, THAT’D BE JUST ABOUT THE SWELLEST PUNCH IN THE GUT A FELLA COULD MUSTER!

ANGEL

WHAT’S HER NAME?

BILLY

MARIA. THAT’S HER IN THE NUN GET-UP WITH ALL THE KIDS.

ANGEL

LET’S GO TO HER NOW!

(BLING!)

(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK)

KING

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

MARIA

AH! HELLO, YOUR MAJESTY! YOU MUST BE THE MAN OF THE HOUSE!

KING

YES, I AM! I AM KING VON TRAPP OF SOUTH DAKOTA! RULER OF HUGE FLAT NOWHERE, IMPERIAL LORD OF ROCK AND GRAVEL, ETC, ETC, ETC.

MARIA

I’M SISTER MARIA. I’M HERE AS GOVERNESS OF YOUR CHILDREN.

KING

WHY DO YOU CARRY STRANGE BLACK SUITCASE?
MARIA
THAT’S MY GUITAR, YOUR MAJESTY. GOES WITH ME EVERYWHERE I GO. I THOUGHT I’D SING A LITTLE TUNE OF INTRODUCTION—
(SINGING)
“RAINDROPS ON ROSES AND WHISKERS ON KITTENS, BRIGHT COPPER KETTLES AND WARM—”

KING
STOP SINGING. YOU MEET CHILDREN NOW. THERE ARE 67 OF THEM. CHILDREN!
(CLAP CLAP)
THIS IS YOUR NEW SINGING GOVERNESS. MRS. SISTER MARIA, THESE ARE THE ROYAL PRINCES AND PRINCESSES, LEISEL, FREDERIK, CHING SOW, BRIGETTA, WO DUK FAN, GRETEL, MARTA, LOO TSU FU—

MARIA
GOOD AFTERNOON, CHILDREN!
(SINGING)
“RAINDROPS ON ROSES AND WHISKERS ON KITTENS—”

KING
STOP SINGING! 56 CHILDREN TO GO! LOUISA, HUN TSO—

MARIA
PERHAPS I’D BETTER SIT DOWN.

BILLY
MARIA. MARIA, BABY, IT’S ME, YOUR OLD MAN. DON’T GET MIXED UP WITH THIS BUNCH, YOU’LL NEVER LEARN ALL THEIR NAMES!

ANGEL
SHE CAN’T HEAR YOU, MR. BIGELOW.

—KURT, HO SOO LING—

(KING ENTRANCE)

(ANNA ENTERS)

ANNA
GOOD AFTERNOON, YOUR MAJESTY. I APOLOGIZE FOR MY TARDINESS!

WHO ARE YOU?

KING AND MARIA

ANNA
I’M ANNA. THE TUTOR FROM BRITAIN. I NEVER DREAMED IT’D BE SUCH A HORRIBLY LONG DISTANCE FROM LONDON TO SOUIX FALLS! BUT THESE MUST BE YOUR 67 LOVELY CHILDREN!

MARIA
THEY ARE. AND I’M THEIR GOVERNESS. PLEASED TO MEET YOU, ANNA. WHERE’S YOUR GUITAR?
ANNA
OH, HEAVENS. A LADY DOESN’T CARRY SUCH A PREPOSTEROUS INSTRUMENT. I HAVE MY CHALK AND TEXTBOOKS. SHALL WE BEGIN, CHILDREN?

(SINGING)
“GETTING TO KNOW YOU, GETTING TO KNOW ALL ABOUT—”

MARIA

(SINGING)
“RAINDROPS ON ROSES AND WHISKERS ON KITTENS—”

ANNA

(SINGING)
“GETTING TO LIKE YOU! GETTING TO HOPE YOU LIKE—”

MARIA

(SINGING)
“BROWN PAPER PACKAGES TIED UP WITH STRING—”

KING
STOP! STOP! OUT OF ALL NANNIES IN WORLD, I FIND TWO SINGING WINGBATS!

MARIA
CLEARLY THE CHILDREN ARE HAPPY WITH ME, KING VON TRAPP!

ANNA
CLEARLY THE CHILDREN DO NOT NEED A GUITAR-WIELDING FAILED NUN RUNNING LOOSE, YOUR MAJESTY!

KING
IS A PUZZLEMENT!

BILLY
SAY, THIS ANNA DAME IS HORNIN’ IN ON MY MARIA’S JOB OPPORTUNITY! SOMEONE OUGHTA DECK HER!

ANGEL
DON’T DO IT, MR. BIGELOW!

BILLY
THEN SOME OF THE KIDS -- LET ME POP ONE OF THE KIDS!

MR. BIGELOW!

ANGEL

(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK)

KING
JUST WHAT WE NEED, MORE NANNIES!

(CURLY ENTERS)
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT, BUT I AIN'T NO NANNY, KING VON TRAPP. IT'S JUST ME, CURLY-

AH, RANCH HAND MAN! EXCELLENT! HOW IS ROYAL HERD COMING?

I RECKON FINE, YOUR IMMENSENESS. BUT THAT AIN'T WHAT I'M HERE FOR. I WAS JUST WONDERIN' IF MISS MARIA HERE HAS AN ESCORT TO THE BOX SOCIAL AND CLAM BAKE OUT ON BALI HAI ISLAND TONIGHT?

OH MY.

AS MATTER OF FACT, SHE DOES. I AM ESCORTING SINGING GOVERNESS TO BOX SOCIAL/CLAM BAKE ON BALI HAI ISLAND.

WHAT?

NOW, YOUR BALDNESS, JUST 'CAUSE YOU'RE THE KING OF ALL FIELDS, ROCKS, PRAIRIES-

-ETC, ETC, ETC.-

-DON'T MEAN YOU GET TO JUST LAY DOWN THE LAW 'BOUT THE WOMEN FOLK!

YOU TELL HIM, COWBOY!

I DO LAY DOWN LAW! AND I SAY I GO TO BOX SOCIAL AND YOU GO FINISH TURNING GRASS FIELD INTO LANDING STRIP FOR BOMBERS. MUST FINISH IN TWO WEEKS IF G.I.'S ARE TO BEAT JAPS!

WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF SOUTH DAKOTA, YOUR VASTNESS! THERE AIN'T NO BOMBERS TO BE FOUND 'TWIXT HERE AND CHEYENNE!

ORDERS ARE ORDERS, SOLDIER! NOW BUILD LANDING STRIP WHILE TUTOR AND I DANCE WALTZ. OUT OF WAY, CHILDREN!!
ANNA
IT WOULD BE MY PLEASURE, YOUR MAJESTY-
(SINGING)
“SHAAALL WEEEE...”

MARIA
I’M THE TUTOR HERE! IF ANYONE’S FALLING IN LOVE WITH THE LONELY, STODGEY-BUT-TENDER-HEARTED MAN OF THE HOUSE, IT’LL BE ME!

KING
PUT DOWN GUITAR AND MAYBE WE’LL TALK.

CURLY
MARIA! WHAT ABOUT ME??

MARIA
OH, CURLY. I DO HAVE FEELINGS FOR YOU-

CURLY
YOU WAIT AND SEE, MARIA! YOU JUST SEE WHO BUYS YOUR HAMPER!

KING
AFTER YOU FINISH AIR-STRIP!

(CURLY STORMS OUT)

ANNA
COME, YOUR MAJESTY, I HAVE A WONDERFUL IDEA FOR A FULLY-STAGED KABUKI VERSION OF “UNCLE TOM’S CABIN” WE CAN TEACH THE CHILDREN!

(KING AND ANNA LEAVE)

MARIA
OH, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? ...I THINK I’LL SING!
“EEEDELWEIIISSS-”

BILLY
DON’T, MARIA, HONEY. DADDY’S HERE.

ANGEL
SHE CAN’T HEAR-

BILLY
I KNOW THAT, YA WHITE-ROBED BEAN COUNTER! I’M JUST TRYIN’ TO COMFORT HER!

MARIA
OH! HERE’S SOMEONE WHO CAN COMFORT ME! AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY!

(AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY ENTERS)
MARIA (CONT’D)
OH, MARY, IF EVER I NEEDED SOME OF YOUR HOMESPUN EARTHY WISDOM, IT’S NOW. I LOVE CURLY AND THE KING! WHAT SHOULD I DO?

AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY
YOU LIKE COWBOY BOOTS? FOUR DOLLA!

MARIA
IT’S JUST THE KING -- HE’S A LOVELY MAN, AND I LOVE ALL 67 OF HIS LOVELY CHILDREN, AND I LOVE THE WAY HIS LOVELY BALD HEAD GLISTENS IN THE CANDLELIGHT... BUT... BUT I THINK HE’S 1/16 CHEROKEE. THE WAY HE TALKS AND HUNTS BUFFALO. I CAN’T MARRY A MAN WHO’S 1/16 CHEROKEE!

AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY
HE DAMN SEXY MAN.

MARIA
AND CURLY. THE WAY HE SWINGS A LASSO AND SINGS ABOUT HOW TALL THE CORN IS -- BUT HE’S SO FULL OF HIMSELF!

AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY
HE DAMN SEXY MAN.

MARIA
WHAT SHOULD I DO, AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY?

AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY
YOU LIKE COWBOY HAT? TWO DOLLA!

MARIA
OH, MARY. I KNEW YOU’D KNOW JUST THE RIGHT THING TO SAY! I THINK I’LL SING!
(SINGING)
“THE HILLS ARE ALIIIIVE-”

AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY
YOU SING, YOU PAY ME FIVE DOLLA.

BILLY
MARIA, LISTEN TO ME, IT’S YOUR OLD MAN. DON’T LET THESE LUGNUTS MESS YA AROUND! YOU’RE WORTH MORE THAN THAT! DONTCHA UNDERSTAND? LISTEN TO ME, MARIA! LISTEN TO ME!

(SLAP!)

MARIA
AH!

ANGEL
NOW YOU’VE DONE IT, MR. BIGELOW.
BILLY
I THOUGHT SHE COULDN’T KNOW I WAS HERE! HOW COME SHE ONLY FEELS ME WHEN I SLAP HER? WHAT KIND OF CHEAP SET-UP RACKET IS THAT??

MARIA
AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY, I... I JUST FELT SOMETHING. BUT IT DIDN’T HURT. IT WAS LIKE A TOUCH. DO YOU THINK IT’S POSSIBLE... IF YOU LOVE SOMEONE ENOUGH, EVEN IF THEY HIT YOU IT DOESN’T HURT?

AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY
IF YOU LOVE SOMEONE ENOUGH, THEY CAN HIT YOU WITH 2X4 AND IT FEEL LIKE KISS.

MARIA
YES.

AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY
THEY DROP TREE BRANCH ON YOUR HEAD AND BACK CAR OVER YOU AND THROW YOU INTO WOLVERINE PIT AND IF YOU LOVE THEM ENOUGH... IT FEEL LIKE KISS.

MARIA
YES, AUNT BLOODY ELLER MARY! YES!

BILLY
GOSH. I GUESS MAYBE SHE DID LEARN A LESSON.

ANGEL
WHAT IN GOD’S NAME KIND OF LESSON IS THAT??

BILLY
LOVE CONQUERS ALL!

(ENOCH AND ADO ANNIE ENTER)

ENOCH
I’M ENOCH. AND THIS IS ADO ANNIE. WE’RE THE COMICAL SECONDARY ROMANTIC COUPLE!

MARTHA
WHO ARE YOU?

ENOCH
ARE WE LATE?

MARTHA
A LITTLE. I THINK WE’VE REACHED THE CLIMAX.
Then we’ll stick around and sing the rousing finale, if you don’t mind!

(King and Anna enter)

King

Ah! Other tutor, Mrs. Sister Maria! And comical secondary romantic couple! Just in time for trip to box social/clam bake on Bali Hai Island!

Maria

Let’s go, Your Majesty!

Anna

Yes, do let’s, Your Majesty!

Maria

Of course, we’ll have to slip by the guards out the back and sneak all of your children to safety over the island before the Nazis and Japanese notice!

King

Of course.

Anna

But with love—

Maria

—and a guitar—

(Curly enters)

Curly

—and my lasso!

Maria

Curly!

Anna and King

We can do anything!

Billy, Ado Annie, King, Anna

(Singing)

“When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high—”

Maria, Curly, Aunt Bloody Eller, Enoch

(Singing)

“Climb ev’ry mountain! Search high and low—”
BILLY, ADO ANNIE, KING, ANNA
(SINGING)
“WALK ON, WALK ON, WITH HOPE IN YOUR HEART—”

MARIA, CURLY, AUNT BLOODY
ELLER, ENOCH
(SINGING)
“FOLLOW EVERY RAINBOW ‘TILL YOU FIND YOUR DREAM!”

BILLY, ADO ANNIE, KING, ANNA
(SINGING)
“AND YOU’LL NEVER WALK ALOOOONE!”

ALL
LET’S ALL GO TO THE DREAM BALLET!

(MUSIC AND APPLAUSE)