

MUSICAL THEATRE GEEKS!

A Radio/Stage Play

By

Eric Coble

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RUDMAN

AND NOW AS PART OF OUR ANNIVERSARY SEASON, ANOTHER CLASSIC MOMENT. SEVERAL YEARS AGO, WE INTRODUCED THE WORLD TO A RADIO GAME SHOW WHICH WENT ON TO INSTANT NOTORIETY AND IS STILL REQUESTED BY FANS TO THIS DAY. SO HERE, ONE MORE TIME, IS THAT TOE-TAPPING, HEAD SCRATCHING BATTLE OF EPHEMERA -- YES, IT'S TIME TO PLAY "MUSICAL THEATRE GEEKS"! AND HERE'S YOUR HOST, THE MASTER OF MINUTIAE, ALEX LUNT!

ALEX

THANK YOU, CLEVELAND. IT'S A DELIGHT TO BE BACK, AND LET'S GET RIGHT TO IT. AS REGULAR LISTENERS ALREADY KNOW, OUR CURRENT CONTESTANTS HAVE BEEN LOCKED IN A DEAD HEAT FOR 34 CONSECUTIVE PROGRAMS -- LET'S MEET THEM NOW AND SEE IF ONE WILL FINALLY MUSICALLY MASTER THE OTHER! HAILING FROM EAST LILYWHITE, RHODE ISLAND, THREE-TIME WORLD TRIVIAL PURSUIT CHAMPION, WILOMENA DINK!

(WILOMENA ENTERS, APPLAUSE)

AND FROM CORNEAR, IOWA, FOUR TIME WINNER OF THE BERT LAHR MEMORIAL RIB COOK-OFF, STUART PLOTZ!

(STUART ENTERS, APPLAUSE)

LET'S GET TO KNOW OUR CONTESTANTS A LITTLE BETTER BEFORE THE BLOOD-LETTING BEGINS, SHALL WE? STUART, IT SAYS HERE YOUR INTEREST IN MUSICAL THEATER BEGAN IN FIRST GRADE. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

STUART

WELL, LIKE MANY SIX-YEAR-OLDS, MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH THE THEATER BEGAN WHEN I WAS CAST IN THE SCHOOL PLAY. MRS. VANDEGRIFT WAS OUR DIRECTOR. BRILLIANT, BRILLIANT WOMAN. A VISIONARY.

ALEX

WHAT PLAY WAS THAT?

STUART

"CABARET".

ALEX

"CABARET" WITH FIRST GRADERS? SHE REALLY WAS A VISIONARY.

STUART

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN MY M.C.. I STILL HAD THE LISP THEN, WHICH MRS. VANDEGRIFT SAID ADDED INCREDIBLE POIGNANCY.

ALEX

I CAN IMAGINE. WILOMENA, YOU...

STUART

MIGHT I ADD THAT MRS. VANDEGRIFT'S PRODUCTION WAS MUCH, MUCH DARKER THAN THE RECENT BROADWAY REVIVAL.

ALEX

REALLY? WHAT AN INTERESTING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THAT MUST HAVE BEEN.

STUART

DON'T EVEN GET ME STARTED ON HER PRODUCTION OF "EQUUS".

ALEX

WILOMENA, YOUR DEVOTION TO MUSICAL THEATER BEGAN...

WILOMENA

NOT TO BRAG, BUT I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE FOOTLIGHTS AT A MUCH, MUCH YOUNGER AGE THAN STUART HERE. BY FIRST GRADE I WAS ALREADY WELL VERSED IN THE MYTHOS OF MUSICALS.

ALEX

AND IT BEGAN...

WILOMENA

THE ORIGINAL CAST RECORDING OF "ARMS AND THE GIRL" WITH NANETTE FABRAY. I FOUND MY MOTHER'S LP AND... WELL, THE REST IS HISTORY. I WORE OUT THE GROOVES LISTENING AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN AND...

ALEX

I'M SURE YOUR FAMILY ENJOYED THAT AS WELL.

WILOMENA

I DON'T KNOW REALLY. THEY MOVED WHILE I WAS AT SUMMER CAMP ONE YEAR. MUSICAL THEATER CAMP IN CONNECTICUT, WE PRODUCED "PAL JOEY"...

ALEX

WAIT, YOUR FAMILY MOVED AWAY WITHOUT YOU?

WILOMENA

NO FORWARDING ADDRESS.

ALEX

HOW... SAD.

WILOMENA

NOT REALLY. THEY LEFT ME THE PHONOGRAPH AND THE STACK OF SHOW TUNES.

(PAUSE)

ALEX

WELL. LET'S GET RIGHT TO OUR CONTEST. SHALL WE?

(MORE)

RUDMAN (cont'd)

AS I SAID EARLIER, YOU TWO HAVE BEEN LOCKED IN A DEAD TIE FOR THE LAST 34 SHOWS. THE FIRST TO GET THREE RIGHT ANSWERS TONIGHT WILL BE OUR GRAND CHAMPION. ARE YOU READY?

STUART

OH, YES.

WILOMENA

CERTAINLY.

ALEX

OUR FIRST QUESTION. IN THE 1941 PRODUCTION OF "BANJO EYES" WITH EDDIE CANTOR... WHO WAS THE COSTUME DESIGNER?

(STUART BUZZES A SPLIT-SECOND BEFORE WILOMENA)

STUART?

STUART

LYDIA McTINGLE.

ALEX

RIGHT YOU ARE. ONE POINT FOR STUART.

WILOMENA

I THOUGHT YOU SAID THE QUESTIONS WERE GOING TO BE HARD THIS TIME.

ALEX

KEEP YOUR HAT ON, WILOMENA. NEXT QUESTION. 1951. "THE KING AND I". WHAT WAS...

(WILOMENA BUZZES)

WILOMENA?

WILOMENA

"WHO WAS GERTRUDE LAWRENCE?"

ALEX

NO. PLEASE LET ME FINISH THE...

(BUZZ)

WHAT, STUART?

STUART (CONT'D) (cont'd)

"WHAT IS A WALTZ?"

ALEX

NO. NOW IF I MAY JUST...

(BUZZ)

WILOMENA
 "WHERE IS SIAM?"

ALEX
 NO!

STUART (cont'd)
 "WHAT IS BALDNESS?"

ALEX
 NO! THIS IS NOT "JEOPARDY", WILL YOU PLEASE...

WILOMENA
 "WHAT IS COLONIALISM?"

STUART (cont'd)
 "WHAT IS POLYGAMY?"

ALEX
 NO! NO NO NO!! LET ME FINISH THE QUESTION!!

(PAUSE)
 WHAT SONG WAS "GETTING TO KNOW YOU" WRITTEN TO REPLACE?

(STUART BUZZES A SPLIT SECOND BEFORE
 WILOMENA)
 STUART?

STUART
 I BELIEVE... "GETTING TO KNOW YOU" WAS WRITTEN TO REPLACE
 "MY, WHAT A LOAD OF CHILDREN."

WILOMENA
 I KNEW THAT.

ALEX
 I'M SURE YOU DO. HOWEVER, STUART TAKES THE LEAD. ONE MORE
 RIGHT ANSWER AND HE'LL HAVE THE CHAMPIONSHIP. FINALLY. NOW
 IT'S TIME FOR THE "NAME THAT TUNE" PORTION OF THE SHOW.
 PLEASE BUZZ IN THE MOMENT YOU RECOGNIZE THIS TUNE FROM A
 1940'S FILM.

(THE FIRST NOTE OF "IT MIGHT AS WELL BE
 SPRING" FROM "STATE FAIR" PLAYS)

(BUZZ. IT'S WILOMENA.)

ALEX
 WILOMENA?

WILOMENA
 "IT MIGHT AS WELL BE SPRING". FROM "STATE FAIR". 1945.

ALEX
 (STARING DUMBFUNDED FOR A
 MOMENT, THEN...)

...RIGHT YOU ARE. ONE POINT FOR WILOMENA. OKAY. IN 1975,
 "CHORUS LINE" OPENED. THE SONG "DANCE TEN, LOOKS THREE" WAS
 PERFORMED BY DONNA MCKECHNIE. WHO WAS ORIGINALLY SLATED TO
 SING THE PART?

(STUART BUZZES ANXIOUSLY, WILOMENA
 PANICKING)

STUART?

STUART (cont'd)
 (NERVOUSLY)

UM... ETHEL MERMAN?

ALEX AND WILOMENA

ETHEL MERMAN??

WILOMENA (CONT)

ETHEL MERMAN WAS 63 WHEN THAT OPENED! YOU THINK SHE WOULD
 HAVE BEEN HOOFING IT AROUND UP THERE IN TIGHTS AT 63?
 BESIDES, SHE WAS IN HER 14TH TOUR OF "GYPSY" AT THAT POINT...

STUART

YOU HAVE A BETTER ANSWER?

WILOMENA

GWEN VERDON.

ALEX

GWEN VERDON! CORRECT!

STUART

OH, OF COURSE! BUT SHE COULDN'T DO IT BECAUSE SHE WAS STILL-

WILOMENA AND STUART

-PERFORMING IN "CHICAGO".

ALEX

RIGHT, RIGHT, RIGHT.

STUART

DOES THAT COUNT FOR EXTRA CREDIT?

ALEX

NO. WILOMENA TWO. STUART TWO. IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THIS.
 WE'RE GOING TO PLAY ANOTHER SHOW TUNE. WHOEVER NAMES IT
 FIRST WILL BE OUR GRAND PRIZE WINNER. ARE YOU READY?

STUART (cont'd)

OH, YES.

WILOMENA

CERTAINLY.

ALEX

NAME THE TUNE AND SHOW TITLE OF THIS HIT FROM THE 1980'S...

("MEMORY" FROM "CATS" BEGINS PLAYING.
WILOMENA AND STUART LOOK STUMPED FOR
THE FIRST TIME -- THINKING HARD --
BETTY BUCKLEY SINGING AWAY -- WILOMENA
ALMOST BUZZES... THEN STOPS HERSELF --
STUART IS CONTORTING, ABOUT TO IMplode,
THINKING SO HARD -- ALEX LOOKS
IMPATIENTLY AT THEM -- THEY ARE BOTH SO
CLOSE TO ANSWERING, BUT NOT COMING UP
WITH IT...

AND THE SONG FADES OUT)

ALEX

WELL?

(PAUSE. THEN STUART TENTATIVELY BUZZES
IN)

STUART?

STUART (cont'd)

IS IT... "ASSASSINS"?

ALEX

NO. SORRY. WILOMENA? IT'S YOURS TO WIN...

(WILOMENA HANGS HER HEAD IN SHAME)

NOTHING?

(SHE SADLY SHAKES HER HEAD "NO")

"CATS". THAT WAS "MEMORY" FROM "CATS".

(BOTH HAVE HUGE REACTIONS TO THEIR
MISTAKE)

ALEX (CONT)

SO WE HAVE NO WINNER. GOD HELP US, THAT MEANS A 35TH ROUND.
WHICH MEANS WE ALL WILL SEE YOU ALL... AGAIN... WHEN NEXT WE
PLAY... "MUSICAL THEATRE GEEKS"!

(APPLAUSE)