

# Irving Berlin & Co.

Written and Arranged by  
Chip Deffaa

Music and Lyrics By  
Irving Berlin

## **Performance Rights**

It is an infringement of the federal copyright law to copy or reproduce this script in any manner or to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co., Inc. Contact the publisher for additional scripts and further licensing information. The author's name must appear on all programs and advertising with the notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Company."

**ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY**

© 2020 by Chip Deffaa

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing

<https://histage.com/irving-berlin-co>

*Irving Berlin & Co.*

- 2 -

## **DEDICATION**

*This one is for Jack Sprance, with appreciation....*

## **STORY OF THE MUSICAL**

Inspired by actual events, legendary songwriter Irving Berlin shares his life story with two teens. It's a rags-to-riches tale--terrific for schools, colleges, community theaters, and more--about a poor immigrant kid rising to become the most successful songwriter in the world. Along the way, we get to hear such timeless Berlin songs as "I Love a Piano," "All by Myself," "Play a Simple Melody," "Ragtime Violin," and "Alexander's Ragtime Band." The songs are pure Americana--great for singing and dancing.

## **ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

The first reading of this script was held February 10, 2013, at Ripley Grier Studios, 520 Eighth Avenue, New York City, with the following collective personnel: Michael Townsend Wright, Emily Bordonaro, Michael Kasper, Bob Diamond, Brian Gari, Katie Branden, Eve Prouty, Matt Zanfagna, Deborah Grisorio, Chip Deffaa. Aides-de-camp: Jesse Riehl, Jack Saleeby, Ben Youngstone, Samantha McCoy.

Special thanks to Donald Brown and Richard Danley for preparing the music for this show.

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(12 to 24+ actors: 14 m, 9 w, doubling possible)*

**EMILY:** A girl of about 16.

**SPRACK:** A boy of about 16, able to dance.

**IRVING BERLIN:** At the opening of the play, he is 95 years old. He is America's most famous and successful individual songwriter; he is also a recluse; he has not been seen in public in years. He can be something of a curmudgeon—feisty, but in a likeable kind of way. He need not look extremely old, however; Berlin aged rather well.

**JOHN WALLOWITCH:** A middle-aged man, a great admirer of Irving Berlin's music.

**BERTRAM:** Another member of the group, a middle-aged man.

**BERNICE:** Berlin's longtime housekeeper.

**BIG BRYAN LeTENDRE:** Owns a variety theater, which offers a weekly amateur show.

**A. WALTER BRODY:** Owns a movie theater.

**POLLINGER BRANDONE:** A do-gooder, a reformer, whose mission is to stop child labor, particularly in places he does not approve of.

**MIKE SALTER:** A big, rough fellow, owns a beer hall/dance hall. He is also the community "fixer," who can, for a fee, make any problem go away.

**MAX BEERSTEIN and BEN STONE:** Singing waiters.

**NICK NARDOZZI:** A piano player.

**MISS McNIBBY, MISS LAMBERT, and MISS LISA** are entertainers.

**SOPHIE TUCKER:** A popular entertainer of the era, a big woman with a big voice and a commanding manner.

**GEORGE M. COHAN:** A buoyant fellow known as "the man who owns Broadway," is a top song-and-dance man, a star.

**FANNY BRICE:** A popular singing comedienne. She rose from the ranks of burlesque to become a top star on Broadway, on the radio, etc.

**AL JOLSON:** Billed as "the World's Greatest Entertainer," is dynamic singer, a top star.

**Continued**

**DOROTHY GOETZ:** A pretty 20-year-old aspiring vaudeville singer, becomes the first Mrs. Irving Berlin.

**LOQUACIOUS B. NUTMEG:** A former entertainer turned preacher, protesting the supposed sins of the entertainment world.

**ELLIN MACKAY:** Beautiful, refined, 20-ish, and from one of the wealthiest families in America, becomes the second Mrs. Irving Berlin.

**EXTRAS:** The other members of the group are not named, but do have lines. The script includes such figures as a **DRUNKEN PATRON, MAN IN THE CROWD, AUDIENCE MEMBER #1, AUDIENCE MEMBER #2,** and **CHORUS MEMBERS** (on certain songs). **MALE CHORUS OF SOLDIER-SINGERS**

**NOTE:** BERLIN, EMILY, and SPRACK must be played by actors who do not play any other characters. The other characters can be doubled. The actor playing JOHN in the first scene, for example, might also play one or more other characters – such as POLLINGER BRANDONE or MIKE SALTER – who only appear in later scenes. The actress playing BERNICE in the first scene, for example, could also play one or more other characters – such as SOPHIE TUCKER or MISS McNIBBY –who only appear in later scenes. If you have a larger cast, you can have more people in the group of singers in the opening scene, and in other ensembles later in the play.

*Irving Berlin & Co.*

- 5 -

### **SETTING**

Settings can be as simple or elaborate as you like. The story begins in front of Irving Berlin's home, 17 Beekman Place, New York City. The action then moves inside the home, and then we see scenes from Berlin's life, as he reminisces.

### **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

Spoken introductions to songs may occasionally be slightly different on the cast album than in the script and score. Actors should perform the script as written.

\*See additional notes at the end of the script.

## **MUSICAL NUMBERS**

### **ACT I**

1. "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (Irving Berlin)
2. "The International Rag" (Irving Berlin)
3. "Simple Melody" / "Musical Demon" (Irving Berlin)
4. "I'm Going Back to Dixie" (music by Ted Snyder, words by Irving Berlin)
5. "Araby" (Irving Berlin)
6. "There's Something Nice About the South" (Irving Berlin)
7. "Ragtime Violin" (Irving Berlin)
8. "I've Got to Have Some Lovin' Now" (Irving Berlin)
9. "Everybody Step" (Irving Berlin)

### **ACT II**

10. "All By Myself" (Irving Berlin)
11. "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy" (George M. Cohan)
12. "Yankee Love" (words and music by E. Ray Goetz and Irving Berlin)
13. "Down Where the Jack O'Lanterns Grow" (Irving Berlin)
14. "This is the Life" (Irving Berlin)
15. "Wild Cherries" (music by Ted Snyder, words by Irving Berlin)
16. "That Dying Rag" (music by Bernie Adler, words by Irving Berlin)
17. "We're On Our Way to France" (Irving Berlin)
18. "In A Cozy Kitchenette Apartment" (Irving Berlin)
19. "They Call It Dancing" (Irving Berlin)
20. "Settle Down in a One Horse Town" (Irving Berlin)
21. "Mandy" (Irving Berlin)
22. "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning" (Irving Berlin)
23. "When I Get Back to the USA" (Irving Berlin)
24. "I Love a Piano" (Irving Berlin)
25. Bows music (curtain-call music): "Mandy"—instrumental (Irving Berlin)
26. Exit Music: "Say It With Music"—instrumental (Irving Berlin)
27. Optional Encore: "I Beg Your Pardon Dear Old Broadway"
28. Optional Encore: "I'm Gonna Pin a Medal on the Girl I Left Behind" (Irving Berlin)

## **End of Freeview**

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing  
<https://histage.com/irving-berlin-co>

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!