

GOODSPEED MUSICALS

AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

Cole Porter's

ANYTHING GOES





MICHAEL GENNARO
Executive Director

MICHAEL P. PRICE
Founding Director

presents

Cole Porter's

ANYTHING GOES

Music and Lyrics by
COLE PORTER

Original Book by
GUY BOLTON & P.G. WODEHOUSE and
HOWARD LINDSAY & RUSSEL CROUSE

New Book by
TIMOTHY CROUSE and **JOHN WEIDMAN**

Scenic Design by
WILSON CHIN

Costume Design by
ILONA SOMOGYI

Lighting Design by
BRIAN TOVAR

Sound Design by
JAY HILTON

Wig & Hair Design by
MARK ADAM RAMPMEYER

Animals Trained by
WILLIAM BERLONI

Assistant Music Director
WILLIAM J. THOMAS

Orchestrations by
DAN DELANGE

Production Manager
R. GLEN GRUSMARK

Production Stage Manager
BRADLEY G. SPACHMAN

Casting by
STUART HOWARD & PAUL HARDT

Associate Producer
BOB ALWINE

Line Producer
DONNA LYNN COOPER HILTON

Music Direction by
MICHAEL O'FLAHERTY

Choreographed by
KELLI BARCLAY

Directed by
DANIEL GOLDSTEIN

APRIL 8 - JUNE 16, 2016
THE GOODSPEED

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GOES

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MAX
SHOWALTER
CENTER FOR EDUCATION
IN MUSICAL THEATRE

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CHARACTER & SHOW SYNOPSIS



THE CHARACTERS

BILLY CROCKER: A roguish and charming young man who works on Wall Street as an assistant to the wealthy Elisha J. Whitney. Billy is in love with Hope Harcourt and stows away on the *S.S. American* in order to win her heart.

RENO SWEENEY: A glamorous “reformed” sinner turned evangelical nightclub singer. Though she originally had feelings for Billy herself, she puts them aside to help him in his shipboard quest to win Hope.

HOPE HARCOURT: A beautiful young **debutante** who is being forced into an arranged marriage with Lord Evelyn Oakley by her overbearing mother. Hope is secretly in love with Billy but she insists on doing her duty and marrying Evelyn.

LORD EVELYN OAKLEIGH: A wealthy English nobleman who has a fascination with American slang.

MRS. EVANGELINE HARCOURT: The overbearing mother of Hope Harcourt.

ELISHA J. WHITNEY: A wealthy New Yorker and Billy Crocker’s boss.

MOONFACE MARTIN: A bumbling gangster rated as Public Enemy No. 13. Martin befriends Billy Crocker and allows him to use Snake Eyes Johnson’s ticket to sail on the *S.S. American*.

ERMA: A gangster’s **moll** who colludes with Billy and Moonface Martin.

CHEEKY: Mrs. Harcourt’s pampered and spoiled dog.

REVEREND HENRY T. DOBSON: A minister who is mistakenly identified as Moonface Martin and arrested.

LUKE AND JOHN: Disciples of Reverend Henry T. Dobson who are led back to their sinful ways after he is arrested.

FRED: A bartender.

THE CAPTAIN: The leader of the *S.S. American* who is horribly disappointed that there are not more celebrities onboard his ship.

PURITY, CHASTITY, CHARITY AND VIRTUE: Reno Sweeney’s showgirl “Angels.”

Elisha Whitney, a wealthy stockbroker, waits impatiently for his assistant, Billy Crocker, to meet him at a Manhattan bar. Mr. Whitney is about to set sail on the *S.S. American* and has asked Billy to drop off some items that he needs for his trip. Mr. Whitney also wants to give his irresponsible assistant instructions on which stocks to sell during his absence. When Billy finally arrives, it turns out that he forgot his boss’ passport and will have to deliver it to him on the cruise ship before it sets sail. Billy is about to leave the bar when he sees his friend Reno Sweeney, an Evangelist turned sultry nightclub singer, entering the bar. Reno tells Billy that she plans to travel to England on the same boat as Mr. Whitney and asks Billy to come with her. Billy realizes that Reno has a romantic interest in him, but he explains that he is in love with a girl named Hope. Reno is disappointed but quickly gets over her initial displeasure.

The next day, in front of the *S.S. American*, the Captain is bemoaning the lack of celebrities on board the ship as passengers are beginning to arrive. Passengers and the press expect a luxurious cruise ship to have famous passengers, but the *S.S. American* does not meet their expectations. Hope Harcourt, an American debutante, and her fiancé, Lord Evelyn Oakleigh, Minister Henry T. Dobson and his two Chinese converts, and Reno Sweeney and her four showgirl Angels are the only pseudo-celebrities on board the ship. Billy arrives with Whitney’s passport just as Hope is boarding the ship. He realizes that the trip to England is his last chance to convince Hope to marry him and he decides to stowaway on the ship. Meanwhile, two pushy F.B.I. Agents storm the boat looking for a phony minister. A member of the ship’s crew mistakenly identifies Minister Dobson as Moonface Martin, F.B.I. Public Enemy #13, and the agents arrest him. Moonface and his friend Erma, who are still onboard the ship, strike up a friendship with Billy and give him their friend’s unused ticket and room. The only problem is that their friend who didn’t make it on board is Snake Eyes Johnson, Public Enemy #1.

Now, Billy must avoid being mistaken for Snake Eyes and evade Whitney since his boss specifically wanted him to go back to work. Billy finds Reno on the ship and begs her to help him win Hope’s heart and stay undetected during the trip. Reno, along with Moonface and Erma, agree to help Billy however they can. Moonface helps Billy with one problem by tricking Whitney and stealing his glasses. This results in Whitney not seeing Billy or anything else for the rest of the trip. With the help of his friends, Billy finagles time alone with Hope to win her heart. Left to their own devices, Moonface and Reno decide to break up Evelyn and Hope. Their plan is for Reno to seduce Evelyn so Moonface can burst into the room, catch the couple in a compromising position

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and force Evelyn to call off the engagement. The seduction plan fails spectacularly, and Reno realizes she is genuinely romantically interested in Evelyn.

Eventually, the Purser apprehends Billy, mistakenly identifying him as Snake Eyes Johnson. However, instead of arresting Snake Eyes the passengers celebrate him and treat him like a king. Eager for attention, Moonface also confesses his identity. To honor the two "gangsters" on board, Reno performs in a rousing sermon/nightclub act that causes many of the passengers to confess their past immoral behavior. Evelyn is among the confessors and admits to having a romantic affair with a Japanese girl named Little Plum Blossom many years ago. Not to be outdone, Billy confesses that he is not Snake Eyes Johnson. The passengers and crew are outraged and throw Billy and Moonface into the **brig**.

Later that night, Evelyn confesses his love to Reno; yet, tells her that he plans to honor his word and marry Hope. Depressed, Reno visits Billy and Moonface in jail and tells them that she and Evelyn are in love. Emboldened by this turn of events, Billy and Moonface decide to break out of jail. To escape they need the crew to think they are Reverend Dobson's fallen converts, Luke and John, so they challenge the two Chinese men to a game of strip poker and exchange clothes with them. A few hours later, the guards release Billy and Moonface thinking that they are the converts. The two men and Reno, dressed as Little Plum Blossom, interrupt Hope's wedding to Evelyn. Hope comes up with a plan to pay off the debt of honor owed to the two fake Chinese men: to make things right Evelyn must offer Hope to Plum Blossom's relative, who is Billy in disguise. Now Hope, Billy, Reno and Evelyn can be together. Evangeline Harcourt, Hope's mother, is infuriated by the arrangement and begins having hysterics that her daughter is not marrying a rich man. Whitney saves Evangeline's day by proposing and shares that

he is now a zillionaire because Billy stayed on the *S.S. American* and never returned to New York to sell his stocks. All three couples happily marry.



Reno Sweeney (Rashida Scott) and the sailors (Edward Tolve, James Tolbert, John T. Wolfe and Christopher Shin in Goodspeed's Anything Goes. ©Diane Sobolewski

GLOSSARY

Debutante: a girl or young lady from an aristocratic or upper class family who has reached the age of maturity and, as a new adult, is introduced to society at a formal "debut" presentation.

Moll: The girlfriend of a criminal or gangster.

Brig: A secure space on a ship used as a temporary jail or holding cell.

MEET THE WRITERS: COLE PORTER



Cole Porter

COLE PORTER (*Music and Lyrics*) was born in Peru, IN on June 9, 1891, to Kate and Sam Porter. Kate Porter née Cole was the daughter of wealthy executive J.O. Cole. Kate Cole grew up in luxury and, as the sole heir of the Cole business empire, was expected to marry a man well-suited to taking over the family business. However, Kate Cole had a mind of her own and fell in love with Sam Porter, a pharmacist from her hometown of Peru, IN. J.O. Cole was against the marriage, but ultimately accepted his daughter's choice and financed the couple's lavish wedding

and their subsequent lifestyle. When Cole Albert Porter was born, J.O. placed his hopes for a next generation businessman on his new grandson but, like his mother, Cole had other plans.

Young Cole showed an aptitude for music at an early age and began playing the violin at age six followed by the piano at age 8. By the age of 10, Cole had begun composing music and wrote a Gilbert and Sullivan type operetta; he had his first musical composition published by the time he was 11. Kate recognized her son's potential and made donations to finance a local youth orchestra in which Cole was the featured performer. She would also sit at the piano with Cole while he practiced and the two of them would create parodies based on popular songs of the time, a practice that Cole continued in adulthood.

Cole was sent away to school at the age of 14 and settled into life at the prestigious Worcester Academy in Massachusetts, a choice that infuriated J.O. Cole. Beyond his grandfather's reach, Cole continued to study music and met instructor Dr. Abercrombie who would have a lasting influence on his musical work. Cole credited Abercrombie with teaching him that, "words and music must be so inseparably wedded to each other that they are like one," a practice for which audiences praised him throughout his songwriting career. In 1909, Cole

graduated from the Worcester Academy as the class Valedictorian and went on to Yale University. At Yale, Cole became famous for creating witty song parodies, school fight songs and musical comedies. During his collegiate career, he wrote over 300 songs some of which, like the 🎵 **"Yale Bulldog Song"** and "Bingo Eli Yale," are still sung today. Cole also wrote six full musical comedies for the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity and the Yale Drama Association. Though he was not the class Valedictorian when he graduated in 1913, his classmates did bestow the senior superlative of "Most Entertaining" upon him.

After graduating from Yale University, Cole enrolled in Harvard Law School at the insistence of his grandfather. Despite the direction his studies were intended to take, Cole remained deeply interested in music and, in 1915, transferred to the Harvard School of Arts and Sciences to pursue a graduate degree in music. Though Cole told his parents about this change in his education, his grandfather was not informed and continued to believe that Cole was studying law until he left Harvard in 1916 to pursue a career as a composer. His first New York musical, *See America First*, opened this same year and closed after only 15 performances. Despite the disappointing reception of the show, the production provided Cole with several wealthy and prominent individuals with whom he quickly formed acquaintanceships.

In 1917, Cole moved to Paris and enjoyed a glamorous social life. While Cole was enjoying extravagant parties thrown by celebrities, minor nobility and fellow artists, he met American socialite Linda Lee Thomas. Though Cole was gay, he and Linda formed a deep friendship and married in 1919.

Linda and Cole became the jewel of the European party circuit and were known for their over-the-top soirees; for a party in Venice, the couple hired 50 gondoliers to transport the guests, a troupe of acrobats and a ballet dance company to provide entertainment. Though Cole's social life was incredibly successful, his music career was not fairing as well. He continued to write



Cole Porter's wife, Linda Lee Thomas.



CLICK HERE
to listen to Cole
Porter sing "Anything
Goes."

<https://archive.org/details/ColePorterSings-AnythingGoes1934>

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during the large part of the 1910s and early 1920s, but his work was not connecting with audiences or producers. It was not until 1928 that there was a breakthrough in Cole's musical career; he was asked to contribute to a musical comedy entitled *Paris*. He penned five songs for the show one of which was ♪ **"Let's Do It (Let's Fall in Love)"** and this became Cole's first professional success.

The success of his songs in the musical *Paris* opened the proverbial floodgates for Cole's career and hit shows like *Fifty Million Frenchmen*, *The New Yorkers* and *Gay Divorce* with Fred Astaire swiftly followed.

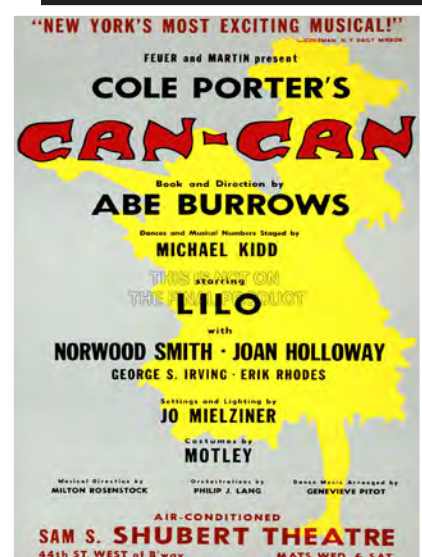
// Words and music must be so inseparably wedded to each other that they are like one. //

In 1934, Broadway producer Vinton Freedley approached Cole about composing the words and lyrics for a new musical comedy. Freedley had already obtained P.G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton to write the libretto for the show and this prestigious team guaranteed Cole's participation. The show was to be set on a cruise ship and to have the characters become shipwrecked; however, a last minute rewrite became necessary when a real cruise ship, the *S.S. Morro*, caught fire and sunk off the coast of New Jersey. Despite the quick and massive changes made to the show, it opened on time in 1934 and was called *Anything Goes*. *Anything Goes* became an immediate hit and catapulted Cole into the annals of musical theatre history. *The New Yorker Magazine* praised Cole saying, "he was in a class by himself" and *Anything Goes* was considered one of the premier and defining musicals of the period. Cole himself is reported to have called *Anything Goes* one of his two perfect shows, the other being *Kiss Me, Kate* in 1948.

The 1930s became one of the high points of Cole's career, and he followed the success of *Anything Goes* with dozens of hit songs, stage musicals and movie musicals. In addition to earning praise from critics for his work during this period, Cole also earned accolades from other musical theatre greats; Richard Rogers proclaimed, "few people realize how architecturally excellent his music is. There's a foundation, a structure, and an embellishment. Then you add in the emotion he's put in, and the result is Cole Porter."

Despite his professional success, tragedy struck Cole Porter in 1937. He was involved in a horseback riding accident that broke both of his legs and confined him to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. He continued to compose after his accident, but his work seemed to lack the spark of mischief and joy that so illuminated his early songs. Though still successful, Cole did not have another blockbuster musical hit until *Kiss Me, Kate* in 1948. The show was written during Cole's recovery from his 21st leg operation and cemented his place among the musical theatre elite.

Cole Porter passed away on October 15, 1964, in Santa Monica, CA, and left behind an incredible repertoire of musical hits like ♪ **"Begin the Beguine,"** ♪ **"My Heart Belongs to Daddy,"** ♪ **"Night and Day,"** ♪ **"It's De-Lovely"** and shows like *Silk Stocking*; *Anything Goes*; *Red, Hot and Blue*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *High Society* and *Can-Can*.



MEET THE WRITERS

ANYTHING GOES



Howard Lindsay

HOWARD LINDSAY (*Original Book*) was born on March 29, 1889 in Waterford, New York. Before meeting his writing partner, Russel Crouse, Lindsay aspired to be an actor. He began his career at the age of 19 and continued to act throughout his life though he is best known as a Broadway playwright and director. He wrote his first Broadway show in 1933 with Corey Ford, a musical comedy called *Hold Your Horses*. Producer Vinton Freedley, who was trying to salvage a musical set on a cruise ship, first paired the legendary duo Lindsay and Crouse together in 1933. This project evolved into *Anything Goes*, which premiered in 1934. From 1934 on, Lindsay collaborated with Crouse, and the two penned the books for numerous musical blockbusters including *The Sound of Music*; *Red, Hot and Blue* and *Call Me Madam*. Lindsay and Crouse also wrote the long-running play, *Life with Father*, in which Lindsay starred with his wife, Dorothy Stickney. Lindsey passed away on February 11, 1968.

RUSSELL CROUSE (*Original Book*) was born on February 20, 1893 in Findley, Ohio. Crouse first appeared on Broadway as an actor in the 1928 production of *Gentlemen of the Press*. Following this debut, he turned his attention to writing for the theatre and collaborated with Frank McCoy, Morrie Ryskind and Oscar Hammerstein II on the musical *The Gang's All Here* in 1931 which only ran for two weeks. Crouse was first paired with Howard Lindsey in 1933 by producer Vinton Freedley. The duo's first collaboration resulted in the musical *Anything Goes* which premiered in 1934. From 1934 to the end of his career, Crouse collaborated solely with Lindsay. Together, they wrote the books for legendary shows like *The Sound of Music*, *Life with Father*, and *Call Me Madam* as well as producing *Arsenic and Old Lace*. In 1946, Lindsay and Crouse won a Pulitzer Prize in Drama for their satirical show, *State of the Union*. Russel Crouse passed away on April 3, 1966.



Russell Crouse

GUY BOLTON (*Original Book*) was born on November 23, 1884 in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, England to American parents. Bolton spent most of his childhood and teenage years at school in France before moving to the United States to study architecture. He eventually turned his attention to writing and had a play premiere on Broadway in 1911. Early in his career, Bolton discovered that he preferred collaborations to solo projects and began working with notable writers of the period like P.G. Wodehouse, Fred Thompson, George Middleton, and George and Ira Gershwin. He is perhaps best known for his work on musicals written for the Princess Theatre during WWII with Wodehouse and the composer Jerome Kern. These shows moved the American musical away from the style of European operettas to more intimate and integrated productions. During his lifetime, Bolton collaborated on well over 50 plays, musicals and movie scripts including *Lady, Be Good*; *Oh, Kay!*; *Oh, Boy!*; *Oh, Lady! Lady!*; *Anything Goes*; *Ambassador Bill* and *Easter Parade*. Bolton passed away on September 15, 1979 in London, England.

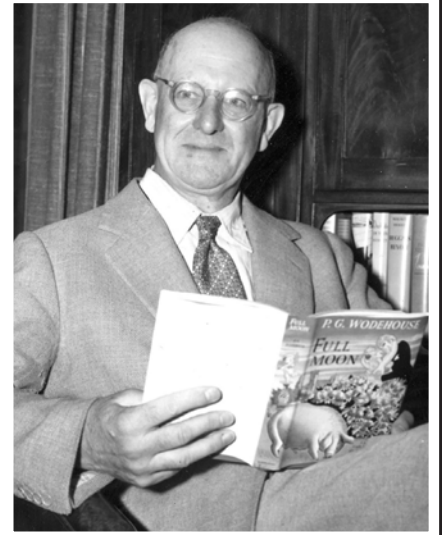


Guy Bolton





P.G. WODEHOUSE (*Original Book*) was born Pelham Grenville Wodehouse on October 15, 1881 in Surrey, England. He went to school at Dulwich College in London and worked briefly in a bank before taking a job as a columnist for the London Globe in 1902. By 1913, Wodehouse began writing farce, which eventually led him to international acclaim. In 1940, he was captured by German forces and spent most of WWII imprisoned in Berlin. After WWII, Wodehouse relocated to the United States and became an American citizen in 1955. Throughout his literary career, Wodehouse wrote over 90 books, 20 screenplays and 30 musicals and plays. He was knighted by the Queen of England for his contributions to literature in 1975 and passed away on February 14, 1975 in Southampton, New York.



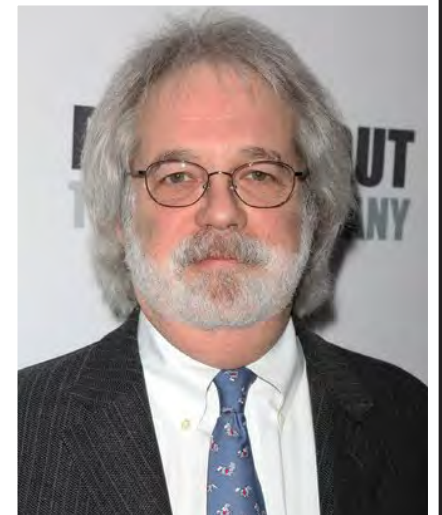
P. G. Wodehouse

TIMOTHY CROUSE (*New Book*) is the son of Russel Crouse, one of the original writers of *Anything Goes*. Crouse inherited his father's writing talent and, after a brief stint in the Peace Corps from 1968-1969, began writing for *The Boston Herald*. He became a staff member of *Rolling Stone Magazine* in the 1970s and worked as a contributing editor for the magazine from 1971-1972. He published his first book, *The Boys on the Bus* in 1973 which was a non-fiction account detailing the lives of the reporters covering the 1972 presidential campaign. After publishing *Boys on the Bus*, Crouse contributed pieces to *Esquire*, *The New Yorker* and *The Village Voice* before deciding to revive *Anything Goes* in 1982. He co-wrote the new book for *Anything Goes* with John Weidman, re-ordered musical numbers within the show and borrowed Cole Porter pieces from other Porter shows. The revised version of *Anything Goes* opened at the Vivian Beaumont Theater on October 19, 1987 and at the Royal National Theatre in London in 2002. Crouse is still actively writing; though, *Anything Goes* remains his sole contribution to the musical theatre.



Timothy Crouse

JOHN WEIDMAN (*New Book*) was born in New York City on September 26, 1946. Weidman graduated from Harvard University in the 1960s with a degree in East Asian History and went on to earn a Juris Doctor degree from Yale Law School. As an intern for legendary producer Hal Prince, Weidman authored his first musical libretto, *Pacific Overtures*, which premiered in 1976. He wrote for *National Lampoon* throughout the 1970s and, since 1986, has steadily written for *Sesame Street*. In 1987, Weidman co-wrote a revised libretto for *Anything Goes* with Timothy Crouse, which won a Tony Award for Best Musical Revival. In addition, to *Pacific Overtures*, *National Lampoon*, *Sesame Street* and *Anything Goes*, Weidman authored *Assassins*, *Big*, *Contact*, *Bounce*, *Take Flight*, *Road Show* and *Happiness*.



John Weidman





Director Daniel Goldstein at the first read-through of *Anything Goes*. ©Diane Sobolewski

Income inequality is at an all-time high. It's an election year with a sharply divided population. Overseas, a hateful and terrifying enemy carrying out mass ethnic and cultural extermination is rising quickly in power and invading the minds of the American people.

You might think that I'm talking about 2016, but you would be mistaken. I'm talking about 1934, when *Anything Goes* burst on to the Broadway scene with Ethel Merman as Reno sounding her clarion voice through the brick walls of the Alvin Theater (now the Neil Simon) on 52nd Street all the way down to Times Square, where the news on the ticker was bleak, bleak, and more bleak.

But within the walls of the Alvin (where 44 years later the Goodspeed hit *Annie* would open), there was nothing but joy. The cold American winter quickly thawed under the spell of those Cole Porter tunes.

In 1986, when Weidman and Crouse put together a draft of their new book to *Anything Goes* for the landmark Lincoln Center revival, things weren't so different. But wisely, rather than updating the script, they let the social parallels shine through the original story. We intend to do the same.

But this production is going to do something else, too. I want to celebrate what only Goodspeed Musicals does. This is my 5th show at Goodspeed, which has become a home away from home. To celebrate this remarkable place, and the new era being ushered in by new Executive Director Michael Gennaro, we're doing something that has rarely been done on The Goodspeed stage. We're putting the orchestra on stage and extending the stage over the pit. The singing and dancing will take place in the middle of the theater in

a way you've never seen before, and you'll get to see the Goodspeed orchestra strut their stuff front and center. *Anything Goes* has one of the greatest scores in history and thrilling opportunities to showcase Kelli Barclay's miraculous choreography. We have put together a spectacular and diverse company, one of the best that Goodspeed has ever seen. The best part of seeing a show at Goodspeed is knowing that we're really all in the same room, and in this production, you'll feel that more strongly than ever.

// Joy will flow like champagne on a cruise ship. Won't you join us for a glass? //

Times are rough these days. The country is divided, the world is threatened, we all live with a bit of fear. *Anything Goes* is just the medicine we need. As Gregory Mosher said when he programmed the 1986 revival at Lincoln Center, "There is a lot to be said for the theater providing real joy." Now it's 2016, and inside The Goodspeed the joy will flow like champagne on a cruise ship. Won't you join us for a glass?

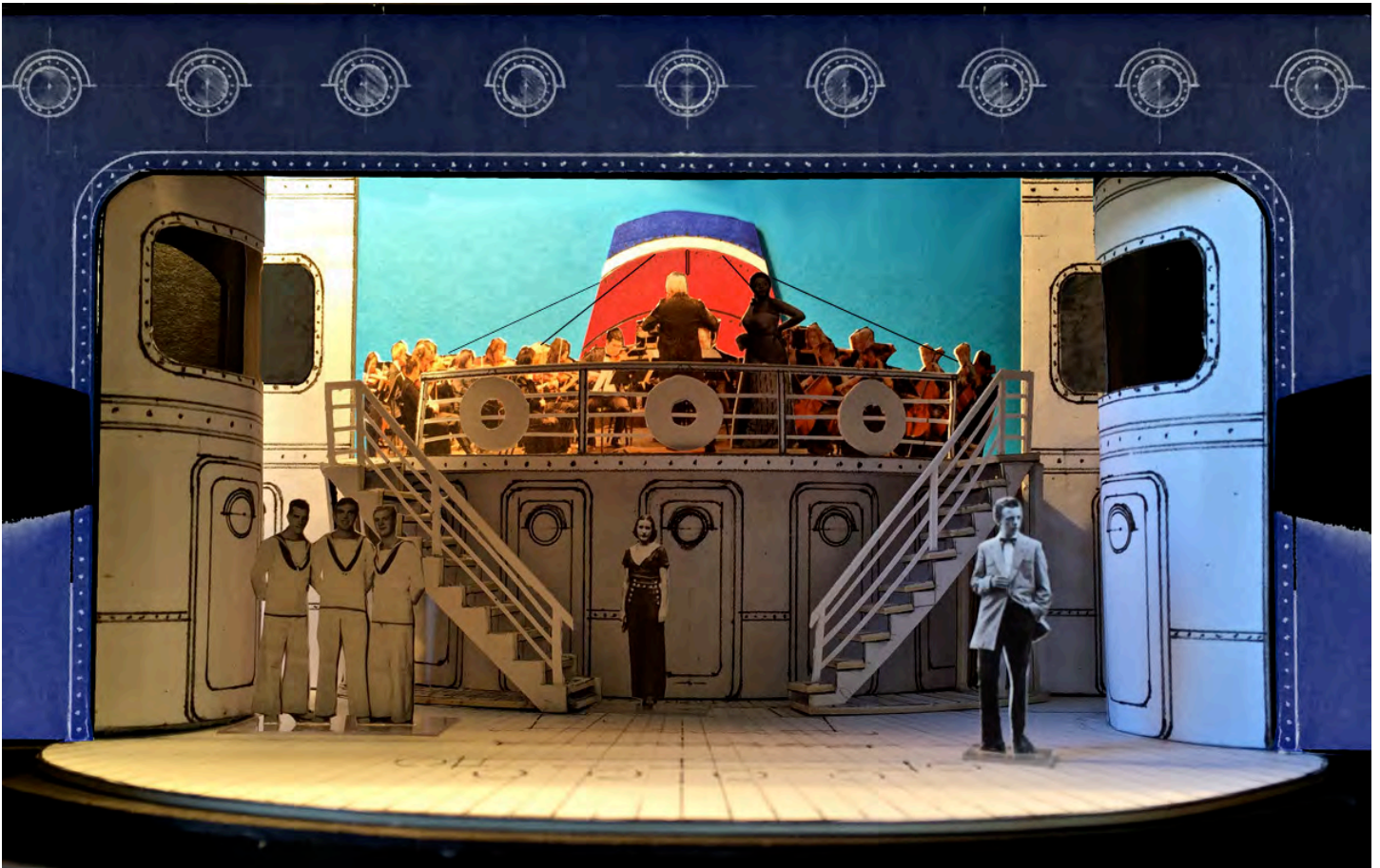


BEHIND THE SCENES SCENIC DESIGN BY WILSON CHIN

Some of Wilson Chin's research and inspiration



A set model of the ship's deck





**Reno Sweeney's
"beach pyjamas"**
Design by
Ilona Somogyi



A 1933 magazine ad showing the resort fashions of the day.



A post card from Nice, France showing women in beach pyjamas

BEACH PYJAMAS

A big trend in resort wear in the 1930s was something called beach pyjamas. Beach pyjamas surfaced in 1927, first worn over swim suits by the Riviera's fashionable elite, they became more widespread by the 30s on the beaches of Britain and the United States. As seen in the vintage postcard above, these beach outfits consisted of jumpsuits or full pants worn with short sleeved or halter tops, accompanied at times by a bolero or jacket. Women wore these over swimwear for strolling the promenade or boardwalk. They soon became a double-duty garment for the relaxed resort lifestyle—you could wear them on the beach and then to a cocktail party.

In 1931, *Vogue* magazine declared, "A woman may and does wear pyjamas to quite formal dinners in her own house, to other people's dinners in town and country if you know them well and the more iconoclastic members of the female sex even wear them to the theatre."

Resort wear for the ladies of *Anything Goes*

Design by Ilona Somogyi

Cole Porter, the composer and lyricist of *Anything Goes*, honed his distinctive style during the 1920s while living the gilded life of a bon vivant and socialite abroad. Porter was part of the “lost generation” of expatriate artistic and literary minds who fled the austere materialism of American cities for the more permissive artistic and intellectual scene, which flourished in places such as Paris and Venice. Porter’s travels and opulent experiences enriched his work and helped set the stage for shows that would establish him in the upper echelon of musical-comedy writers.

For example, he was cruising down the Rhine River in Germany in 1934 while he wrote the classic music and iconic lyrics to the song “You’re the Top” from *Anything Goes*. Purportedly, he asked fellow passengers to name their favorite objects and places to help him pen the topical lyrics to the song. The score to *Anything Goes* proved to be one of his greatest. It is full of hits including “I Get a Kick Out of You,” “You’re the Top,” “It’s De-Lovely,” and “Blow, Gabriel, Blow.”

Porter’s first hit musical was *Paris*, which premiered on Broadway in 1928. One slightly risqué song from the show, “Let’s

Do It, Let’s Fall in Love,” was a smash, and its success helped propel him to a new level of notoriety and acclaim. The following year brought the panic of the stock market crash and the subsequent Great Depression. Yet, Porter’s songs during the trying 1930s served to lift the spirits of the downtrodden and affluent alike. In fact, of all the shows during this tumultuous and challenging period, none proved to be more closely associated with the decade than *Anything Goes*.

In 1933, the year before *Anything Goes* opened on Broadway, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated as president, and Prohibition ended. These monumental events brought glimmers of hope to a people reeling from economic catastrophe and failed government policies. Theatre historian Miles Kreuger described *Anything Goes* as “the bright and cheerful embodiment of Roosevelt recovery.” It was exactly what people yearned for at that moment in history. They needed a show with sophisticated tuneful songs that would allow them to forget their troubles, laugh, and enjoy the affluent lifestyle most could not afford. However, it was anything but smooth sailing to steer *Anything Goes* to Broadway success.

Early in 1933, producer Vinton Freedley was on the lam to avoid creditors after suffering considerable financial losses from his production of *Pardon My English*. Freedley was in Panama when he conceived of an idea for a musical comedy that could change his fortune. He imagined a hilarious story about oddball characters on an ocean liner that experiences a bomb threat. Freedley returned to New York and assembled an outstanding team of performers and writers to bring his dream to fruition.

Unfortunately, about two months before *Anything Goes* was to open, a fire on the S.S. Morro Castle sank the ship off the coast of New Jersey, killing 137 people. Freedley knew he needed to change the plot drastically in light of this terrible tragedy. There is also evidence that he was unsatisfied with the script he received from veteran writers P.G. Wodehouse and



Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse



Guy Bolton. In desperation, Freedley recruited the show's director, Howard Lindsay, as well as Russel Crouse, a Theatre Guild press agent, to perform a rapid revision of the libretto. The show actually went into rehearsal with only a portion of the first act completed. However, the joining of Lindsay and Crouse on *Anything Goes* resulted in one of the greatest writing partnerships in theatre history and a quarter-century of collaboration. They went on to write such great shows as *Red, Hot, and Blue*; *The Sound of Music*; and *Life with Father*.

Anything Goes opened on Broadway at the Alvin Theatre on November 21, 1934 with William Gaxton as Billy Crocker, Ethel Merman as Reno Sweeney, and Victor Moore as Moonface Martin. The show ran for 420 performances and was widely lauded by critics. *Anything Goes* was revived Off-Broadway in 1962 at the Orpheum Theatre and on Broadway at the Vivian Beaumont Theater in 1987. Different Porter songs were interpolated into each of these versions. A member of the original writing team, Guy Bolton, thoroughly revised the 1962 libretto. John Weidman and Timothy Crouse wrote yet another new book for the 1987 revival and significantly increased the amount of dance music in the show. *Anything Goes* received an additional Broadway revival in 2011 at the Stephen Sondheim Theatre. Both the 1987 and 2011 revivals won three Tony Awards.

Goodspeed's *Anything Goes* is directed by Daniel Goldstein, whose previous direction credits include Goodspeed productions of *Damn Yankees*; *Hello, Dolly!*; *Snapshots*; and *The Unauthorized Autobiography of Samantha Brown*. Goldstein believes in the poignancy of *Anything Goes* and its ability to bring renewed joy to audiences during these trying and uncertain times. You will notice some bold changes when you enter The Goodspeed auditorium. Goldstein places the orchestra on stage front and center and extends the stage over the orchestra pit. These differences highlight Goodspeed's outstanding musicians and enable the audience to enjoy Kelli Barclay's miraculous choreography more close up than ever. In addition, these adjustments align with the uniqueness of Goodspeed productions by accentuating the audience's feelings of intimacy and togetherness in powerful and exciting ways. Bon voyage!



Ethel Merman as Reno Sweeney in the original Broadway production of *Anything Goes*.



Colin Donnell, Sutton Foster and Joel Grey in Roundabout's 2011 Broadway revival of *Anything Goes*.

A MUSICAL REPRIEVE

ANYTHING GOES



W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan

The United States of America has endured many changes since its inception during the Revolutionary War, and the heyday of Cole Porter in 1920s and 1930s is no exception. The 1920s were largely a decade of idealism and optimism populated by new inventions and social changes. The 1930s, however, took a darker turn and the American people predictably needed a way to lift their spirits and restore their optimism, if only for a moment. The vehicle for this desperately needed dose of happiness was musical theatre.

Before 1927, musical theatre was a somewhat undefined form of artistic expression and had not quite detached itself from its roots in European Operetta. Though popular with audiences, the musical theatre genre consisted of shows with strong libretti, scores, or actors; yet, these elements never combined to form a cohesive unit. For this reason, Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and musical revues dominated the theatre scene. Audiences could enjoy a classic musical performance or see witty song and sketches play out onstage without concerning themselves with a cohesive story. This changed with the premiere of *Show Boat* in 1927. The collaboration between Oscar Hammerstein II, Jerome Kern and Florenz Ziegfeld was the first musical in which both the dialogue and music were integral in moving the plot forward and developing character. Also fully incorporating music in the story, *Show Boat* was groundbreaking for its frank handling of complex racial issues. This production marked musical theatre's transition from a simple entertaining diversion to a full-blown creative outlet.

Musical comedies dominated the theatre scene throughout the late 1920s, though thought provoking shows like *Show Boat* were beginning to make an appearance. This potential trend towards dramatic or darker musicals ground to halt when the stock market crashed in 1929.

The stock market crash of 1929 heralded a downward economic spiral in the United States leading to the Great Depression, which became a nationwide catastrophe. By 1933 the prosperity of the 1920s was no more than a memory, unemployment

steadily rose to an all-time high with 14 million Americans out of work, industrial production was down, and the national household income had dropped by more than half. Though money was exceptionally tight for most of the nation, this did not stop the American fascination with musical theatre, though, it did force it to take a very specific direction. The number of performances taking place on Broadway declined in the 1930s and the majority were comedies and musical comedies.

Farce was in demand during this period and works that included a happy conclusion were the norm. The musicals of this period like *Strike Up The Band*, *Bandwagon*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *Gay Divorce*, *Hold Your Horses*, *Anything Goes*, *Jumbo* and *On Your Toes* filled this need. Reality was harsh enough for audiences during this period who demanded the right to step into a theatre and forget their troubles, even if only for few hours.

Anything Goes was a prime example of the kind of farcical production that populated the early 1930s. Witty, silly, romantic and ludicrous were the buzzwords of the era, and *Anything Goes* managed to harmoniously hit each one. The dashing Billy Crocker fell in love with socialite Hope Harcourt and was willing to go to any extreme to win her heart. Throw in Public Enemy Number 13, a gangster's moll, a sexy singing evangelist, a gold-digging mother, several cases of mistaken identity and you had a monster musical on your hands. Despite all the gags and zany misadventures, *Anything Goes* was a story about love and hope prevailing against all odds. After all, if a priggish English lord can find love with a nightclub singer/preacher, then certainly there was hope for the economy.



The 1927 Broadway poster for Show Boat.



The 1934 Broadway poster for Anything Goes.



A TRANSATLANTIC ADVENTURE

With American railways having adopted a standard rail gauge in 1872, travel from one end of the country to the other by rail was possible. Train travel quickly became a common method of transportation. Oceanic travel took several more years to gain popularity, though passenger liners like the *Carmania*, *Lusitania*, *Mauretania* and *Titanic* appealed to both the extravagantly rich and the poor alike. As with early train travel, early transatlantic crossings on passenger liners did not always go smoothly and safely, which sometimes resulted in tragedies at sea.

By the early 1920s, changing immigration laws impacted the number of immigrants who could travel by ocean liner and companies began marketing their ships to wider audiences calling their ships safe, modern and fun experiences for all income levels. Steamship companies converted their steerage spaces into affordable cabins that were marketed to middle-class tourists and business travelers. Shipping companies also experimented with cruising for pleasure and started sending their ships on leisure trips to scenic destinations across the world.

The famous ocean liner, the *Mauretania* made 54 such cruises between 1923 and 1934. The *S.S. American* featured in *Anything Goes* is a fictional example of the kind of journey many passengers took during this period. Ocean travel flourished in the era before aviation though it was not without inherent risk. The *H.M.S Titanic*, the *Camorta*, *Principessa Mafalda*, and the *R.M.S Empress* of Ireland were all examples of shipping disasters that resulted in a significant loss of life.

The *S.S. Morro Castle* was another passenger vessel that fell victim to the dangers of oceanic travel that also had a surprising impact on the history of musical theatre. The *Morro Castle* was a popular ocean liner in the 1930s that was designed for voyages between New York City and Havana, Cuba. Early on the morning of September 8, 1934, while en route to Cuba, the ship mysteriously caught fire, resulting in the deaths of 137 passengers and crew members. The ship eventually came to rest off the coast of Asbury Park, New Jersey, and remained there for several months. The disaster aboard the *Morro Castle* became a catalyst for improved fire precautions aboard ships; it also forced the writers of *Anything Goes* to rework the entire script a month before they were scheduled to begin rehearsals. The original plot of *Anything Goes* revolved around an ocean voyage, a bomb and a subsequent shipwreck; however, the real life tragedy of the *Morro Castle* caused the production team to throw out the original story for fear it would be in poor taste. According to Timothy Crouse, the son of original librettist Russel Crouse, the script was frantically rewritten in the span of two weeks with the final scene being penned on the train to Boston immediately before the out-of-town tryout. The writers turned this frantic rewrite into a rollicking transatlantic adventure that has endured the test of time and reminds its audience of a bygone era.



Cruise poster from the 1920s



Luxury cruise ship SS Morro Castle burns just off the end of the Convention Center Pier in Asbury Park in 1934.



- Vivian Vance, better known as Ethel Mertz on the beloved television sitcom *I Love Lucy*, was Ethel Merman's understudy for the original 1934 production of *Anything Goes*.
- There are several versions of *Anything Goes* that are regularly performed and Moonface Martin has a female accomplice in all of them though her name changes from version to version.
- Two film versions of *Anything Goes* exist and neither movie uses the same plot as the musical.
- The 1956 film version of *Anything Goes* was the last picture Bing Crosby made with Paramount Pictures.
- Cole Porter's great-grandfather, A.A. Cole, grew up in Connecticut.
- Timothy Crouse, son of original *Anything Goes* librettist Russel Crouse, says that his father and Howard Lindsay were so nervous about the last minute rewrites made to the show that they begged their friends not to attend the premiere.
- At Harvard, Cole Porter roomed with future Secretary of State, Dean Acheson.

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