

**YOU AIN'T HEARD  
NOTHIN' YET**

a Harmony College Show

**YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET**

**(A Tribute to Al Jolson)**

An  
**S P E B S Q S A Inc.**  
Show Script

# "YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET"

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### GENERAL

YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET is an excellent vehicle for your chapter in two respects. First, the musical selections are fantastic: most are songs well known to your audience, all are good solid barbershop (most are suitable for contest) and the arrangements are some of the finest to ever come from the pens of our talented Society arrangers.

Secondly, the fascinating career and life story of Al Jolson, one of the world's truly great entertainers, is presented in an entertaining and unique fashion — through the eyes of six men who were touched by this show business legend.

The show is a complete two-act production with two guest quartets scripted in at appropriate points. Assuming each guest quartet performs for twenty minutes and a fifteen minute intermission is observed between acts, the total show should run between two hours and two hours and fifteen minutes.

As with any production, your chapter should use all the theatrical elements you have at your disposal to make YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET the most exciting and interesting production possible for your audience. These elements include scenery, props, costuming, lighting, chorus-stage presence, supplemental choreography, vignettes, pantomimes, or just about any other entertainment device you can imagine.

Following these general remarks, we have given you some more specific thoughts on the show and some production ideas. There are many more ideas that you can and should come up with on your own.

One good idea-producing process that can be used is brainstorming. Divide the chapter into groups. Assign each group an entire scene. Let the group write down as many ideas as they can on how to stage their scene. Tell them to use all the theatrical elements they can think of and not to throw out any idea because it is impractical. The group which comes up with the longest list can be awarded a prize or some type of special recognition. Once the lists are complete, the show committee can take them, extract the good ideas and use those which work with the total show in mind.

Suggestions have been indicated in the script on who should perform each song: chorus or quartet. These are only suggestions; flip these around to suit your own situation. Remember, however, that mixing chorus and quartet performances offers variety for your audience, gives a brief respite to the performers and provides opportunities to encourage quartet participation within the chapter. Also, do not overlook the possibility of using solo voices with chorus "loos" in the background. Double quartets are another form of variety, two of these are indicated in the script.

The Society publishes a Show Production Handbook (Society Stock No. 4081). This is a comprehensive guide that outlines both on and off stage show procedures from A to Z. It offers additional production tips. Every member of your show committee should have one of these excellent handbooks.

Remember, the audiences at your show could stay home and *listen* to barbershop records. They have come to witness a theatrical experience which includes both sound and sight; don't cheat them. Feature our unique product — barbershop harmony — and complement it with a solid visual performance.

Cassette learning tapes for all the music in this show are available for purchase from the Society's Order Desk. Each tape is \$5.00 (\$6.00, Canadian) and a set of all four tapes is \$18.00 (\$22.00, Canadian). The stock numbers are: Tenor (4945), Lead (4946), Baritone (4947), Bass (4948) and the set of four (4949). These tapes may not be copied.

## STAGING AND SETS

The script gives very little indications of staging and this was done purposely. The staging can range from quite simple to somewhat involved.

On the simple side, the chorus can perform from risers, set center stage in a traditional concert style performance. Similarly, quartets can perform from center stage either having entered from the wings or stepped out from the chorus. Each of the six hosts can enter from the wings and deliver his monologue from down stage center, right or left and then exit into the wings as the chorus or quartet begins to sing.

On a more involved basis, the chorus could help set each of the scenes: the Wintergarden Theater, Jolson's boyhood haunts, a 1930s radio studio, a Hollywood sound studio and a U.S.O. troop show. This could be achieved by taking the chorus off the traditional risers, creating levels with platforms disguised as scenic pieces (e.g. sidewalks, hillsides, balconys, etc.) and adding back drops, painted flats, set pieces, props and costumes which combine to create the illusion of each specific scene.

A third suggestion falls between these two extremes. Let the chorus perform from risers for most of the scenes but stage them off the risers for one or two scenes to give a bit of variety. In addition, create a small scenic area for each of the six hosts that will help punch up his character. This might be done with flats that could be easily moved on, stage right or left, for each host. These flats along with his costume and a hand prop should create a realistic mood for each host.

One more suggestion is to get some planned movement by the chorus into as many of the songs they perform as possible (certainly on all up-tunes and easy-beat numbers). This accomplishes two goals. It relieves the static glee club look and provides some visual entertainment for your audience. It also loosens up your singers and helps them get inside the song a little better. Remember, moves and choreography are not stage presence within themselves. Every chorus member must still work to understand the message or theme of the song and visually reflect that with face, body, spirit and soul.

The song, "The Spaniard That Blighted My Life" (No. 7648) is a comedy number and should be staged broadly. Let your thoughts roam to zany toreadors, a two-manned bull costume, an outraged husband and the like. Make this number a real show-stopper.

Don't overlook outside help when preparing your show. A local dance school may be thrilled to help choreograph and supply dancers for a specialty number. Likewise, the local community theater group may be able to supply actors or provide technical ideas and help. You can return the favor to these groups by providing some good barbershop entertainment for *their* show or annual banquet. (This is a good way to spread the word about barbershopping to fellow performers.)

There is one last, but very important point about staging a show of this type. Timing and pacing are critical. There can be no dead spots or the production will slow down and become dull. **EACH SONG MUST BEGIN IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE MONOLOGUE WHICH SETS IT UP.** Pitches must be blown unobtrusively and tune ups should be hummed quietly under talk. You may even find that tune ups are not necessary if all the singers concentrate on the pitch being blown. In any case, the director should give the down beat as soon as the set-up is delivered.

## ACTING

Six characters serve as hosts for this story of Al Jolson and his music. Four of them, Florenz Ziegfeld, Harry Jolson, Jack Warner and Louis Epstein are based on men who actually lived and knew Al Jolson. Two others; a 30s radio announcer and a World War II soldier, are fictional but are men with which Jolson could have easily come in contact.

Each character hosts a scene that represents a phase of Al Jolson's life or career. The parts were written keeping in mind that Barbershoppers are singers and not necessarily actors. All the monologues should be given in a relaxed, conversational tone. The host should be chatting with the audience, sharing little private insights into this remarkable man. If the lines are not delivered word for word it does not matter. It is only important that each actor develops a character and stays with it and that cue words for pitch blowing or other action stay in tact.

The chances are pretty good that you can find six men in your chapter with some acting experience or ability who can handle these roles quite well. You may want to have an open reading to determine this. If your chapter has absolutely no one who can adequately play one of the hosts look to a Barbershopper from another chapter. Or, go to a local community theater group for amateur actors. These men are like Barbershoppers — they love to be on stage.

To help in casting and development of character here are some thumb-nail sketches.

**FLORENZ ZIGFELD:** We tend to think of Zigfeld as somewhat sophisticated and dignified. He is a man in control — this is not to say that he cannot show excitement. (Note: the name is pronounced Zig-feld not field.)

**HARRY JOLSON:** Harry has much of his younger brother's enthusiasm both in speech and gesture. He basically grew up on the streets and as such is not exactly refined.

**RADIO ANNOUNCER:** This character is a bit brash and colorful. After all he is in show business and his voice is heard coast-to-coast. He is very conversational, almost gossipy until he puts on his announcer's voice, cups his ear and takes on his syrupy-smooth, sing-songy, Aragon Ballroom voice.

**JACK WARNER:** Warner has the same confidence of Zigfeld, but probably not the sophistication. He is Hollywood, a new giant in a new medium. Yes, he is a bit cocky and brash but with a movie mogul's air of self-esteem.

**WORLD WAR II SOLDIER:** This actor should be young and the role played as an innocent. This soldier is an awe-struck admirer of Jolson. Jolie lifted his spirits when they most needed to be and the soldier will never forget his hero.

**LOUIS EPSTEIN:** Jolie's best friend should be played fairly down-to-earth, warm and very friendly. Eppy certainly should grow proud and happy when he talks of Jolson's comeback and he should reflect real tenderness when he speaks of his friend's death.

A minimum rehearsal schedule for the acting portion of the show would include: a line read through after all parts are cast; a complete show blocking to tell everyone where they should be on stage at all times; as many run throughs as the schedule will permit (at least three), a technical rehearsal to work out sound and lighting cues, and a dress rehearsal. All of these, except the read through and blocking rehearsals, should include singing the songs or at least starting and ending the songs to establish the correct pacing and timing. Remember: practice makes permanent.

## GUEST QUARTETS

The script has been written so that two guest quartets appear as an integral part of the theme, yet are permitted to perform their normal package with little or no alteration.

However, remarks from the quartet such as, “we’d like to thank the Mid Valley Chapter for having us on the show,” or “It’s great to be in Florida” can damage the believability of the show. Send the guest quartets a script well in advance with their spot marked. Also, send them these paragraphs you have just read that explain the importance of their cooperation.

## COSTUMES

Chorus costuming will depend on the staging approach you take. If the chorus performs their portion concert-style then any uniform or costume will work. Go with the outfit in which your chorus feels best, then they will perform like they feel. One outfit can be worn throughout the show, outfits can be changed between acts or possibly even between scenes for variety.

If the chorus is staged more dramatically to help develop each scene then costuming should be selected to fit the mood. A complete change between scenes may not be necessary but a lot can be done with accessories: hats, scarfs, gloves, jackets, etc.

The costuming of each host is important in character development. There is always more than one possible approach but here are some suggestions along with the character’s time frame;

Zigfeld (20s) — Rich-looking top coat, dress pants, dress shoes, derby or silk topper, gloves, walking cane; or a 20s style tuxedo.

Harry (20s) — Vaudeville look: straw hat, colorful vest, bow tie, slacks, shoes with spats.

Announcer (30s) — Shirt with sleeves rolled up to elbows — top button loosened — necktie loosened, pleated full cut slacks, saddle oxfords or a double breasted 30s style suit.

Warner (30s) Blazer or flashy sport coat, ascot, slacks, nice loafers.

Soldier — World War II uniform could be either dress or field uniform — if field add a two-day growth of beard.

Epstein (50s) — Suit or sportcoat, fairly conservative and comfortable looking.

## LIGHTING

Lighting will differ with every stage and with the equipment that is available. To give you just one idea, here is a description of the lighting that was used when the show was first presented at the 1985 Harmony College.

Generally speaking, chorus uptunes were lighted brightly and chorus ballads were lighted lower key (dimmer) with warmer tones (more yellow). On the songs, “Little Pal” and “Sonny Boy” the chorus was silhouetted against a colored cyclorama (blue for “Little Pal” and yellow for “Sonny Boy”). A rainbow (splashes of colored lights) was displayed on the cyclorama for, “There’s A Rainbow ‘Round My Shoulder.” A blacklight (ultra violet light) was hung above and in front of the chorus and was used as a special effect to light white gloves and hats worn by the chorus members for a 16 measure segment of “I Love A Jolson Song.”

Two follow spot lights were used to light the hosts as well as the quartets and double quartets. Here’s the lighting specifics as related by lighting director, Bill Rashleigh.

### Instrumentation:

24 lekos (elipsoidal reflector spotlights) were used. Twelve on each of two catwalks available in the theatre. For a standard production, these lights should be gelled using a No Color Pink (Roscolene No. 825 or Roscolux No. 033) to reduce some of the harshness. It is feasible to use fewer lekos for this production as long as the downstage area is adequately lit.

Two rows of strip lights were used to light the midstage area. As is the case with most modern sets of strip lights, the strips allowed for independent circuiting of three colors. These colors are determined by the gels placed in front of the lamp. An additional row of striplights was used for backlighting and special lighting on the backdrop.

Ten fresnels were used to light the midstage area and provide fill for the chorus scenes. These lights should be gelled following the same procedure as with the lekos. Eight fresnels were hung from a batten upstage of the scrim.

The strips were gelled, with red and blue and white (no gel). This provided a general wash when the chorus was singing as well as providing some subtle mood changes during ballads. A row of strips was placed on the ground upstage of a filled scrim. The filled scrim was white and used as a backdrop. It was gelled with two blue circuits and one red.

The fresnels that were used to light the chorus provided general fill and full stage lighting for a majority of the show. The eight fresnels that were upstage of the scrim were gelled to give a rainbow effect when shown on the scrim, for the song "There's A Rainbow Round My Shoulder." Suggestions for the gels that a chorus could use are as follows:

Yellow, Roscolene 806 or Roscolux 010  
Green, Roscolene 874 or Roscolux 088  
Blue, Roscolene 851 or Roscolux 083  
Red, Roscolene 832 or Roscolux 027  
Purpose, Roscolene 846 or Roscolux 055

The fresnels were focused straight down onto the scrim so that the pattern of each light overlapped. In this manner, the colors mixed and gave the illusion of a rainbow effect.

### Focusing:

The lekos were focused to allow for a division of the downstage area into three special areas. These areas were: Stage Right, Stage Center, and Stage Left. This enables the use of selective focus by highlighting areas of the stage where action is prevelant. By dimming secondary areas, the audience's attention is drawn to the bright parts of the stage. With the above arrangement, the following areas can be highlighted, SR alone, SL alone, SR and C together, SL and C together, etc. Obviously, the many combinations available provide variety in the usable acting areas.

The guest quartets may have their own lighting instructions. If they do, make sure the lighting director has them before the technical rehearsal. He can review the cues even though the guest quartets will most likely not be at the technical rehearsal.

### SOUND

As with lighting, sound reinforcement will differ with stages and available equipment. Following are two suggestions you may wish to consider.

The Crown Company of Elkhart, Indiana manufactures a microphone called the PCC-160. This is a small light weight microphone which sets on the stage and does an amazingly good job of accurately picking up sound from anywhere on a medium size (or smaller) stage. This one microphone can serve the chorus, quartets and hosts. A forerunner to the PCC, the PZM microphone (also manufactured by Crown) is also a very usable mike. It requires a plexiglass shield to block noises from the rear. These floor mikes eliminate obvious microphone stands on stage which can destroy the scenic illusion. Even guest quartets should be able to work around a floor mike — giving them more freedom of movement.

A second choice would be to hang several omni-directional microphones over the main stage and several more set on the floor and angled just over the edge of the stage. These microphones will have to be run through a sound mixer and balanced. Have someone knowledgeable set the microphones, adjust them during the technical rehearsal and ride gain during the show. You will find two excellent articles on sound reinforcement at the back of the Show Production Handbook. You may even consider using a wireless mike on the hosts. One wireless will be enough, since there is time to place the microphone on each new host before he comes on stage.

## WRAP UP

Two things were purposely avoided when scripting this show and we urge you to respect these when staging, **YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET.**

Do not perform in blackface. Yes, Al Jolson frequently used this device during his career and that is explained by the Harry Jolson character during the show. The fact remains that blackface is and was derogatory to black people. We are sure that you all respect this and will act professionally and ethically.

Second, Al Jolson was one of a kind. Creditable imitations of this man are few and far between. That is why the show was scripted using other characters to tell Jolson's story. The silhouetted character suggested at the beginning and end of the show should be fairly easy to pull off but the secret is a short stay on stage and the character played in the shadows.

We have purposely left out cues for lighting, sound, and pin rails on the enclosed script since these will vary with each production. We have provided the space for these, however, and they are an excellent way to smoothly "call" a show.

The Show Production Handbook explains how to use cue sheets as well as describing many more show production aspects, both on and off stage. Each chapter should have at least a half-dozen copies in its library.

Announcements before or after the show or during the intermission should be eliminated. Let your show program be your message board.

The end of the show should be run as scripted, without the singing of "We Sing That They Shall Speak" or "Keep The Whole World Singing." While both are beautiful and moving songs, they are not in context with the show and would lose their meaning as well as distract from the show.

Curtain calls should be kept to a minimum as described on the last page of the script. The six hosts and two guest quartets each come on stage and take a quick bow, down center during a reprise of "We'll Sing Another Jolson Song" (No. 7547). These curtain calls are unannounced, and are very quick and lively with no pauses between. This should be rehearsed.

In conclusion, have fun with this show. It is a good vehicle to involve your chapter members in a positive entertainment experience. Putting the show together was a labor of love, now it is yours to enjoy.



S  
P  
O  
TL  
I  
G  
H  
TP  
I  
NS  
O  
U  
N  
D

YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET  
(A Tribute to Al Jolson)

(ACT I)

(HOUSE LIGHTS DIM AND THE CURTAIN RISES. CHORUS IS ON STAGE BUT VERY DIMLY LIGHTED, SO AS NOT TO BE THE CENTER OF ATTENTION. THE SCENE IS THE WINTER GARDEN THEATER ON BROADWAY. AS CURTAIN RISES CHORUS BEGINS "MY MAMMY" (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7115) AT MEASURE 41. AT THE SAME INSTANT A PERFORMER REPRESENTING AL JOLSON RUNS TO CENTER STAGE. THERE SHOULD BE NO FRONT LIGHTING (INCLUDING SPOT) ON THIS CHARACTER ALLOWING HIM TO PERFORM IN SILHOUETTE. THE CHORUS SINGS THE NOTES ON THE NEUTRAL SYLLABLE "OOH" INSTEAD OF THE WORDS THROUGH THE SECOND BEAT OF MEASURE 48, AS JOLSON CHARACTER SPEAKS THE LYRICS AND GOES THROUGH TYPICAL JOLSON GESTURES. (SEE THE PRODUCTION NOTES.) AS SOON AS THE SINGING ENDS, THE JOLSON CHARACTER SAYS ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO THE AUDIENCE, "FOLKS, YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET," HE RUNS OFF STAGE, THE LIGHTS COME UP FULL ON THE CHORUS AND THEY IMMEDIATELY BEGIN THE SONG AT MEASURE 1 AND SING IT THROUGH TO THE END.)

MY MAMMY (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7115)

(ON THE FADE OF THE APPLAUSE A MAN WALKS OUT FROM THE WINGS. HE IS DRESSED IN A 1920s BUSINESS SUIT. HE SPEAKS CASUALLY TO THE AUDIENCE.)

(ZIEGFELD)

Al Jolson — only 5 feet, six but an ego 12 feet tall. Some say he was the greatest entertainer that ever lived. Could be. This (HE GESTURES AROUND THE THEATER) is the scene of some of his greatest triumphs. Broadway . . . to be more exact, the Winter Garden Theater. It's funny I should be standing here; since this was the show place of my biggest rivals the Shubert Brothers. (CATCHES HIMSELF) Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't introduce myself. My name is Florenz Ziegfeld and I was lucky enough to have a few hits on the Great White Way. There was one thing I never had though — Al Jolson. Audiences loved him; they loved his electricity, his great songs but most of all, they loved his style.

(IMMEDIATE LIGHT SHIFT TO CHORUS AS THEY LAUNCH INTO THE NEXT NUMBER, RIGHT OFF LAST WORD OF THE MONOLOGUE.)

I LOVE A JOLSON SONG (SOCIETY CAT. NO. 7546)

(AFTER APPLAUSE THE SPOT GOES BACK TO ZIEGFELD.)

(ZIEGFELD)

Jolie's first real show on Broadway was back in 1911. The Shuberts opened this theater with an extravaganza entitled, "La Belle Paree." Near the end of the second act Jolson did a couple of songs. A bit stiff and nervous at first, he soon caught fire and made the audience true believers. The Shuberts were smart enough to know they had a star on their hands. Through the next fifteen years, or so, they put Jolson in hit after hit. The shows really had very little plot. They were just an excuse for Jolie doing his songs in his own way and often not the same way twice. Sometimes he'd put in a song that wasn't even in the show or step down to the edge of the stage and ask the audience, "Do you want me or do you want to see the show." They'd cry out "Jolie, Jolie." So he'd dismiss the rest of the cast and launch into an energetic one man show, starting with a favorite like this. (QUARTET HAS COME ON STAGE AND GOES RIGHT INTO SONG)

CAROLINA IN THE MORNING (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7685)

(ZIEGFELD)

Al Jolson was a brash and cocky guy. I asked him to audition for one of my shows and do you know what his answer was? . . . "Jolie doesn't audition for anyone." Even though he seemed to ooze confidence, he was also insecure. But Jolie had his good side, too. He was a man of firsts. He popularized the first hit song of Irving Berlin and gave George Gershwin his first big break. He was the first performer to sing up and down the aisles or a runway to his audience. Another first of his was to take a Broadway show: cast, costumes and scenery on the road for a tour. One of my favorite "firsts" of Jolies was his idea to give Sunday night performances. He did it so his fellow Broadway performers would get a chance to see his show. Jolson would often introduce new songs during these performances, like this next number. (BEGINS TO LEAVE, THEN TURNS BACK) Oh, that bit of Jolies — going down on one knee. They say he did it the first time to relieve pressure on an ingrown toenail. The audience loved it. Jolie could do no wrong.

EVERYTHING IS PEACHES DOWN IN GEORGIA  
(SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7214)

(ON APPLAUSE THE CURTAINS CLOSE AND QUARTET COMES ON AND PERFORMS NEXT SONG IN FRONT OF CURTAIN)

DEAR LITTLE BOY OF MINE (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7208)

(QUARTET EXITS ON APPLAUSE AND NEW CHARACTER COMES OUT. HE IS DRESSED CASUALLY IN 20s-30s STYLES.)

(HARRY)

I knew Al Jolson pretty well and for a long time. I'm Harry Jolson and Al was my kid brother. Al was born Asa Yoelson, in 1886 in Russia and our folks were peasants, but proud. Papa was a cantor — A Jewish holyman who sings the services in synagogue. In fact he was a fifth generation cantor and he had us boys singing as soon as we could talk. He expected us to be cantors, too. We moved to Washington, D. C. when we were kids and soon Asa and I were on the streets listening and learning. We loved to listen to the black kids sing their songs of Dixie.

(I'M GOIN' SOUTH (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7209)

(HARRY)

When Asa was 11 he changed his name to Al to sound more American. I had gone off to New York to make it big and Al ran away from home to follow me. From then on it was a knock about life. We'd hang around outside theaters or actually go in and see a show if we could scrape up the money. When he was about 12, Al got his first big break. He was given a minor part in a Broadway show. When it closed Al and I got a vaudeville act together. Al had been a boy soprano but now his voice was cracking. So he began whistling in the act and that stuck throughout his career. About that time we changed our last name to Jolson. We had a pretty successful touring act. In fact, everything was going well. (*DOUBLE QUARTET HAS COME ON STAGE AND GOES INTO NUMBER.*)

I'M SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD  
(SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7202)

(HARRY)

Another performer on the bill made a suggestion to Al that really changed his career. He told Al to try doing his part with burnt cork on his face — black face it was called. Al tried it and it seemed to give him a lot of new confidence. In fact he used blackface quite a bit the rest of his career. Many years later blackface was criticized. But I can tell you, to Al it was just a gimmick to hide some of his self doubts. He wasn't making fun of anybody.

Al and I had a falling out and broke up the act. Al toured with Lew Dockstader's Minstrels in the last days of the minstrel shows and he got bigger and bigger on the Vaudeville circuit. It was in 1906 when he was playing in San Francisco, not long after the earthquake, that he said a few words that were to be a part of every show after that. The audience was going crazy after one number and he stepped up and shouted to them, "listen folks, you ain't heard nothin' yet." (*NEW QUARTET ON STAGE*)

YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET  
(SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7205)

(HARRY COMES OUT ON QUARTET'S EXIT)

(HARRY)

To borrow my kid brother's line, "you ain't heard nothin' yet," because we have a real treat for you now. Just like Jolie — great entertainers! Let me present (*NAME OF FIRST GUEST QUARTET*)

GUEST QUARTET (15-20 MINUTES IN FRONT  
OF CURTAIN)

(*UPON GUEST QUARTET'S EXIT, NEXT CHARACTER COMES ONTO STAGE. HE IS A 1930s RADIO ANNOUNCER. DRESSED IN PERIOD SPORTCOAT, TIE LOOSENEED, ETC.*)

(ANNOUNCER)

Probably not too many of you remember me. I'm Bill Larsen and I was the announcer on Mr. Jolson's first radio show back in 1932. Jolie always liked to stretch his career into new directions. He decided to try his hand at radio which was becoming very popular in the early 30s. His first show featured him singing his own popular tunes, or hits of other performers like this Ted Lewis classic that Jolson had a small hand in writing (*CATCHES HIMSELF*) But let me do this right. (*HE CUPS A HAND BEHIND ONE EAR AND TAKES ON SMOOTH 30s ANNOUNCER VOICE*)

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, the National Broadcasting Company and Chevrolet once again bring you the smooth and satisfying sounds of Mr. Al Jolson and his friends. (*QUARTET HAS COME ON STAGE AND BEGINS SINGING*).

ME AND MY SHADOW (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7211)

(ANNOUNCER)

Jolson had his ups and downs with radio. He only completed 15 of the 26 half hour shows he had contracted for with Chevrolet at \$7,500 per show. His ego got in the way of guests and he didn't like the restrictions placed on him. But, he was back on the air again in 1933 and launched the Kraft Music Hall — a show he was on and off with until his death. Unfortunately, Jolson was often suggestive and libelous on the air. His broadcasts caused NBC to make a ruling that all shows had to submit advance scripts for censorship. But there was nothing libelous about Mr. Jolson when he held the radio audience in the palm of his hand with a tender ballad. (*CHORUS SINGS*)

S  
P  
O  
T

L  
I  
G  
H  
T

P  
I  
N

S  
O  
U  
N  
D

LITTLE PAL (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7206)

(ANNOUNCER)

One of Jolie's good show business friends was Eddie Cantor. Early in their careers Jolson gave Cantor a new song that Al didn't like. Later on, one of his radio shows Jolson had Cantor as a guest and sang the song with him. Jolie told Cantor, "Eddie, if I knew it was that good, you dog, I'd never have given it to you." (*ONCE AGAIN HE CUPS HIS EARS AND TAKES ON ANNOUNCER'S VOICE*) Ladies and gentlemen, for your listening pleasure, "If You Knew Susie." (*CHORUS SINGS*)

IF YOU KNEW SUSIE (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7138)

(*ON APPLAUSE, CURTAIN CLOSES AND HOUSE LIGHTS COME UP – INTERMISSION*)

S  
P  
O  
T

L  
I  
G  
H  
T

P  
I  
N

S  
O  
U  
N  
D

## (ACT II)

(HOUSE LIGHTS GO DOWN, MAIN CURTAIN GOES UP AND STAGE LIGHTS COME UP FULL ON CHORUS AS THEY GO INTO NUMBER.)

WE'LL SING ANOTHER JOLSON SONG  
CATALOG NO. 7547)

(ON APPLAUSE, MAN COMES OUT. HE IS JACK WARNER, FILM PRODUCER. HE IS DRESSED IN A 30's SPORT COAT AND SCARF, ETC.)

(WARNER)

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I'm Jack Warner and I'd like to share some memories of Al Jolson with you. (STOPS HIMSELF) Oh. If you don't recognize my name, it's because I'm usually associated with my two brothers. We run a little motion picture studio. Al Jolson touched the motion picture business, or I should say he shoved it into another era. In 1916 he had appeared in a silent picture for Vitagraph. The film didn't get much notice. But there was something down the road that did make Jolson head for Hollywood, California. (CHORUS IMMEDIATELY INTO SONG)

CALIFORNIA HERE I COME (SOCIETY  
CATALOG NO. 7022)

(WARNER)

In 1927 our studio was in big trouble financially so we came up with a last ditch effort — a full length sound film. At that time there was a hit on Broadway called the Jazz Singer, starring George Jessel. We bought the rights to the film and offered Jessel the title role. He turned it down — — said it was too risky for his career. Eddie Cantor turned it down too. Then we went to Jolson. The man loved a gamble and agreed to star in the film. Well, the rest, as they say, is history. Most of the film was silent with about six songs and a few scenes of dialogue in sound. But Jolson found a chance to ad lib. After his first number, Al turned to the audience in the nightclub scene he was playing and shouted, "Wait a minute, wait a minute. You ain't heard nothin' yet." Then he turned to the band leader and said, "Listen. You play 'Toot, Toot Tootsie! Three choruses, and in the third chorus I whistle. Now give it to 'em hard and heavy.'" (QUARTET RIGHT INTO NUMBER).

TOOT, TOOT TOOTSIE (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7201)

(WARNER)

Jolson went on to make a string of successful films in the late 20s and early 30s. The public loved them. Theater owners even organized Jolson look alike contests. (HE CHUCKLES) Al entered one under a fake name — he came in third. (SLIGHT PAUSE, AS HE THINKS) I must tell you one story before

S  
P  
O  
TL  
I  
G  
H  
TP  
I  
NS  
O  
U  
N  
D

I go. For Jolson's second film, "The Singing Fool," he called his song writing team in New York and asked them to write him a new song. He got them during a party and told them he wanted a sentimental song about a father and his young son. The three writers went into the next room and decided to turn out a song — strictly as a joke — that was as hokey as you could get. They had their result in a couple of hours and mailed the song to Jolson, laughing hysterically as they did. They could see Jolson receiving the song, getting a good laugh, then tossing it in the waste can. But, it didn't quite work out that way . . . (CHORUS RIGHT INTO SONG).

SONNY BOY (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7200)

(CURTAIN DROPS AFTER SONG AND DOUBLE QUARTET COMES OUT FRONT AND BEGINS NEXT SONG).

APRIL SHOWERS (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7212)

(ON APPLAUSE, NEW CHARACTER COMES OUT. HE IS A G.I. IN A WORLD WAR II UNIFORM.)

(SOLDIER)

In 1941 Al Jolson was beginning to look like a has been. Then the war broke out and Al's life changed dramatically. He called the president and begged to put on shows for the troops. It happened that the U.S.O. was looking for entertainers to go overseas — a new idea then — and they took Jolson up on his offer. That's where I first saw him. Al was a big hit. His songs brought spirit to us. He always wore a uniform — but he wouldn't wear an officer's insignia, although he was entitled to. Jolie always gave us enlisted men top priority. Yeah, he found a new audience and he brought some smiles to us. (CHORUS RIGHT INTO NUMBER).

THE SPANIARD THAT BLIGHTED MY LIFE  
(SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7648)

(SOLDIER)

Company after company enjoyed Al and he carried on without stopping until 1943. Then he got malaria and was told he'd have to return to the States. So he performed in troop hospitals until the end of the war. He was a real trouper and a source of inspiration to us. During his very first show, a GI yelled out to Jolie to give his wife a call when he got back to the States. Al said he would and asked the men for more names and phone numbers. He telephoned every one of the ladies personally. From then on he made this a part of every show. He knew how much it meant to the fellas who had left their girls. Sometimes he'd sing a song to us to help us remember. (QUARTET HAS COME ON STAGE AND GOES RIGHT INTO SONG).

OLD FASHIONED GIRL (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7207)

(SOLDIER)

Al would always bring other entertainers along with him. In that Jolson tradition we are proud to present (*NAME OF SECOND GUEST QUARTET*).

GUEST QUARTET (20-25 MINUTES)

(*ON APPLAUSE AS QUARTET LEAVES, A NEW CHARACTER COMES OUT. HE IS LOUIS EPSTEIN. HE IS DRESSED IN 50's CASUAL.*)

(EPSTEIN)

Hello, I'm Louis Epstein. But Jolie just called me Eppy. I was his manager and his best friend for over 30 years. I have never seen anyone who equaled him as a performer. Off stage was a different story though. He needed an audience to do his best work. Three marriages, including one to dancer Ruby Keeler, ended in divorce. The "other woman" cited in all three divorces was his audience. Jolie needed applause, not one woman's affection. He adopted three children, and although he was a good father, he was still an entertainer first. After World War II the applause he was looking for was slipping fast. It looked as though his career was finally over. But Jolie and a screen writer hatched an idea that was to put the rainbow back around his shoulder. (*CHORUS RIGHT INTO SONG.*)

THERE'S A RAINBOW ROUND MY SHOULDER  
(SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7210)

(EPSTEIN)

That big idea was to put Jolson's life story on film. Jolson talked Columbia Pictures into the idea — a fairly big risk since Jolson was hardly known to the bobby soxers who were the biggest theater audience. Jolson wanted to play himself but the studio insisted on someone younger. A virtual unknown named Larry Parks was cast. Facts were juggled to fit the picture and Al didn't mind that, but he did insist on recording the songs himself for the film and he coached Parks constantly. There's one scene where Jolie prances down the ramp at the Winter Garden Theater. Parks couldn't get it down to Jolie's satisfaction, so Al did it himself. They used a long shot, but if you look closely you can see Jolie doing his stuff. Well, the "Jolson Story" premiered and the audiences loved it. They went crazy as Jolie sang his old standards. (*QUARTET WHO HAS COME ON STAGE GOES RIGHT INTO NUMBER.*)

ROCK-A-BYE YOUR BABY WITH A DIXIE MELODY  
(SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7032)

S  
P  
O  
T

L  
I  
G  
H  
T

P  
I  
N

S  
O  
U  
N  
D



(EPSTEIN)

The film and its sequel were such successes that Jolie was a star once again. He released new hit records and was in demand as a guest star on radio programs. On October 23, 1950 he and I went to do the Crosby radio show — but he never made it. I was with him when he died of a heart attack. He went out the way he wanted to — on the top. The entertainment newspaper, Variety, wrote: "An institution and an era of the show business stopped breathing in a San Francisco Hotel suite. A legend now begins to live." His friend, Georgie Jessel looked at the thousands waiting outside his funeral and said, "Al's turned them away again." . . . He was my friend but he was the world's showman. *(CHORUS RIGHT INTO SONG)*

SWANEE (SOCIETY CATALOG NO. 7199)

*(AS AN OPTION, THE JOLSON CHARACTER THAT WAS SEEN IN THE BEGINNING OF THE SHOW MIGHT COME OUT AT MEASURE 89 AND DO SOME CHARACTERISTIC JOLSON PRANCING. AGAIN, the FIGURE SHOULD BE IN SILHOUETTE TO CARRY THE ILLUSION. AFTER THE NUMBER IS OVER THE CHORUS GOES RIGHT INTO A RE-PRISE OF "WE'LL SING ANOTHER JOLSON SONG" (NO. 7547), DURING THIS REPRISE THE ACTORS AND THE TWO GUEST QUARTETS TAKE THEIR CURTAIN CALLS, UNANNOUNCED AND FINISH THE SONG WITH THE CHORUS.*

CURTAIN

S  
P  
O  
T

L  
I  
G  
H  
T

P  
I  
N

S  
O  
U  
N  
D

