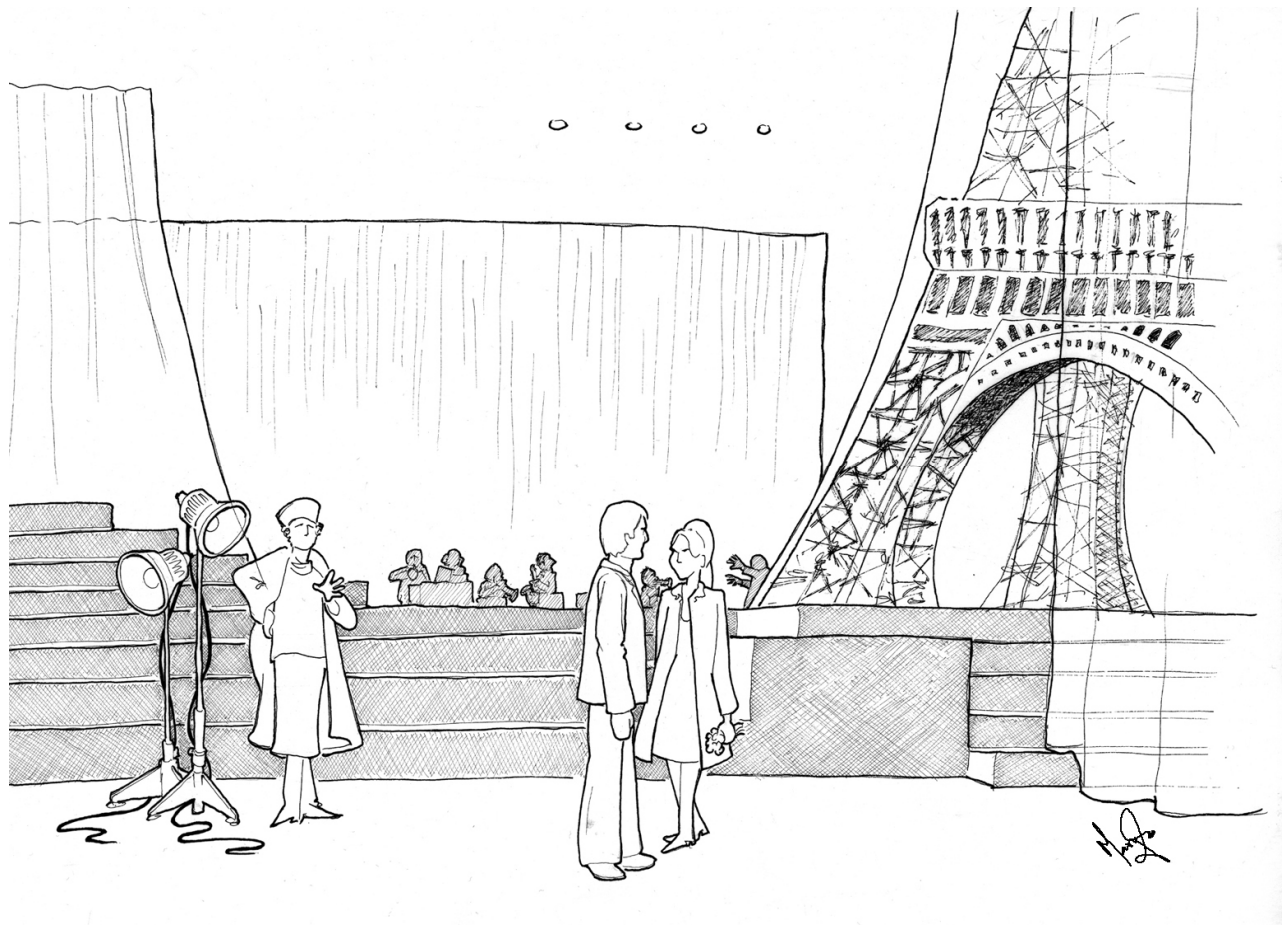


The Observer

From the Files of Project Quantum Leap



A No Strings Keepsake

Issue 36

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..... Jay Schwartz, and LPOs & Leapers everywhere

ON OUR COVER

The very talented Maryse Worrallo offers us her conception of the stage during the first act of *No Strings*. She has also generously provided drawings to grace Anita Balestino's insightful recollections of the production, which focus on the romance between Barbara (Sophina Brown) and David (Scott Bakula). Anita's exceptionally vivid account will bring back memories for those who saw the production; those fans who were unable to attend will find the storyline captivating and easily imagine the expressions and gestures of the actors. The transcript of the Q&A with the *No Strings* cast follows with Jo Fox's many wonderful photos. I am tremendously pleased to offer our readers an incomparable memento, which serves to keep our memories of this production alive.

SHEILA O'MALLEY'S FANSITE FOR DEAN

Entitled "The Sheila Variations," O'Malley has created a website devoted to Dean Stockwell's entire oeuvre, offering hilarious commentary and anecdotes, plus oodles of photos—from Broadway to screen. She provides an ongoing, comprehensive assessment of all of Dean Stockwell's work, and readers can respond with their own comments. With frequent updates and additions this is truly an archive worth searching over and over again:
http://www.sheilaomalley.com/archives/cat_dean_stockwell.html

CORRECTION

Please note that in our last issue (#35, page 21), the article about Scott Bakula's career should have stated that *Quantum Leap* debuted on Easter Sunday, March 26, 1989. The editor's sincere apologies for this significant typographical error and any misinformation it may generate.



Leapers from around the world will gather in Los Angeles the weekend of March 27-29, 2009 to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of *Quantum Leap*. Everyone on The Leap Back 2009 organizing committee—Judy Ascenzi, Carol Davis, Emma Fee, Brian Greene, and Maryse Worrallo—has been hard at work creating an unforgettable experience for *QL* fans.

With over 40 celebrity guests already confirmed, including Dean Stockwell, Deborah Pratt, Chas Floyd Johnson, and a virtual "who's who" of *QL* guest stars, The Leap Back 2009 will truly be an event unlike any previous *QL* convention. One of the many special features being planned is the premiere of *A Leap to Di For*, a fan-produced film by award-winning filmmaker Christopher Allen, in conjunction with Racso Motion Pictures.

The organizers have also launched a *QL* fanfic contest specifically for this occasion. The winning entries will be published in a brand-new fanzine distributed to all of the guests and attendees at the convention. (Entry deadline: March 27, 2008, click "Events" on the website homepage.) Artwork, music video, costuming and centerpiece competitions will be announced in the near future.

Up-to-date information on the convention, including the guest list, FAQs, and a fan forum, is available at the con website, www.leapback2009.com. Ticket sales are expected to open early in 2008, but in the meantime, take a few minutes to look around and fill in the opinion survey!

THE QUALITY OF LIFE WORLD PREMIERE

The Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles recently commissioned and debuted Jane Anderson's newest play, *The Quality of Life*, starring Laurie Metcalf, Dennis Boutsikaris, JoBeth Williams, and Scott Bakula. The play, written and directed by Emmy-winner Anderson, began previews on October 2 and ran until November 18, garnering excellent reviews for both the writing and the superb performances of its cast.

AN EVENING WITH SCOTT BAKULA

Coming up quickly on the calendar—January 16, 17 and 18, 2008—is a unique Ford's Theatre event being presented at the Harman Center for the Arts in Washington, DC. This brief engagement with limited seating features Scott in a very special cabaret performance with a five-piece orchestra and a song list selected by Scott himself. Details on ordering tickets can be found at our website: www.ProjectQuantumLeap.com

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NO STRINGS: A BITTERSWEET TIE

By Anita Balestino

Photos by Michael Lamont; drawings by Maryse Worrallo

This recollection began as an attempt to capture some of the details of Scott Bakula's and Sophina Brown's performances in the May 2007 *Reprise!* production of *No Strings*. With the help of a libretto¹ of the play, some hastily scrawled notes, and my often faulty memory, this piece focuses on lovers, *David* and *Barbara*, and attempts to describe as much detail as possible about two outstanding performances. Much certainly has been left out. Descriptions may not exactly match lines that correspond to them. But I hope those who attended the show and those who did not might *see* the performances through the limited vehicle of these words and enjoy what is ultimately a tribute to the play, to two very talented performers, and to their vivid characters.

Introduction

It seems almost compulsory that some of the critics who reviewed this recent *Reprise!* production should disparage the revival of a musical as supposedly dated and sentimental as *No Strings*. Certainly, the ultimate conflict of the play – the controversy, hostility, indeed the violation of law in some states that followed from an interracial marriage in the America of that period – does not play with the same urgency in 2007 as it did in 1962. Thankfully, most parts of our country have put that kind of bigotry aside, at least in principle; although recent events in Jena, LA and at Columbia University reveal the hidden racial tensions that nonetheless persist. Still, this delightful *Reprise!* revival had a meaningful comment to make about the pain caused by the institutionalized discrimination that was still the norm in our country a mere forty-five years ago.

But social commentary aside, at its tender heart, this play gave audiences a beautiful, classic love story. Although music was an elemental part of the production, the director, Kay Cole, and musical director, Gerald Sternbach, allowed the narrative to take precedence. In this *'play with music,'* the spotlight shone on the story of the two lovers and the forces that brought them together or tore them apart. One of those forces – the elegant but hollow jet set milieu that threatens to destroy the lovers' relationship – was embodied by an ensemble of wordless models. Dressed in period, haute-couture costumes by Bob Mackie and Joe McFate, they posed like mannequins on the stage and served as living scenery for the story.

No Strings also featured an unexpected departure from the usual musical production. The orchestra did not occupy its customary place in the pit but remained on stage, tucked away in a remote upstage left corner throughout the play. True to the show's title, the orchestra contained no string section. Hence *No Strings* acquired a double meaning to represent this feature

¹ *No Strings, A new musical;* book by Samuel Taylor; music and lyrics by Richard Rodgers; Random House, NY, 1962.

of the orchestra and the outcome of the relationship between the two lovers. As mentioned earlier, music helped to move the play forward but the production seemed to embody the principle, *"The play's the thing."* Perhaps for this reason some critics disparaged the songs featured in the play as 'unremarkable.' Admittedly, at times some of the rhyming techniques seem a bit forced. (Richard Rodgers composed this music without his long-time, recently-deceased lyricist, Oscar Hammerstein II, and *No Strings* is the only musical for which Rodgers himself wrote the words for his songs.) But upon closer review, the lyrics emerge as intelligent, witty, sophisticated, of course romantic, and even at times inspirational. Yet above all, those gorgeous Richard Rodgers *melodies*, graceful, haunting, poignant and passionate, surface in abundance in this play. *"Look No Further"* and *"Nobody Told Me"* serve as two beautiful examples, along with the more popular *"The Sweetest Sounds"* and *"No Strings."* In addition to the ballads, the play features the lively anthem *"Loads of Love"* and the blues/jazz-infused *"You Don't Tell Me,"* both solo numbers for *Barbara* that Sophina Brown powered all the way to the rafters. But for me, one of the major appeals of the score was that it allowed Scott Bakula's singing voice to rise into the upper register of his range – the *'lyric'* section of his lyric baritone. Here, especially in the romantic ballads, he sang with such sweetness, purity and tenderness that his voice evoked an almost celestial quality and carried the music directly into one's heart.

Another critic remarked that *No Strings* lacked an authentic showstopper. But in fact during the first cast Q&A, Scott expressed his gratitude to Sternbach and Cole for permitting the dramatic arc of the play to predominate rather than interrupting the story with extravagant pieces of music and choreography. Nonetheless, *"Be My Host,"* performed by *David* (Bakula), *Michael* (Matthew Ashford), *Comfort* (the irrepressible Bets Malone) and the ensemble, while not taking away from the dramatic impetus of the play, came pretty close to being precisely that aforesaid showstopper. In this energetic song and dance, pals *David* and *Michael* gleefully invite *Comfort* to bankroll them across Europe, harmonizing, *"anyone with money should be smart enough to see/ There are people who need it, like me,"* and *"it's more blessed to receive than give."* The whole company energetically performs this number, and Scott in particular attacks the song and its accompanying choreography with joyful abandon, a devilishly charming, *cat-that-ate-the-canary* smile on his face all the while. Loose, limber and just-that-little-bit cocky, he belts out the lyrics, dances, runs and jumps – even partners a girl from the chorus in a free-style, sixties *boogaloo*. At the end of the number, Scott bounds up a tall staircase on the right side of the stage as if he were flying. At several performances he actually had to rein in his speed a bit so his cast mates could catch up with him. *"Be My Host"* delivers its hyperkinetic energy to the

audience and gets a huge audience reaction in return. Nevertheless, *Host* does not stand alone as contender for the title of showstopper in this play. The sly, innuendo-laden “*Eager Beaver*,” sung by *Comfort* and *Mike*, and the whimsical “*Love Makes the World Go (Square)*,” sung by *Comfort* and Ruth Williamson as *Mollie* also give the audience lots of dazzle, energy, and fun.

Scott’s character is *David Jordan*, a jaded, disillusioned, hard-partying writer, who is alienated from himself and his talent and seems to have an ever-present glass of cognac or champagne in his hand. Despite having previously won a Pulitzer Prize for his first novel, *David* now consumes the Euro party scene like a drug, needing more and more of life in the fast lane to anesthetize his anguish over a near-critical case of writer’s block. I’m always amazed at how thoroughly Scott *becomes* his character, using his body every bit as much as his face and voice to create a living, breathing persona. Whereas Scott gave *Charlie Anderson*, his character in *Shenandoah*, a bearing that often appeared tired, stiff and slow from years of hard manual labor, every movement still conveyed *Charlie’s* sense of resolve. In contrast, Scott’s *David* carried himself with a careless, casual, and urbane grace, yet with a conspicuous *absence of any purpose* at all. As always, the sincerity, depth and complexity of Scott’s portrayal drew me wholly into the story and into his character’s conflict. He defined this *David* with an air of insouciance and aimless self-indulgence but also, at times, with light-hearted merriment or persistent determination. Scott made *David* blaze with impassioned longing yet also radiate exquisite tenderness. And at the very end, Scott endowed *David* with extraordinary strength, integrity and the capacity for agonizing but gallant sacrifice born of fully realized love.

Act I The Opening

The show begins with a darkened stage and the sound of a flute playing a lovely, poignant solo. The melancholy, pulsating notes seem to float, disembodied, over the audience and set the mood for the play. Presently, the rest of the orchestra picks up the introduction and both the tempo and the lights come up. *Barbara* enters and sings a chorus of “*The Sweetest Sounds*.” *David* arrives from the other side of the stage and reprises the chorus by himself. Then the pair sings the chorus together but neither looks at or is aware of the other. The lyrics describe each character’s yearning to find something truly meaningful in their lives, and both singers portray that desire. As Scott sings the phrase, “*Is waiting somewhere*,” he brings his hands together and raises them to the level of his chest. With palms turned upward, he extends them slightly outward in front of him, as if reaching for the longed for love he sings about. With this subtle but eloquent gesture, he makes the lyrics come alive and gives the audience its first insight into the nature of his character. As the music ends, *David* and *Barbara* exit on opposite sides of the stage, holding the last, lingering note of the song. Scott begins the last note softly and builds a gradual, smoothly sustained crescendo until he finishes at full vocal power just before leaving the stage. Scott has such complete control over the

dynamics of his singing voice that, as he so often does, he accomplishes this technique with a natural ease that entirely belies its difficulty.

*The sweetest sounds I’ll ever hear
Are still inside my head.*

*The kindest words I’ll ever know
Are waiting to be said.*

*The most entrancing sight of all
Is yet for me to see.*

*And the dearest love in all the world
Is waiting somewhere for me,
Is waiting somewhere, somewhere for me.*

(Richard Rodgers; *The Sweetest Sounds*; ©1962; Williamson Publishing)

The Photography Studio - Meeting

Early in the first act, *David* visits the studio of his friend *Luc* (Brent Schindele), a well-known fashion photographer, and his vivacious assistant *Jeanette* (Carla Tassara, giving an effervescent performance entirely in flawless French). *Luc* introduces *David* to *Mollie*, the editor of *Paris Vogue* and *Barbara’s* professional adviser. In the delightful number, “*How Sad*,” *David* commiserates with *Mollie* about the fate of women. “*Poor things!*” he sympathizes and tells *Mollie* that women miss out on the greatest treasure in the world – **women**. After contrasting a woman’s sublime assets with the pathetic shortcomings of a man, he sings, “*What do they see in men?*” When his song refers to the female side of this equation, his tonal quality and facial expression suggest compassion or rapture. But his voice becomes strident and severe, and his face and gestures turn farcical when he sings about the male element.

In the course of this energetic song, he shifts with seamless ease between rhythmically speaking the lyrics and singing them. At the same time he weaves in and out between the high fashion models posed on groups of steps for a photo shoot, pointing out their alluring features. “*Beneath her chin lies heaven*,” he intones while he dips beneath a model’s outstretched arm, his knees bent deeply but his torso upright, then rises with a smooth, spiraling motion to the level of her breast. The fluid, sinuous grace of that movement and the sensuality implied in Scott’s voice brought to mind the snake in the ‘*Garden of Eden*.’ As he continues with the opposing section of that verse, *David* sings, “*While under his lies hair*.” Here he makes his vocal tone harsh and discordant on that last word and stares at the audience with a wide-eyed, bemused expression, illustrating this inverse and wholly inferior feature of the male anatomy. Later in the song, *David* provides more evidence of his athletic grace when he leaps from the top of the stairs and



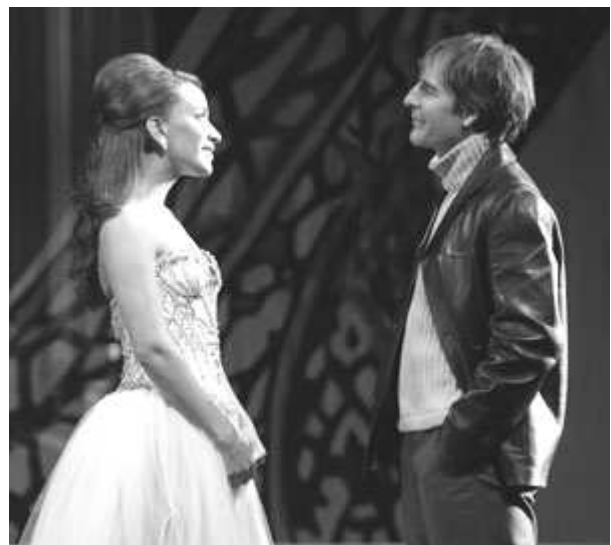
lands on the stage in a slow, supple *plie* that absorbs any impact of the jump and makes not even a sound. Finally as the song ends, *David* declaims, “How can they make such a fuss/ Over ugly,” he points good-naturedly at *Luc*, who points right back at *David*, “sinful, (singing now) predatory/ Bums like us!” He finishes the phrase with a flourish on the last powerful high note. But as the models circle him and strut off to his right, he reprises part of the opening refrain and scuttles after them in a bawdy, hunkered down crouch that mimics the gait affected by the late Groucho Marx with such hilarity. Finally, *David* ends the song with even more sustained vocal power and once again sings, “What do they see in men?”

It is here at *Luc*’s studio that *David* meets *Barbara*. A beautiful young model and the toast of Europe who also happens to be African-American, she arrives, late and breathless, to pose for the highly desired cover of *Paris Vogue*. As yet unspoiled by the artifice of the French fashion world, she remains ingenuous and animated, eagerly soaking up each new experience that life in Paris presents to her and regaling everyone in the studio, especially *David*, with her latest adventure. *Barbara* has never heard of *David*, his book, or the literary prize *Luc* announces that his friend has won. But while she moves animatedly through her repertoire of poses for *Luc*’s camera, *Barbara* proves to be quite curious about this friend. For his part, *David* clearly enjoys *Barbara* and her poses, along with quite a few glasses of *Luc*’s brandy, and proves to be just as curious about her. Through his earlier banter with *Luc* and *Jeanette*, *David* revealed that he has started many novels in many different locations but gave up working on each of them for (we assume) lack of inspiration. So when *Barbara* asks what *David* does for a living, the sharp-tongued *Mollie* replies, “He starts novels.” With genuine candor, *Barbara* asks in return, “Who finishes them?” *David* reacts to this exchange by abruptly dropping an arm to his side in offended disbelief, then turning one of [Scott’s] incomparable deadpan looks on *Mollie*. Immediately following *Barbara*’s less than tactful question, *Jeanette* and *Luc* come to their friend’s defense, scolding that *David* is a “great writer” who has won a “great prize,” although the name of that prize escapes them. *Barbara* turns to *Mollie*, certain that her mentor “knows everything,” and asks her what prize *David* won for his novel. But *Mollie* only quips that they ought to give prizes for reading some novels. Taking up the older woman’s teasing tone, *Barbara* suggests that perhaps *David* won this much-heralded prize “for finishing one.” Stung by the women’s jibes and laughter at his expense, *David* quietly bids *Luc* goodbye. “I’ll see you later, *Luc*,” he says, then pauses and throws his head back to toss down the brandy left in his glass. He gives *Luc* a genial cuff on the shoulder and makes arrangements to meet him for dinner later that evening, before striding briskly toward the door.

Meanwhile, both *Luc* and *Jeanette* implore *David* not to go but neither of them can change his mind. *Barbara* at first seems unaware of the reason for *David*’s abrupt decision to leave, until *Mollie* explains, “I’m afraid we’ve hurt his feelings, dear.” At that, *Barbara* steps down from her modeling platform and tells *Luc* that she’s done enough for the day. “Mr. Jordan!” she calls out in an urgent tone and crosses to

David, who has turned his back on her and is walking resolutely from the studio. “Mr. Jordan!” she calls again more softly, and only then does *David* stop and turn around to face her directly. “I’m terribly sorry,” she tells him with genuine regret. Trying to soothe his ruffled dignity, she rationalizes their jokes at his expense by claiming that *Mollie* reads very little and that she, herself, limits her literary fare to “spicy French novels.” “So you see!” she continues brightly, “Someone could walk in who’d won the Pulitzer Prize, and we wouldn’t know the difference.” While *Barbara* gives her little explanation, *David* regards her steadily, only shifting his weight and dipping his head to level a penetrating look at her when she mentions the name, “Pulitzer Prize.” Of course, *Luc* and *Jeanette* both chime in immediately with shouts of recognition at *Barbara*’s chance mention of the name “Pulitzer.” As for *Mollie*, she merely says, “Whoops!” But *Barbara* tries to recover, uttering a rather anemic, “How nice,” then asking *Luc* if he remembers the name of *David*’s book. “Plan of Attack!” *Jeanette* answers straightaway, before her boss has a chance to recall the title, and adds that the book is published all over the world. “All over the world,” *Barbara* repeats, this time sounding a little less chastened and a little more impressed. “It’s alright,” *David* responds, still guarded but obviously disposed to relieve her embarrassment, “It was before your time.” But then he challenges her earlier ridicule of his reputation, asking just a bit contentiously, “What have you got against Americans?” *Barbara* responds by turning that clichéd denial of prejudiced thinking on its head. “Some of my best friends are Americans,” she declares, her witty comeback drawing an appreciative chuckle from *David*. It would seem that although *Barbara* has hurt his feelings and wounded his pride, or perhaps simply because she dares to tell him the truth about his erratic approach to his profession, this girl fascinates him.

And so, as the lone flute reprises the figure of its opening solo, *David* relaxes his bearing, casually slips his hands in his pockets and ambles a little closer to *Barbara*. “Can I buy you a drink?” he asks, his casual manner belying the hint of desire in his voice. But *Barbara* quickly replies that she doesn’t drink. At that, *David* lifts his chin and studies her face for a moment while she returns the scrutiny.



"I'll walk you home," David suggests, although his words are more assertion than request and his deep voice conveys an undertone of warm persuasion. Barbara declines again, objecting that she has a driver waiting. "Send him home," David counters in a compelling, seductive tone as he gives a slow, sideways toss of his head to mimic the act of dismissing the driver. Barbara protests that it's a long walk to her flat. "It's – a – nice – day," David parries, drawing out the phrase so that each word has enticing weight as that sensual, hypnotic note vibrates even more deeply in his voice. And as if it were fated, Barbara agrees. She asks Mollie to take Louis' car and driver back to her office and then to discharge them for the day. As Mollie exits, Barbara climbs the staircase to the modeling platform and steps behind a narrow curtain to change from designer gown to street clothes. Meanwhile, a piano plays a slow prelude as Jeanette walks toward David with Barbara's coat. He holds out one arm so Jeanette can drape the coat over it, and she walks past him and into the wings. David looks down at the garment, gives it an absent-minded toss or two to reposition it over his arm, and becomes lost in thought. Softly, reflectively, with only the piano as accompaniment, he sings, "What's real? She's real. I'm real, too." Here the horns play a martial interlude, evoking the first phrase of *La Marseillaise*, while David strides with resolve up the steps in Barbara's direction. Reaching the platform, he continues singing with more passion and volume, "Everything about us shifts and changes. Only we are real." Could David have rediscovered some purpose in his blocked and aimless existence through the dauntless spirit of this radiant young girl? He begins to sing the first lines of "The Sweetest Sounds," initially looking toward Barbara's dressing room and then descending the steps to the stage. But he stops abruptly when Barbara emerges from behind the curtain and calls to him, "All right?"

"Where d'you live?" David calls back to her briskly, his manner promising an imminent adventure. Barbara tells him that she lives on the Left Bank, off the *Champs de Mars*, and that the Eiffel Tower stands just outside her window. "How very Parisian!" David remarks, a touch of amused certainty coloring his words, as if he could have predicted how completely she would embrace Paris. "Oh yes," Barbara replies innocently, ignoring his amusement at her expense, "I work at being Parisian." Almost immediately, Barbara apologizes for her remarks about David's book and asks contritely, "Were we terribly rude?" He doesn't dispute her impression of their bad manners but replies, "Yes, you were." In a tone that is part challenge, part genuine curiosity he asks, "Are you always that way when you first meet fellow Americans?" Barbara responds, "I think so," and adds that it's a kind of wariness on her part – a way of fending off other Americans. David's quiet voice expresses gentle understanding as he assures her, "There's no need of wariness. You don't have to fend me off." But at the same time a subtle constraint appears in his bearing – a barely perceptible inclination backward as he speaks. Perhaps David creates this slight distance between them, even as he continues to look steadily into Barbara's eyes, because he is reluctant to acknowledge her need for wariness toward other Americans or

to admit that her countrymen's racial bigotry might prompt that wariness.

Barbara changes the subject, asking why it is that she has not met David before. He replies that he's been away from Paris for nearly a year and concludes that she most likely wasn't in the city then. "Oh yes," Barbara says, "but I was still just a little girl, trying." David chuckles at how completely she dismisses her younger self, but the tone of his next comment reflects fitting admiration – and also just a hint of light mockery. "And now you've made it. And big," he emphasizes, "The cover of *Vogue*. A car and driver." He pauses a moment, then holds Barbara's coat up to help her into it. Striving for nonchalance, David fails completely when his voice becomes a little too forced, a little too jaunty, betraying the import he attaches to his next question. "Who is Louis?" he asks, while Barbara slips on her coat without a word, then changes the subject pointedly and reminds him that he said he wanted to walk. David accepts the rebuff without comment, regardless of whatever reservations he may have, and after a small silence moves to stand beside her. So Barbara takes his arm in both of hers, and they set off for her flat in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower.

A Stroll through Paris – Discovery

Along the way, Barbara seems curious to learn all she can about David, asking him one question after another about himself: Was he very young when he wrote his Pulitzer Prize-winning book about the war? Categorically, "A Baby." Did he enlist as a drummer boy? Mock-serious, "I was wounded at the *Battle of Bull Run*." When was the book published? "Eight years ago." Where did he write the book? "[Back home] in *Bear Isle Maine*." Did he truly live on an island off the coast of Maine and is it really rock-bound, grim, and forbidding? With great fondness, "And gentle and caressing." What did his family do there? "My father was a quarryman. My uncles were lobstermen. My mother was a schoolteacher." Did he also cut granite and fish lobsters? With pride, "Ohhhh, yes!" Does he live in Paris now? "Paris... Rome... Switzerland..." describing his rootless lifestyle with dramatic elation, "two homes have I: the world and Paris!" What has he written since his book? Avoiding her eyes and on a flat, frustrated note, "Not very much." What did he mean by his joke about "starting novels"? At first David acknowledges her question with a slight dip of his head, but it isn't at all clear whether he deems her query an insult or an accolade. His spoken reply begins with bravado but ends up seeming almost desperate. "I start novels," he says, as if he were laying bare a transgression, and meets her eyes with a look that manages to be smug and shamed all at once.

David quickly breaks off eye contact with Barbara and walks on ahead of her. His next thought seems to stray toward the palliative effect of brandy. "You're sure you wouldn't like to stop somewhere and get a drink?" She tells him again that she honestly doesn't drink, but allows that he should have a drink if he wants one. Barbara's next comment inadvertently reveals her negative view of David's drinking habits. "You had quite a

bit of brandy at Luc's," she says with only the slightest hint of disapproval. *David* may well be offended by her blunt observation, but he frames his retort with a little laugh and sounds more amused than affronted: "*Oh? By whose standards?*" *Barbara* promptly apologizes and offers to have a lemonade while he has his drink. "*Forget it,*" *David* replies stonily, but the explosive consonant sound at the end of his response ultimately gives away his annoyance. "*I didn't mean to imply you were a drunkard,*" *Barbara* amends, suggesting that very opinion by her disavowal. As the couple bandies about proposals whether to stop for a brandy or a *citron pressé*, each insists that the other should prevail. She seems genuinely eager to please him, taking his hand and dragging him toward the *taverne*; he stubbornly refuses to admit that he wants a drink. Suddenly *David* pulls *Barbara* around to face him and takes her hand in both of his. Regarding her with unmistakable affection, he points out, "*We're having our first quarrel,*" in a tender, smiling tone as if to preserve the incident as cherished memory.

In response, *Barbara* searches *David's* features for the answer to something that puzzles her. "*What is it?*" he asks, still holding her hand. Finally, she asks why he wanted her to come for a drink, to go for a walk with him. As he studies her face in return, *David* admits that he doesn't know yet, but then reveals his fascination with *Barbara*. "*A beautiful girl was deliberately rude...*" he ponders, allowing his comment to hang on an upraised inflection as he speculates aloud over her enigmatic behavior. "*Aren't you curious?*" *Barbara* asks. On a deep, husky note that implies much more to come, *David* simply murmurs, "*Very.*" Seeming to ignore the implication in *David's* voice, *Barbara* turns and begins to walk away. As she goes, *David* holds on to her hand, stretching his arm to its full length until she is out of reach before letting it fall in vain to his side. She complains that he has asked not even one question about her to offset the "*hundred questions*" she has asked about him. *David* counters, "*I have time, I think.*" Then cocking his head to one side and aiming a probing look her way, he adds with more insistence, "*Haven't I?*" *Barbara* remains mute. So he obliges her and asks briskly, "*What would you like to tell me?*" She places the charge back on him, "*What would you like to know?*" But *David* seeks only the most fundamental information from *Barbara* since he seems to be acquiring all the insight he needs simply by observing her. Still, he continues with vigor and self-assurance but with a slightly mechanical note in his voice as if he were reciting a list or litany and asks what is her name? "*Barbara Woodruff.*" Where was she born? "*Manhattan.*" Where did she live? "*Uptown. Way uptown.*" Where did she go to school? "*George Washington High.*" Satisfied that he has fulfilled his quota of questions, *David* announces, "*That's enough for one time, don't you think?*"

But then as if he's forgotten something *David* hastily adds, "*Uh... what do you want?*" "*The world,*" *Barbara* answers matter-of-factly. "*What will you settle for?*" he stresses, sketching a slow sideways arc with his head as if trying to curb a child's audacity. "*The world,*" she responds again completely undaunted. *David's* pleasure at her reply spills over in a deep, delighted chuckle, and he asks her how she'd like it

wrapped. "*In pink and gold with a big blue ribbon,*" *Barbara* declares happily. So *David* moves to stand beside her, props one foot on the step where she is seated and leans his arm on his knee. "*Does it ever come wrapped that way?*" he laughs, charmed by her boldness. *Barbara* insists that her world will come that way or she'll take it back and exchange it for another one. She then launches into a sensational performance of "*Loads of Love.*" *David* takes a seat on the steps and watches her, enchanted by her spirited song. At one point toward the end of the number, *Barbara* grabs the lapels of *David's* luxurious, black leather jacket and pulls him to his feet facing her. She holds on to his coat and tows him along after her. Both of them take each step in time with the music, she moving backward, he forward. Meanwhile she sings, "*A bud appears and then it's May!*" wagging her index finger at him, "*So first things first, I always say!*" moving in double time now, "*The horse precedes the cart!*" swinging him around in a short arc and heaving him forcibly away from her toward stage right, "*It isn't heft it's heart.*" *David* plays the amused but passive dupe throughout and makes a grand gesture of being tossed off balance when *Barbara* swings him away from her. She finishes the song with plenty of vocal fireworks while *David* looks on from far stage right and raises his head high in salute to her performance. With her ending lyrics *Barbara* declares, "*I just want money, and then some money, and loads of lovely love!*"

When the song is over, *David* goes to *Barbara* and places in her hand a little bunch of violets that he bought from a roving flower peddler. She smiles in response and points out that they've arrived at her home, showing *David* that the Eiffel Tower really does sit in her backyard. As he scans the massive structure, he comments that living so close to it must be frightening. But *Barbara* maintains that she loves it: "*I never have to wonder where I am when I wake up in the morning.*" Very dryly but with a hint of self-derision, *David* admits, "*You're lucky; I often do.*" He asks permission to come up to her flat, clearly expecting *Barbara* to agree. But she refuses with a quiet but very definite, "*No.*" In somewhat stunned silence, *David* turns and studies her face closely, perhaps searching for an opening in her unreadable features. She thanks him, bids him goodbye and begins to walk away. "*Will I see you again,*" he calls after her, his tone more forceful, more insistent. Although *Barbara* turns back toward *David*, she simply offers that they will probably see each other somewhere. "*We travel in the same circles,*" she comments lightly. Sensing a bit more promise in her answer, *David* pledges to call her tomorrow. But again she rebuffs him, saying she'd rather he did not. "*Why?*" he asks very, softly, his hushed voice bearing a trace of bewilderment, a trace of entreaty. "*Do you have what the French so delicately call 'a friend?'*" he continues with more vigor as he puts his suspicions into words. "*Did you decide it was your turn to be rude?*" *Barbara* counters, accusing him of her earlier offense and deflecting his question at the same time. She thanks him for the walk and the flowers, and walks away. *David* stares after her until she disappears, perplexed and discouraged by her outright dismissal. Then he stuffs his hands in his pockets and begins to wander into the crowd of people on the street, pausing for one more backward glance in *Barbara's* direction.

As for *Barbara*, she returns to her flat where *Louis De Pourtal* (Joseph Culliton) is waiting for her. They discuss their plans for the evening and what she should wear. They also speak of their relationship, which so far is that of mentor in the social graces and student. But *Louis* also hopes to eventually become *Barbara's* lover. As they talk, *Barbara* begins to replay fragments of her conversation with *David* in her mind, repeating her side of the discourse aloud, while ostensibly still talking with the older man. And *David* himself returns to stand on the steps above and to the right of the stage, an embodiment of *Barbara's* preoccupation with him - and his with her. He too repeats pieces of dialogue from their earlier scene together, adopting a spectral tone of voice and looking straight ahead with expressionless features like the phantom presence he represents.

Monte Carlo - Revelry

The next scene brings us to Monte Carlo and the annual Grand Prix auto races. As usual, the ensemble sets the scene. The dancers prance onto the stage in dayglo-colored sportswear that features a checkered flag theme. When they stop in a tight group at the right, rear corner of the stage, their backs remain toward the audience while their collective eyes are seemingly glued on the race. *David* strides jauntily into this scene from stage left, a portable bar and ever-present cognac in hand. He appears dynamic, convivial and eager to "have a ball." To all appearances he has come for the race but primarily he hopes to run into *Barbara* at this major social event. The usual *Eurotrash* crowd is on hand for the races, as are *Luc* and *Gabrielle* (a famous French singer and *Luc's* clandestine love interest), *Mike* and *Comfort*, who are there to take in the sights, and *Jeanette*, who comes ready to help *Luc* set up a photo shoot but not at all ready to come face to face with a rival for his affections. *Comfort*, who has been left to her own devices all morning, sweeps on stage and tells *Mike* and *David* about her adventures, informing them that she has bought a "dirty book." As *Mike* speaks out in protest, *David* starts up in alarm from his seat on the bottom step of a small staircase, looking entirely ready to throw himself into the breach and protect *Comfort* from the impending danger of the book's contents. However *Comfort*, far from scandalized, says she wants to send copies of the book to everyone back home in Tulsa.

Soon *Luc* arrives with *Gabrielle* on his arm. *David* greets his friend with a hearty handshake that turns into a bear hug and introduces him to *Comfort*. But after the introduction, *David* tells *Luc* that he's looking for *Barbara* and asks if, "that model... the one I met in your studio," has come to Monte Carlo with him? When *Luc* replies that she's still in Paris, *David* complains that he has "kept calling her" but never got an answer. *David* doesn't speak of *Barbara* any further, but he has certainly revealed how much he wants to see her again. Amid a conversation about how much *Comfort* likes Monte Carlo, she, *Mike* and *David* banter about whether she could afford to buy the place - or perhaps Switzerland - for *Mike*. Once it's established that *Comfort* (or her father) really could "swing" such a deal, *Mike*, *Luc* and *David* launch into a

spirited and witty performance of "Be My Host," accompanied by plenty of pouring, toasting with, and quaffing *David's* ubiquitous cognac. As the number unfolds, *David* seems to playfully embrace *Mike's* status as a confirmed gigolo. In song, both men try to convince *Comfort* that they are exceedingly worthy of her monetary support, and in fact she is funding this trip for both of them. However *David* is still his own man and supports himself to



some degree by hiring out his services as a private pilot, by writing dialogue for (bad) Italian movies and by parlaying his talent for tennis and skiing into extended house visits with well-heeled friends. After "Be My Host" concludes on a high point of frenetic gaiety, *Jeanette* arrives with *Luc's* photographic equipment. *David* does his best to divert her attention, but soon *Jeanette* discovers *Luc* with his new paramour. *David* and *Mike* hustle *Comfort* offstage to prevent her from eavesdropping or worse yet, interfering in the fireworks that are bound to ensue between *Luc* and his vivacious assistant. The scene ends as *Luc* and *Jeanette* sing, "La La La," a lively and clever, bilingual duet. She professes exaggerated but simultaneously shrewd obedience to *Luc* in French while he tries to translate into English, although frequently the effusive *Jeanette* allows him only a word or two before she picks up her song again. At first *Luc* takes on a masterful, self-important air. But eventually he admits in song that *Jeanette* knows exactly how to put him in his place, and as the couple leave the stage, it is clear that *Luc* wouldn't have things any other way.

Paris Gala – Encounter and Conflict

Lest there be any misconceptions, sexual tension crackled between *David* and *Barbara* just as on-stage chemistry flourished between Scott and Sohpinia. Even though *Barbara* is involved with the much older *Louis*, *David* has never quite put her out of his mind. The pair meet again at a crowded party given by *Luc* to introduce *Comfort* to the crème of Paris society. Of course *Comfort* herself finances the affair. As the party begins, *David* enters with his pals, *Mike* and *Comfort*. *Mike* introduces *Comfort* to the glamorous guests, who for the most part ignore her. But *David*, clearly in an irritated, sardonic mood, makes scornful remarks about each of the beautiful people in turn. As *Mike* and *Comfort* drift off toward the next introduction, *David* scans the room looking for *Barbara*. Not finding her, he moves through the glittering crowd, restless, agitated and frequently signaling the waiter for more champagne. Soon *Mollie* arrives, and *Luc* ushers her through the throng to introduce her to *Comfort*. On their way across the room they encounter *David*. *Luc* asks the editor if she remembers *David Jordan*. "Vividly!" *Mollie* replies. *David* makes her no answer but merely lifts his champagne flute up to eye level and cocks the lip toward *Mollie* in a kind of cynical salute. Then he continues on his way, searching for the only guest at the party who would interest him - *Barbara*.

When *Barbara* finally does arrive, *David's* sour mood vanishes at once. Suddenly, the partygoers go silent and still. The rest of the scene seems to fade into the background as *David* and *Barbara* first notice each other from across the room, then speak a soft but meaningful "Hello" to one another from opposite sides of the stage. "I'm happy to see you again. You look wonderful," *David* says, his gentle voice rich and deep with obvious pleasure. He tells her that *Luc* wasn't sure she would be coming to the party. But *Barbara* says, "Oh, I insisted on coming," as she takes the first eager steps toward *David*. Like a magnet drawn to its pole, *David* moves inevitably toward *Barbara* until they stand facing each other at center stage. "I've thought of you often since that day; the day I walked you home," he confesses with quiet warmth. *Barbara* replies that she has thought of him too and adds, "It was a lovely walk." His protective barriers fall away, and he speaks with wholehearted emotion for the first time that night. "The best walk two people ever took through Paris," he agrees with great pleasure. *David* then asks *Barbara* to have dinner with him, suggesting that *Luc* won't mind if they leave the party early. But she protests that she has come to the party with an escort. As if on cue, *de Pourtal* arrives at her side and reminds her that they have dinner reservations at Maxim's. Stuffing his hands in his pockets, *David* takes a step backward as if *Barbara's* rebuff and *de Pourtal's* appearance were a physical blow. *David* tries to be civil and endures the inevitable introduction to the older man like an ordeal but then drifts away as *Luc* and *Mollie* rush over to *Barbara*. The fact that *Barbara* and *Louis* are quite obviously a couple only causes *David* to become more irritated, more isolated and to consume more alcohol. Thankfully, *Luc* leads *de Pourtal* off on the pretext of checking out the stock of champagne. For at least a short while, *David* has *Barbara* to himself.

Without question, *David* intends to make optimal use of whatever time he does have with *Barbara*. With an assumed nonchalance that he clearly does not feel, he strolls back toward *Barbara* and tells her that he once flew a plane for *de Pourtal*. His voice deepens with implied meaning and a hint of reproach as he remembers that *de Pourtal* had "a marvelous girl" with him at that time called, "Anya." If *David's* intent was to disillusion *Barbara* with reports of *de Pourtal's* former lovers, he fails. *Barbara* merely replies that *Louis*, "has had lots of marvelous girls." So *David* turns away from her and responds, if a shade too quickly, "You bet," adding a little exhalation of distaste to the end of his remark. But now, trying to keep the bitterness out of his voice but simply not succeeding, he turns back to her and persists as if driven to do so, "And so you have the world. I thought it was something you wanted; I didn't know it was something you had." *Barbara* agrees that she does have the world, and *David* replies with a barbed edge to his seemingly enthusiastic approval, "Good for you." *Barbara* then asks *David* if he is sitting in moral judgment of her. Again that note of bitterness plus an added shade of self-reproach invades his voice as he laughs derisively, "Hah! No, not that. Never that." *Barbara* is clearly on the defensive now and insists that she has become the top model in Paris on her own merits, that she pays her own rent, and buys her own clothes. Standing some distance to

one side of her, *David* nods and accedes to each of her assertions, "You sure have." "I know." "I'm sure." But he creates a void between them by refusing to look at her. And so *Barbara*, with one word, challenges him to explain his implied criticism, "Well?" But he merely steps behind her and speaks into her ear in a deep, seductive baritone like a scrupulous conscience, "Ah, but all those lovely extras."

An awkward moment stretches out between the couple, but *David* changes direction, perhaps to get their conversation on more congenial ground. He asks *Barbara* how she got to Paris and learns that she won a dressmaking contest. "I'm very handy with a needle and thread," she declares with quiet pride. *Barbara* asks if that surprises him, and *David* hides neither his fondness nor his admiration for her in his reply. "Nothing about you would surprise me," he marvels, as if speaking his private thoughts aloud. *Barbara* continues to tell him that first prize in the contest was a round trip ticket to Paris. When *David* asks what she did with the return ticket, she promptly replies that she tore it up. Caught up in her enthusiasm, animated by her daring, *David* reaches out his arm toward *Barbara* and predicts, "The very first day." "The very first hour," *Barbara* corrects and says that she's always known Paris would be home someday. "How," *David* asks, his soft voice warmed by wonder and tenderness, "How would a little girl who grew up way uptown in New York know that Paris would have to be home someday?" She tells him that she has known ever since her father told her stories about the beautifully dressed women who rode his bus up and down Madison Avenue, and ever since he gave her a subscription to a fashion magazine for her sixteenth birthday. Sometime during the course of her story, *David* comes to understand his feelings for this remarkable young woman. For a moment, he just looks at her fondly as his chest rises and falls on a deep breath. Then, shaking his head in amazement, he confesses, "I've fallen in love with you." *Barbara* asks playfully if he loves her because her father drives the Madison Avenue bus. Initially, genuine affection softens *David's* laughter but then he speculates on the reason behind her little joke. "You don't want to hear that, do you?" he asks with more gravity. *Barbara* answers concisely, "No." But *David* protests, "I can't get you out of my mind," shaking his head again, astounded by how thoroughly she has captivated him. *Barbara* responds that she wishes he would try to do just that. "Why?" *David* challenges her earnestly as he moves quickly toward her, "Do I complicate your life?" But *Barbara* responds with only a trace of sadness that his loving her "...just wouldn't do any good."

Now it is *Barbara's* turn to shift the discussion to a different subject – one that puts *David* under scrutiny for a change. She asks him why he doesn't write any more; what stops him from finishing the novels he starts. He replies, "The fun of living," rubbing his hands together with relish and sounding a note of bravado that is somehow also tinged with pathos. *Barbara* asks if that fun makes up for not writing. "Yes," he declares emphatically, "I have a very good time!" sounding as pleased with himself as if he had just revealed the solution to some key existential riddle. *Barbara* implores *David* to make time for writing as well as for having fun. But he turns his back and

moves away from her, responding with cavalier finality, “*Nope, I don’t seem to have time for both.*” “*But you write so beautifully,*” *Barbara* objects. When *David* questions how *Barbara* could know about his writing, she reveals that she has read his novel. “*Why?*” he challenges softly, “*After you met me, you went out and bought my book? Why?*” he asks again, moving to stand close to her, “*Why do you care?*” She makes a weak protest that she would naturally care if someone has an ability to do something... But he cuts her off midway through her explanation. “*Someone? Or Me?*” he presses. However now *Barbara* is the one creating emotional distance by responding: “*Anyone.*”

And so, *David* turns from her and walks a few steps away. Cynicism and the slightest hint of dejection seep into his words as he warns that one book doesn’t make a writer. However, *Barbara* argues that she has read his short stories as well, “*And they’re good. Every one!*” *David* turns around to look at her for a moment and shakes his head in disbelief. He is amazed that she could even find his book of short stories. “*That’s been out of print...*” he begins, but *Barbara* interjects, “*I found it.*” And so, *David* advances on *Barbara*. Rapid fire like a prosecutor interrogating a reluctant witness, he questions, “*And so you want me to write again?; Because you feel I’ve more to say?; And more books to write?*” *Barbara* answers, “*Yes,*” to each question, every response more eager than the preceding one. To *David*, this proves that *Barbara* loves him, and he tries to make her admit that. “*Why? Why do you care?*” he repeats, with quiet urgency arising out of hope.

He walks several steps away from her, and his quiet tone turns hard, exasperated and slightly repulsed as he suddenly changes course and asks, “*And what are you doing with that lecherous old man?*” *David* turns back toward *Barbara*, extending one arm in tacit appeal, and asks, “*What is it he gives you that you can’t live without?*” He moves toward her – pursuing her with his person as well as his words – and reminds her that she claims to be proud of succeeding on her own. “*Why did you blow it?*” he asks, punctuating the last phrase by dropping his head and outstretched arms in a gesture of utter disillusionment.

But *David* isn’t finished with *Barbara*. He takes her by the shoulders, leaning forward insistently, and warns that she can’t hang a sign around her neck that says, “*I pay my own rent.*” *Barbara* tries to turn away from *David*, but he forcefully spins her around to face him, holding her at arms’ length. “*What do you need him for?*” he urges, “*Stop playing safe!*” *Barbara* heatedly replies that she wants to play safe, but *David* counters just as heatedly, “*Without love?*” He reminds her that she said she wanted “*loads of love,*” illustrating her words by lifting his hands from her shoulders and extending his arms wide. Without hesitation, he concludes, “*There’s no love,*” a note of stark finality in his voice. *Barbara* tries to make her weak protest sound defiant: “*You don’t know,*” she argues. But *David* insists, “*I know!*” accentuating the measured certainty of his intonation with a single affirmative nod of his head, “*You don’t love him.*” *Barbara*’s response is weaker still; “*It can wait,*” she says. *David*’s voice rises in disbelief, “*What? Love?*” he chides, taking a sudden, almost alarming step

forward and grasping her shoulders again. Abruptly, he pulls her into a rough, intimate embrace and holds her firmly to him. “*Stop backin’ away!*” he demands, his voice a low, husky growl, his impassioned face almost touching hers, his mouth practically snarling the harsh words into her mouth. *David* holds her relentlessly close to him and almost turns the snarl into a searing kiss - almost. But *Barbara* wrenches away angrily and shouts, “*Stop it! Stop telling me what to do!*” Instead of a kiss, she treats him to a blistering, blues-and-gospel-infused performance of “*You Don’t Tell Me!*” *Barbara* ends her song-turned-rebuke with an ultimatum for *David*, “*Go tell your brother. Go tell your sister! But don’t tell me!*” As soon as the song is finished, *Barbara* leaves the party.

Though disappointed, *David* refuses to admit defeat where his pursuit of *Barbara* is concerned and believes he can still prevail. *Mollie* has seen *Barbara* leave and determines what prompted her abrupt exit. Referring to *David*’s courtship of her young protégé, *Mollie* asks if he has been “*poaching*” and warns, “*You’re on the wrong game preserve.*” *David* replies with quiet assurance, “*I don’t think so.*” But as he walks past *Mollie* toward the wings, she advises him with regard to *Barbara*, “*Very high walls.*” Disdainful and cocky, his hands slipped casually into his pants pockets, he utters his slow pledge without a backward glance, “*I’ll get over them.*” *Mollie* voices her strong doubt that he can accomplish that feat. But *David* tosses a retort over his shoulder, turning only slightly toward the editor as he does so. “*Love conquers all,*” he answers quietly, half in disdain, half in truth, and ambles offstage. On the heels of *David*’s parting cliché’ and several others about ‘*Love*’ that they each call to mind, *Mollie* and *Comfort* sing the lilting, comical duet, “*Love Makes the World Go [Square].*”

Barbara’s Flat – Denial and Acceptance

As the next scene opens *David* enters *Barbara*’s flat. He plans to convince her to come away with him, but perversely feigns an almost defiant air, sauntering in with his jacket hooked on a finger and slung over one shoulder, a cigarette held in the other hand. *Barbara* is a good deal less than delighted to see him. With no preliminaries, he tells *Barbara* that *de Pourtal*’s driver, a known spy for his boss, is outside “*watching.*” Somehow *David* manages to invest that word with enough distaste to convert the driver’s occupation into an indecent act. Then with casual audacity, *David* adds that he borrowed a match from the man. *Barbara* replies by asking *David* if he meant to be clever, but he answers offhandedly, “*Nah, it just happened that way.*” Thinking aloud, *David* ponders whether to leave right away and limit the damage his presence would imply, or to stay for a while and take the chance of destroying *Barbara*’s carefully constructed world. *Barbara* maintains that her world doesn’t destroy that easily, but *David* is unconvinced. “*Oh, I don’t know,*” he disagrees, “*Any used to tell me that Louis cracked quite a whip.*” *David*’s hard, staccato inflection on the last four words gives an ominous sound to the domination those words represent. *Barbara* makes no response except to snap back irritably and not for the first time, “*What do you want?*”



David says nothing for several slow seconds. But then he tells Barbara about a friend's small house at Honfleur on the Normandy coast, "the most beautiful place in France," and adds, "I can have it for as long as I want." Barbara makes a brittle, sneering comment as she turns her back on him, "And that would be fun. Great fun!" David absorbs her stinging rebuff in silence for a moment but nonetheless urges with quiet but heartfelt intensity, "Will you come?" Barbara answers, "I won't destroy my world. No!" But David tries to convince her that they are already involved, that they "can't stop." "We're on rails," he argues, his voice deep and raspy with suppressed emotion. Clearly provoked and shaken, Barbara twice orders David to leave. "Barbara!" he calls with desperation sharpening his voice. Then he responds urgently but very softly, "I've no place to go. I'm home." Until this point, David's brash confidence has carried him, his nonchalant, drop-shouldered slouch and unconcerned stroll about the room exuding cool unconcern. But when he utters these quiet words, he faces Barbara directly, total honesty visible in every line of his body. His bearing straightens yet somehow softens and opens to her. His mask seems to have fallen away, leaving him exposed and vulnerable, his breath nearly suspended as he waits for her response. I don't know what magic Scott employed to make this subtle change so clear and compelling from the stage, but the moment stole my breath as well.

Once again, Barbara orders David to go away, adding that she wants no part of his life. "It's a terrible life!" she cries. Stung, yet unwilling to accept her assault on the lifestyle he has crafted as a blind to hide behind, he argues, "I think it's pretty good," his voice rising defensively at the end of the phrase. At that, Barbara turns sharply and advances on him, heaping

scorn on the titles he uses to prop up his ego and to ignore the fact that his life has no direction: "fair-haired boy of Europe; non-writing writer; everyone's friend." She condemns him for cultivating acquaintances who will always offer him a house, and for always having a girl to take there. "Not me!" she protests. David seems as perplexed as he is hurt and angry as he asks, "What are you slanging me for?" Barbara goes on that David doesn't need her help to destroy himself. "You're doing a good job on your own," she shouts. Breaking in on her reprimand, David speaks right over her words. "No one's destroyed," he insists, his voice certain and powerful. But Barbara interrupts him in turn, although she is much less angry than sorrowful. "Yes, you," she counters, "And me too, if we're ever together." David's passion returns as he vows softly, "We're already there, Barbara," his supple intonation caressing her name.

One last time Barbara tells him to go away. She turns her back and puts distance between them, but David follows close behind her, making an urgent appeal. "What do you want? On your own terms, say it!" he demands more fiercely, "What do you want me to do?" Very subtly he straightens his bearing, like an accused man awaiting a verdict, as Barbara whirls around to face him. Her voice breaking in frustration, she cries out, "Live some kind of life! I hate waste!" David bows his head toward her in an urgent gesture of consent and implores, "Say it! What?" Barbara takes a sudden step closer to David and grabs his shoulders as if to shake some sense into him. "Stop coasting! Stop running! Stop hiding!" she shouts. David's only response is to pledge with hypnotic intensity, "With you." Then with more heat and passion, he repeats, "Whatever you want **with you!**" Slowing and accentuating those last two words, he tenderly takes hold of Barbara's shoulders in return. Then, he inclines his head toward her and tries to capture her lowered eyes with his own. Quietly but compellingly, his soft voice entices her, "From the very first day. From the day I walked you home." Finally Barbara concedes that she never meant to fall in love. David slides his hands down her upper arms in a slow caress and rests them just below the bend of her elbow. Taking in a slow breath, he gently replies, "Nobody ever really wants to fall in love. It isn't something you set out to do." Then he continues, "But **nobody** wants to be alone," his voice highlighting the pronoun and investing it with the emptiness of isolation.

David tenderly begins to sing the introduction to the haunting ballad "Nobody Told Me." He remains standing face to face with Barbara, holding her arms as she clings to his shoulders. But toward the end of the introduction, he releases her arms only to enclose both of her hands in both of his. As David begins the refrain, Barbara remains unmoving and, he believes, unmoved. And so he turns away from her and walks slowly toward the opposite side of the stage, disheartened and lost in sadness. He continues the song, his mellow, expressive baritone and subtle, natural vibrato making the lyrics soar. David's poignant song draws Barbara to his side but she moves so quietly that he is not aware of her arrival. Only when he feels her hand slide softly into his does he know she is beside him and enfold her hand within his own. They finish this evocative melody together, their voices blending in sweet,

exquisite union, and the Act closes as *David* and *Barbara* embrace each other and their love.

Introduction:

*Night is a lonely time
With no one to sing to
Night is the only time
When you badly need someone to cling to.
Cling to me, my dear.
Sing to me- all I need made clear.*

Refrain:

*Nobody told me
Love was made of lightning.
Nobody warned me
Love would make me quake.*

*No one suggested
I would not be rested
If night after night
I lay awake, alone.*

*Should they have warned me
Love was made of Hunger,
Crimson surrounded by blue ...*

*Should they have told me
Love would come to own me
Healing and wounding me, too.*

*Nobody told me,
No not even you.
Nobody told me – I knew.*

(Richard Rodgers; *Nobody Told Me*; ©1962; Williamson Publishing)

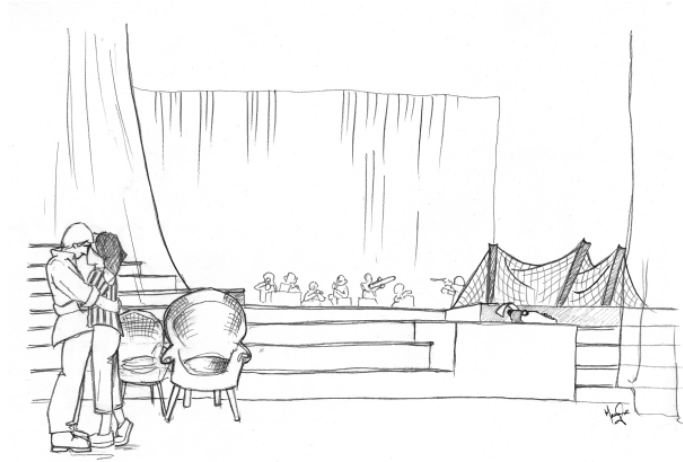
Act II Honfleur – The Lovers' Idyll

The lights come up to reveal *David* reclining on one elbow on the stage in front of a wicker chair, his long legs stretched out before him. His eyes are closed, and he seems either asleep or immersed in a daydream. He wears comfortable jeans, a soft plaid shirt and well-worn boots. From off stage, *Barbara* calls to him several times but *David* does not stir. When *Barbara* comes onstage and discovers *David* lying down, she scolds him lightly for not answering. But he assures her, “*I was guiding you, silently. Like talking down a plane flying blind in a fog.*” He does not change his recumbent position, and wisps of reverie still cling to his voice. *Barbara* teasingly objects that she might have crashed and skinned her knee. But *David* dispels that image. “*No,*” he comforts her, elongating the word to make a soothing sound. “*I had you tight and safe. In here,*” he says, tapping the center of his forehead with the tip of his middle finger. *Barbara* too is dressed in casual vacation clothes: white cotton Capris, a loose fitting, turquoise and white striped overblouse and a small triangular kerchief on her head. It’s clear that she and *David* are living together in Honfleur and are very much in love. During this scene, *David* and *Barbara* look at each other with that unique affection that conveys how each lover’s vision is completed by the other’s image. They always seem to be touching or embracing one

another with tender regard and revealing how *at home* they feel in one another’s arms. Clearly for *Barbara*, *David* represents the center of her universe. But she strongly objects when he admits to a similar preoccupation with her. “*My head is full of you,*” *David* tells her, the intensity of his feelings making his intonation rise on the last word. “*But that’s wrong!*” *Barbara* cries, “*It’s supposed to be full of beautiful words and declarative sentences.*” She reminds *David* that he’s writing and urges him, “*Drive me out.*” But *David* complains, “*I can’t,*” his voice sounding a faint note of distress that nearly turns the protest into a plaintive cry. In that short protest, *David* reveals that even in the midst of this idyll he has walled off a wounded part of his soul that he will not or cannot share, not even with *Barbara*. Again, Scott suggested this vague constraint in his character’s behavior by some exquisite subtlety that I could not name but certainly understood. As *David* abandons his lounging position and takes a seat in the wicker chair, *Barbara* begs him to tell her that she does not distract him from his writing. She maintains that she is supposed to be *good* for him and then describes to what lengths she goes to facilitate his writing. “*I don’t make a sound when you’re writing. And I hide so you won’t see me,*” she says earnestly as she stands in front of his chair. Like a child who believes that words have the power to make wishes come true, *Barbara* demands that *David* tell her she is good for him. He pulls her down to sit in his lap and pledges slowly and solemnly, “*You are the very best for me,*” wanting to believe that what he says is true as much as to convince her of it. And yet that vague hesitation somehow invades even this lover’s pledge. Once more, *Barbara* wants *David* to admit that she helps him with his work. As proof she offers the way she makes him coffee. “*A writer has to have coffee,*” she declares with sparkling certainty. He uses the exaggerated tone of approval one would use to encourage a small child as he reassures her, “*Oh, such a big help, such marvelous coffee!*”

Suddenly *David* exclaims, “*Ow!*” *Barbara* asks him what is wrong, and he says with amusement and just a little indignation in his voice, “*You’re getting awfully bony.*” *Barbara* laughs and tells him that what he feels in her pockets are rocks – beautiful stones that she found on the beach. Animated and glowing, she lays the stones on the ground for *David* to see. As she excitedly describes their special qualities, she tells him to really look at each marvelous detail: “*That streak of pink in the gray... And this one, so smooth and lovely. Just to touch, just to feel!*” At first he indulges her and kneels down beside her to look at her stones. But subtly, gradually he turns his gaze upon her, drinking in her enthusiasm and ingenuous wonder as she takes up each stone and places it on the ground before him. Plainly any wonder that *David* feels comes from looking at *Barbara*, from seeing things through her fresh eyes and spontaneous joy. She directs him to feel the smooth texture of a rock – to take it in his hands. “*Mmmm,*” he murmurs, the rumble deep in his chest, “*...Nice,*” he adds, pressing the stone between his flat palms. “*I held it all the way down the beach,*” *Barbara* says, her happiness lighting her features. But then *David* gives the stone back to her. He tells her to keep it and not to lose it. “*Carry it with you wherever you go,*” he advises, as he returns to his chair, “*So that when life is drab, you’ll have something to*

touch... and to hold." David knows only too well what Barbara has not yet experienced: how quickly the summit of one's life can descend to the nadir. She loves his idea of keeping a "touchstone," but tells him she doesn't need one. "You are my touchstone," Barbara says gladly, "I measure the world by you, now." She declares that the day is only good or bad depending on how David feels. She exhorts the sound of the sea not to bother her David if he is trying to write. David sprawls lazily in the chair, his legs stretched long and crossed at the ankles, his spine slanted low in the seat, his head resting against the back of the chair. He lifts one arm and waves a listless hand toward the sky. "Darling, turn off the moon. It shines in my eyes," he orders with an imperial air as he turns his head away from the offending light.



The music comes up softly, and David sings the introduction to the delicate and beautiful, "Look No Further." Scott's and Sophina's singing voices complement each other flawlessly here, their intonation rich and full, warmed by sweetness and transparent love. The lovers sing to each other almost literally wrapped in each other's arms. At first they face each other, separated by only an arm's length but still holding one another as they sing – sometimes blending their voices together, sometimes taking short solos in tandem. Then Barbara moves around to David's back and embraces him from behind. He leans back very slightly against her body and rests the back of his head against her cheek. With Barbara's arm still encircling his chest and shoulders from behind, David sings, "I can see you right there." The last two notes are measured and accented, coming after a rest on the first beat of that bar. David punctuates them by tapping twice with his fingers on Barbara's forearm in perfect rhythm with the notes he sings. It's a lovely little gesture that signals how content David feels in Barbara's physical presence and how much he wants to keep her close – "right there." As they begin the last chorus, the lovers turn to face each other for a short time. Then David moves beside Barbara and a little behind her. He wraps her in his arms, tucking the side of her shoulder into his broad chest and laying his cheek against the top of her head. As Barbara sings, "Making me all complete," David drops a soft kiss on her shoulder. He only lifts his head in time to sing the rhyming line to her verse, "Sweet," as if reflecting on the taste of her skin or the young woman herself. Then Barbara and David

sing the last verse of the song together. When they have finished, he kisses her mouth lightly, and as the last notes of the music fade, they end in a tender embrace.

*Look no further,
Be still.
Don't move an inch away.
Stay.
Stay with one who loves you.
Look no further, dear.*

*No more searching,
That's through.
This is the journey's end,
Friend.
Friend has turned to lover.
Look no further, dear.*

*Why must you wander?
Heaven isn't far.
Rest where you are.
I'm the nearest star.*

*I can see you,
Right there,
Making me all complete,
Sweet.
Sweet it is to hold you.
Look no further, dear,
Look no further, dear*

(Richard Rodgers; *Look No Further*; ©1962; Williamson Publishing)

Sadly, the sense of contentment and completion David and Barbara feel in each other's arms will not prove to be permanent. In fact, small moments of tension – little tussles over priorities – crop up periodically throughout this scene. Barbara wants David to get back to writing; he tries to find excuses to avoid it. When their duet is over, Barbara suggests that the couple go back to their house. "Mmmm, soon," David, murmurs dreamily. He evidently assumes that Barbara shares his amorous inclinations because he wraps her more tightly in his arms and rocks her gently from side to side. But Barbara is really suggesting that he get back to another session of serious writing. "David," she calls, receiving only another half-hearted, "Mmmm," in response. "You've got work," she insists. David repeats his one word reply but this time with more energy and an upraised pitch. He makes the, "Mmmm," sound as if he agrees emphatically with Barbara's agenda – as if he is responding, "absolutely," instead of murmuring a vague avoidance. However, despite his agreeable tone, David has no real intention of getting back to work, for he never frees Barbara from his embrace or stops rocking her from side to side. However, if Barbara is looking for a way to distract David from lovemaking, something soon comes to her rescue. Still wrapped tightly in David's arms, she points out to sea with one hand and taps him repeatedly on the back with the other that lies across his shoulders. "Look at the beautiful sailboat," she says excitedly. David loosens his bear hug a bit but still holds her in a loose embrace. Instead of looking out on the quay, he lets his eyes linger on Barbara for a minute until she asks what kind of boat it is. "A ketch," David responds

easily, at last peering out at the water. She asks him how he can tell the boat is a ketch, and he replies, "*The mizzen's before the wheel.*" The more *David* explains nautical terms to *Barbara* the more delighted she seems to become. She even makes a little jingle out of his answer, singing, "*The mizzen's before the wheel, tra-la, the mizzen's before the wheel.*" Of course she next wants to know what *mizzen* means. "*The smaller sail, aft,*" *David* replies. But *Barbara* quickly spots another boat farther out on the quay. Leaving *David's* arms, she moves farther down stage and asks, "*What's that silly little boat with the silly little sail,*" as she points toward the horizon. He tells her that it's a fishing boat. "*But that little pocket handkerchief of a sail can't do any good,*" she protests. "*No,*" *David* corrects her amiably, "*The boat's got an engine. The spanker's just to hold it steady in the wind.*" She asks if the little sail is called a *spanker*. "*Yep,*" he replies. Once more delighted with his command of things nautical, *Barbara* enthuses, "*Oh you know so much.*" "*Yep,*" *David* agrees with a healthy measure of self-mockery as he takes her lightly into his arms again, "*A fund of knowledge.*" *Barbara* matches his teasing tone and asks, "*It's because you're a stern and rock-bound coast-of-Maine man, that's why, isn't it?*" *David* answers in the affirmative, "*Aeyup!*" giving her a little bit of Maine localism. *Barbara* says she wants to know more about how stern and rock-bound *David* is. But he replies, "*I'm only stern.*" Pulling her a little closer and peering over her shoulder at her pockets, he continues in an ironic, innuendo-laden tone, "*You're the one that's rock-bound.*"

Returning to her preferred topic, *Barbara* asks if the lobster boats on the coast of Maine wear spankers. "*Some do, some don't,*" he says. She moves out of *David's* arms again and declares that if she were a lobsterman, she'd have all her boats wear spankers. "*Run up by Dior, of course,*" *David* teases her. As if it were a self-evident fact, she repeats, "*Of course.*" Moving further upstage, *Barbara* strikes several glamorous poses as she adds, "*And Balenciaga and Givenchy. I'd have them all make me spankers in the most beautiful colors.*" She asks *David* if they would like that in Maine. "*They would adore it,*" he replies with genuine feeling, shaking his head once for emphasis. But the warm admiration in *David's* eyes as he watches *Barbara* act out her little frolic reveals that he is really speaking of the way he feels about her. "*What would they say?*" she wants to know next, "*When they saw my beautiful spankers?*" Here she reaches back and flips up the tails of her oversized shirt to accentuate the word, "*spankers.*" *David* cannot help but catch *Barbara's* light-hearted mood, for she is like a tonic to him. Tongue-in-cheek, he treats her to some local idioms, spoken in a true Maine dialect. "*Well... they might say... 'Crotch ahmighty! That girl's... raght up on huh bean-wahhtah, ain't she?'*" highlighting and drawing out the word, '*girl.*' *Barbara* can hardly believe her ears and needs some translation help from *David* before she understands what the phrase means. "*Oh... sort of frisky,*" he explains. *Barbara* is enchanted. She assumes another elegant pose and begins to pace slowly as she repeats in a sultry voice, "*I'm right up on my bean-water today.*" *David's* happy, doting laugh spills over onto his words as he agrees, "*You sure are.*" At this point, she asks him to recall the name of the tree that grows in Maine, "*that wonderful name*" that she so loves. *David* replies

quickly, "*Hackmatack..*" Delighted again, *Barbara* repeats the name and states with great drama that she pictures Maine covered with "*hackmatack trees.*" In the same drawn-out, provincial cadence he affected before, *David* corrects her, "*Nope! Pine and spruce, birch and cedah, mostleh.*" The inflection and rhythm of his voice when he mimics an old *Downeaster's* way of speaking is spot on the money. Scott certainly puts his musician's ear to good use when it comes to mimicking regional accents.

Stirred by the joy *Barbara* obviously draws from their conversation, *David* asks her why she loves it so when he speaks about Maine. In fact, she loves to hear *David* talk of all things connected with the coast of Maine because it is so much a part of *him*, because these things say "*home*" to him. Then she adds, almost as an afterthought, that she supposes she's a little jealous. The pair are now seated on the bottom step of one of the staircases onstage. *David* turns to *Barbara* and asks kindly, "*No home for you to remember but Paris?*" She denies his assumption and says it isn't true "*...completely,*" adding that she has nice memories of home - "*some.*" She reveals much by her qualifying words, spoken with a touch of sadness, and more by what she leaves out than by what she actually says. *David* looks at her carefully and waits for her to confide what caused the sadness, but she returns to their earlier subject. "*But no hackmatack trees,*" she says more brightly. "*They probably grow in Central Park,*" he protests in mock dismay. *Barbara* admits that they did have geraniums on the fire escapes, and *David* replies that she's now made him jealous. "*Didn't you have geraniums?*" she sympathizes. "*We didn't have fire escapes,*" he answers with just a hint of feigned petulance in his tone. *Barbara* consoles poor, "*underprivileged*" *David* because he had neither sidewalks nor fire escapes at home in Maine. "*Only sea and sky and trees and rocks and boats... How could you bear it?*" she asks. "*I don't rightly know. But I did,*" replies *David* bravely.

At this point, *David* puts the description of his home into song in the charming, "*Maine,*" a sweet, easygoing little song-and-dance interlude for the two lovers. He sings of "*frozen lakes and hills, a sleigh and team, temperatures of twenty below, breath blowing out like steam and an old train whistle across the bay.*" After *David* sings, "*Maine is the main thing,*" he has a two-beat rest while the orchestra plays two identical, heavily accented notes. In time with those notes, *David* kicks his heel out twice from a leg held up and bent at the knee. As he kicks, he also pumps his fists downward twice from bent arms in rhythm with his heel kicks. This sequence, repeated several times throughout the song, gives the whole performance a spontaneous, rustic feel. When *David* sings about the sleigh and team, he glides diagonally downstage in a loose, smooth, leisurely strut as if he moved on runners. He comes to a stop, raises arms bent at the elbow and sweeps them from side to side in a wide arc, illustrating the words he sings, "*Make believe all of it's yours.*" At the beginning of the next phrase, he turns on one leg to face the back and does a little one-footed jig, moving diagonally upstage toward *Barbara*: he steps forward with his front foot, then moves his back foot up to take its place with a little jump and thrusts his front leg in the air, knee cocked and foot angled outward. His movements,

sturdy, rustic, and quaint, make it seem as if he is dancing a country hoe-down. Not to be outdone, *Barbara* puts different words to the music and depicts *her* home in Harlem, “east of the Hudson.” She describes “kids going out when the sun goes down, sidewalk symphonies, music floating up from the flat downstairs and a trumpet blowing softly.” During her part of this number, *Barbara’s* voice and gestures have more of a jazz edge to them. When she sings, “up north of Central Park,” she fills her two beat rest with two hip or two shoulder isolations in time to those same two accented orchestra notes that occasioned *David’s* heel kicks. She rhythmically twirls an upraised finger in the air to highlight the lyrics that tell of the record playing in the flat below. In all, she gives her performance more of an urban feel in opposition to *David’s* country turn.

Toward the end of the number, *Barbara* and *David* sing their opposing verses at the same time and dance a few steps together. They then form a two-car train with their backs to each other and posteriors in constant contact. They move across the stage like railroad cars coupled together, each tugging a wicker chair along for the ride - he pulling, she pushing. As *David* repeats the musical phrase, “Mainly I do like--” and *Barbara* repeats “Up north of central--“ both of them raising the pitch of the phrase with every repetition, they break apart and walk backwards, each pushing their respective chairs behind them to opposite sides of the stage, then thrusting them away toward the wings. Finally *David* comes to center stage, opens his arms wide and sings the last word of his phrase, “Maine,” on a high note of tremendous volume and power. As he sustains the note, *Barbara* comes up behind him, hooks each of his outstretched arms in the crook of each of her elbows and pins them behind his back, abruptly cutting off his voice as she does so. Then she slips in the last words of her phrase, “Central Park,” gives *David* a quick kiss on the side of his neck, and their duet - what may be my favorite number in the show - ends.

David

Let the snow come down
Before the sun comes up
Maine is the main thing.

Let the lake and hills
Become a frozen cup.
Twenty below in Maine.

Get the sleigh, turn about,
That’s a nice team.
Make believe all of it’s yours.

Take a breath, blow it out,
No, it ain’t steam.
It’ll be warmer indoors.

Let the snow come down
Before it starts to rain.
Under the covers – it’s cozy.

Far away, cross the bay
Goes an old train:
Woo-hoo, woo-hoo. (sound of train)

Mainly I do like Maine.

Barbara

When the sun goes down
The kids are up and out,
East of the Hudson,
There’s a sidewalk symphony
Of song and shout
Up north of Central Park.
When it’s late, climb the stairs,
Ready for bed.
Close yaureyes, start to count sheep.

Music comes floating up
Into your head.
What’s the use trying to sleep?

There’s a record playing
In the flat below.
Down there a trumpet blows softly.

What a warm place it is
After it’s dark.
Wah-hoo, wah-hoo (sound of trumpet)

Up north of Central Park.

(Richard Rodgers; *Maine*; ©1962; Williamson Publishing)

Honfleur – Fight and Flight

When “Maine” ends, *Barbara* hugs *David’s* broad shoulders as she stands behind him, and he holds onto her forearms with both of his hands. While she tightens her arms around him, he leans forward slightly, supporting her weight on his back, and lifts her a little ways off the ground. They appear to be a perfect young couple on a carefree holiday. Without prelude, *David* suggests that they do something exciting with their afternoon. It’s obvious from the yearning in his voice that he craves distraction. *Barbara* agrees and says she knows just the thing for them to do. “What?” *David* asks. *Barbara* begins seductively, “We’ll go home...” He quickly turns around to face her and takes her in his arms, moving his face close to hers and capturing her eyes with his own. “Mmmm, hmmm,” he agrees with obvious relish, excited to learn what amusements she might suggest. But *Barbara* dashes his hopes, “...and you’ll write!” she concludes with great fanfare and exhilaration. The transformation in *David* is immediate and striking. “No, I don’t feel like that,” he says with a touch of distaste, the words rushing out all at once: “Let’s go sailing.” He drops his arms from around her waist and backs away from her quickly as if she were something dangerous, retreating more and more until he reaches far stage right. His hurried movements and the expression of alarm in his voice would lead anyone to believe that *David* is afraid of *Barbara* – or more correctly afraid of the writing she expects him to do. With a little reproach in her voice, she tells him that he’s got to work. “Aw it’s the weekend,” he objects, sounding like a schoolboy trying to avoid homework. *Barbara* inquires, “What difference does that make?” In response, *David’s* voice and manner evoke a forced gaiety that doesn’t quite mask the anxiety beneath it, as he adds, “And Easter weekend at that!” With the same brittle exuberance in his voice, he emphasizes or more precisely pleads, “Nobody works Easter weekend.” *Barbara* promptly responds that *he* does or at least should

work - Easter weekend or no. But *David* walks quickly toward her and stretches out an arm to point off to stage left. "Look," he says, his firm tone signaling a determined change of subject, "What about Deauville?" He invests the town's name with an exotic, alluring air and all the wanderlust that arises from his blocked creativity. However, *Barbara* clearly doesn't take the bait and answers in a flat, indifferent tone, "What about it?" *David* moves up behind *Barbara*, grasps her waist and propels her rapidly downstage and to the left, where Deauville lies. His face close to hers as they move, he speaks eagerly into her ear like a seductive thought, saying the town is, "right there, around the corner, less than ten miles down the coast...This is the weekend for Deauville," excitedly adding, "Everyone's there." *Barbara* promptly replies, "I like it here," her tone quiet but definite.

So *David* turns her around to face him and takes both of her hands in his. "Now *Baba*," he cajoles, drawing out the last syllable of her nickname affectionately. Emphasizing his words with insistent gestures of his head, torso and hands that still hold firmly onto hers, he argues that Easter weekend features the best house party of the year in Deauville. "Let's have some fun, just for the night," *David* coaxes, promising that they'll only go for dinner, the gala and dancing, a little gambling, greeting "everyone we know" and then they can return home. "What's wrong with that?" he wheedles, betraying his actual intentions by laying out at least a weekend's worth of activities for them to achieve. *David's* craving for escape into the narcotizing Euro party circuit adds a hint of urgency to his plea. But *Barbara* replies with a simple, unemotional and unyielding, "No," as she withdraws her hands from *David's* and walks away toward the other side of the stage. Suddenly finding himself with nothing to hold onto, *David* drops his hands and lets them hang uselessly from his shoulders. "No..." he repeats uncertainly, then with more astonishment and a hint of indignation, "No?" Not the least bit concerned by his show of displeasure, *Barbara* breezily remarks over her shoulder that she has already said no to Deauville. *David* turns around to stare at her, his dumbfounded expression and frustrated bearing unchanged from the moment before, and asks, "When?" As if it were of no consequence, *Barbara* tells him that *Mollie* asked her to join a group of models in Deauville for a fashion shoot on the weekend. He takes a couple of steps toward her, inclining his body forward slightly as if trying hard to understand. "When did she ask you?" he inquires. *Barbara* breezily replies, "Oh a couple of weeks ago," while *David* pauses for a second and tries to absorb the meaning behind this disclosure. His tone and manner reveal more a sense of betrayal than anger when he asks, "Why didn't you tell me?" But *Barbara* replies, "I didn't see any point," as she busies herself arranging a few small props on a low step that serves as a table. Meanwhile *David* mounts the stairway toward several pilings and heavy burlap strips that stretch across an upper landing to represent a dock. He pulls the pilings out of place and gathers them together, sounding really irritated for the first time when he asks sharply, "Well... what did you say?" *Barbara* answers, "I said I was awfully sorry, I'm not modeling these days because we're writing a novel." *David* has just deposited his armload

of props behind a curtain and is walking back onstage when he stops in his tracks and turns a conspicuously hard look on *Barbara*. He seems a little stunned by what *Barbara* has just said - even more so by the motive behind her words. "We have another saying in Maine," *David* remarks, descending the steps and walking toward her: "It isn't said often." He places himself directly in front of *Barbara*, and the three feet of space between them speaks of the widening gulf that is beginning to separate the couple over his writing. Like quoting a familiar proverb, he continues, "I don't have to look no higher'n your head for my savior," his voice heavy with implication and irony as he looks steadily into her eyes. *Barbara* makes no reply; she simply returns *David's* gaze. But then he makes a little sideways movement with his head and softens his stare with a twist of mockery at the expense of them both. Quickly, she puts her arms around his neck and kisses his cheek as he stands upright and unresponsive. *Barbara* walks off to the opposite side of the stage, saying, "I'll go make you some coffee," and leaves *David* alone with his implacable typewriter.

A bassoon and an oboe begin a slow, poignant duet of "Look No Further" as *David* stares at *Barbara's* disappearing figure, then takes several steps in that direction. But, as if thinking better of the impulse to go after her, *David* turns and paces uneasily in the opposite direction. He lets out an audible, frustrated sigh, then flops down on the bottom step of a staircase at stage left where his typewriter waits. He begins typing, the amplified sound of his key strokes hesitant at first, but gradually faster and more confident.



Suddenly the full orchestra begins playing, "Be My Host," and the disembodied voices of *Mike* and *Comfort* float over the stage. They laugh and call *David's* name. Their laughter sounds sly, enticing, insidious, as *Comfort* tempts *David* to "go where the action is." *David* hesitates, then stops typing altogether. But, like the voice of conscience, the woodwind instruments return to the evocative, "Look No Further." *David* leans far over the upstage edge of the stairs and looks off into the wings to stage right. Is he looking for the source of his friends' voices or is he afraid that *Barbara* may somehow be aware of their seductive effect on him? He distractedly brushes one hand over his mouth and jaw, as if trying to wipe away the effect of those voices on his willpower, then settles down to his typewriter again.

But now the orchestra switches to "Host" once more, playing louder and with more insistence, while the sound of *Mike's* and *Comfort's* debauched laughter jars raucously with the music. *David* tries to resist, pausing several times to summon his powers of concentration before starting to write again. But the cacophony haunts him, and he eventually types the same key over and over and over, unable to think. Finally he pushes himself forcibly up from his work, walks to the front, left corner of the stage and stares in the direction of Deauville. The

allure of sparkling gaiety consumes him, and he is powerless to fight against it. In the grip of his pernicious fear of no longer being able to write, he craves diversion mightily and not even *Barbara's* love can sustain him indefinitely.

After a moment, *Barbara* returns to the stage, carrying *David's* crucial cup of coffee, and calls out, "How's it going?" *David* literally jumps in alarm and dashes back to the typewriter like someone caught in an illicit act. "Fine," he replies curtly as he sits down and places his hands on the keys. *Barbara* asks him if she can do anything, perhaps "sharpen some pencils." *David* replies, "No," to each of her questions, his tone growing more harsh and more irritable with every reply. Finally she gathers that her presence is unwanted. She carefully places the coffee next to his typewriter and says gently, "Oh, I'm bothering you." This time *David's* booming, "No," resounds with frustration, finality, and an unexpected hint of remorse. He is angry at her for holding him to the task of writing, but more so at himself for desperately wanting to escape the bonds of her expectations. Truly alarmed, *Barbara* turns a searching look on him and asks, "David, what is it?" As she stands beside him and looks at him with concern, he grabs the coffee cup from the step that serves as his desk and swivels away from the typewriter. "Nothing," he mutters, his voice no less testy but now also brooding and barely audible. He is sitting at a right angle to the typewriter and turned partially away from *Barbara*, his elbows resting on his thighs, the coffee cup held in both hands and suspended between his knees, his head lowered to avoid her eyes. *Barbara* consciously takes on an upbeat attitude. She tells him that she knows he is stuck but that he must not get angry. "It happens to everyone. You're just having a bad day," she reassures him, "I'm sure that tomorrow..." *David* has been staring at the cup in his hands and shifting in his seat, edgy and uncomfortable, while *Barbara* tries to buoy his spirits. But abruptly he turns his lowered head towards her and cuts off her words with a challenge, "What tomorrow?" After an uncomfortable moment in which she can make no response, he lifts his head, straightens his torso and looks directly into her eyes. The frank vulnerability of his features both confronts her optimism and confesses how hopelessly he is blocked.

She sits down beside him now and tries to create an even brighter and more cheerful mood for him as she recalls stories that he could write about – stories he has told her about his father and a skunk that fell in the quarry, about his uncles sailing their boats around the islands in Jericho Bay. But he turns his face away from her and begins to squirm in his seat again, looking over his shoulder, down at the cup in his hands, at the ceiling, anywhere but at her earnest, cheerful efforts to help him. While still avoiding her eyes, he finally interrupts her and says in a subdued, hollow voice, "I'm not writing about Maine." *Barbara* declares with certainty, "But you are!" *David* inclines his head in her direction but doesn't meet her eyes. "I said I'm not," he insists with a bit more heat, "I threw it away the first week." With that statement, his voice deepens and fades out as depression swallows his words. At this point, their dialogue turns rapid and snappish as they engage in the tit-for-tat of a growing row. "Why?" *Barbara*

demands, not quite believing her ears. "It wasn't any good," *David* answers bluntly, disdainfully, underscoring the word "good" with a rising tone of harsh irony. "That's not true!" *Barbara* counters passionately. *David* looks intently at *Barbara* and responds with annoyance and a condescending barb, "What do you know?" But she refuses to let him discredit what she knows is great subject material. "But all those wonderful stories..." she begins. *David* immediately breaks in on her words. "It wasn't any good," he repeats stubbornly, his tone cruel and contentious. "When I went to write it, it wasn't any good," he says again, dismissing his efforts with a backhanded sweep of one hand, then dropping his head in defeat. This time, *Barbara* only gets as far as, "But David," before he interrupts her with a really angry outburst. "Will you stop pushing at me?!" he cries fiercely, sounding trapped as well as angry, as he slams his coffee cup down and heaves himself to his feet. He turns his back to *Barbara* and her support, obstinately facing in the direction of *Deauville*. "What the hell do you know? I couldn't write it," he barks, then tosses another, much more tormented denial over his shoulder without ever looking at her, "I couldn't!"

Barbara can only stare at *David's* back. His inner self seems as remote from her now as if he really stood ten miles down the coast at *Deauville* instead of a few feet away. "But you've been writing," she states quietly, putting her hopes into words. "Yes - I have," he replies without turning around in a tone that lacks any inflection or vitality. So *Barbara* asks him just what he has been writing. *David* turns his head quickly over his shoulder but avoids *Barbara's* eyes and shifts uneasily from one leg to the other before declaring, "I've started another novel." He tries to give his announcement a flourish of enthusiasm that he clearly does not feel, but fails miserably. "About what?" *Barbara* wants to know, as *David* begins to pace toward the opposite side of the stage. "Oh... you know..." he says turning only partially toward her and taking a few backward steps, "People... my pals..." The tenor of *David's* answer sounds hesitant, even furtive, and this time it is *Barbara* who chooses to remain sitting with her back turned toward him. "Doing what?" she demands with great skepticism, appalled that he would choose to write about such a vacuous subject instead of telling the wealth of authentic stories he knows about Maine. Meanwhile *David* has paced restlessly to far stage right and is facing away from *Barbara* once more. Before he answers her question, he opens his arms out to the sides, the palms of his hands facing upward, and makes an elaborate shrug. Then he replies vaguely, "Oh...you know..." *David* now turns halfway back toward *Barbara* while still managing not to look fully at her and adds with studied nonchalance, "Just knockin' around Europe - the things I know." He continues as if quoting a primer on creative writing. "You're supposed to write about... 'the things ya know,'" he says, framing these last words with a weighty pause and a mocking tone of voice, at the same time that he frames them with his hands bracketed in front of him to simulate a camera lens or a marquee. *Barbara* finally turns around to scrutinize *David* and demands, "What's there to know?" She springs to her feet and takes a few steps toward

him, insisting, "*David! There's nothing to know. What can you write about those people?*"

David at last turns to confront her face-to-face and protests fiercely, "*I know all about them.*" But this only causes *Barbara* to launch into a tirade of truth about *David's* "*pals.*" "*They devour you!*" she asserts passionately. With scorn, she describes how they go from one glamorous European location to another but *do* nothing there and *see* only each other. "*What have you got to write about?*" she demands again. *David* closes the distance between them until he stands only a few inches away from *Barbara*. Holding out his hands in mute appeal, he shakes them at her in desperation and implores, "*What do you want me to do?*" She grabs him by his upper arms and shakes him in her turn, urgently trying to make him see the sense of her words. "*Write about the things you really know!*" she implores, "*The things in your bones and in your blood!*" For a brief moment, *David* stands looking down on *Barbara* as she begs him to return to writing about his home. But then he takes a step backward and tears himself abruptly from her grasp. "*I told you I tried!*" he insists emphatically. His voice grows deep with despair and a touch of fear as he concludes, "*It wasn't any good!*" *David* has turned his back to *Barbara* once more and returned to the far left corner of the stage. "*What kind of a try did you make?*" she presses, aiming her question at his back. But now *David* whirls around furiously and takes one step toward her. "*What the hell do you know how a man tries?*" he cries, his voice growing louder and sounding more affronted with every word he speaks. But *Barbara* is not about to condone his defeatism. "*Did you? Try and quit in less than a week?*" she probes, a trace of mockery in her uncompromising manner, "*You call that a try?*" *David* takes a very long, very hasty step closer to *Barbara*. He leans toward her urgently and inclines his head so that he can look into her eyes. "*I've been trying for years,*" he pleads, his voice growing so deep that it almost breaks with despair and with the need to make her understand, "*Can't you see?*"

But she gives him an outright refusal and ruthlessly tells him that she *does not* understand. Then her tone changes slightly as she comes to a realization of her own. "*You're a coward,*" she says, tossing the insult at him and then quickly turning away to walk to the opposite side of the stage. "*You don't know how to try! You're licked before you begin!*" Finishing dismissively, her voice is stern and her demeanor unyielding. When *Barbara* tells *David* that he is a coward, he straightens his body slightly and takes in a very faint breath, absorbing the blow without display or dissent. As she continues her attack and turns to walk away, he seems to sink very subtly inward, merely giving the impression of rounding his shoulders and lowering his head to stare, sightless, at the floor. The underpinnings that held *David's* self-image intact seem to have slowly given way. *David* remains silent for a long, painful moment but then lifts his head and looks at *Barbara*. "*That's right,*" he says, his tone not merely accepting of her harsh appraisal, but content with it. "*You're right,*" he says again, but this time he expels the words between his teeth in audible self-disgust. "*I'm licked,*" he confesses with a barely perceptible nod of his head.

Barbara knows that her words were too blunt, too hasty. She knows too that she has gravely wounded him. "*No, David –*" she pleads, her tone compassionate and contrite. But he will not hear of her tempering her judgment against him. "*Yes,*" he says adamantly and nods his head with angry conviction. "*And you know what?*" he asks, taking a couple of steps in her direction, "*You're right about something else – the book about Europe?*" he continues, his words coming out all in a rush as he shakes his head disparagingly, "*It's no good, It's no goddamn good!*" He begins to stride away toward stage left but pauses to throw out one arm in her direction. "*Nothing I touch is good;*" he declares vehemently, "*I – I've forgotten how to write!*" By now, *David* has reached his typewriter and stands poised over it with one foot propped on the stair step where it sits. "*It's been so long since I wrote anything decent,*" he shouts and stabs an outstretched arm violently toward the machine, contempt for his work, for himself, inflaming every syllable, "*I've forgotten how!*"

Barbara hurries to his side and pleads, "*David –*" But he stops her with a torrent of self-directed venom. "*Why do you think I run?*" he shouts, stretching out an arm toward her to emphasize his question but also to fend her off. "*I write something,*" he extends his other arm closer to the typewriter and indicates his work with an open hand, "*I decide that it stinks and then I throw it away,*" he spits out, sweeping his arm away to the side disdainfully. "*So stop wastin' your time!*" he rushes on, barely stopping for breath. *Barbara* tries once more to be the voice of reason. "*If you'll only be patient and try –*" she begins, but once again *David's* fury overtakes her. This time, perhaps inevitably, he turns his attack on her. "*Oh you've got it all taped out, haven't you?*" he intrudes savagely, his voice laced with heavy sarcasm as he pushes his weight off the staircase and walks in front of her toward stage right. She turns to look at him but is stunned to silence by his outburst. "*Baba knows best!*" he mocks, throwing back his head and lifting his body upward as if shouting his ridicule to the sky. "*Always so right,*" he rants on, taking one step back toward *Barbara* and flinging an arm out to point at her with intense scorn, "*so goddamned right!*" He continues to walk obstinately away from her, heading for the large staircase at stage right, while the orchestra plays "*Host*" with more volume and more insistence. *Barbara* calls out to him anxiously, "*Where are you going?*" More than halfway up the stairs, *David* turns to face her. His anguish and self-hatred project from and surround him like a veritable wall. "*To be devoured by my pals!*" he rages at her. His voice breaks with frustration and impotent despair, and he falls to one knee as if losing control of his limbs just as he surrenders control of his will. *Barbara* panics and shouts at him again frantically, "*David, where are you going?*" From the high point of the staircase, he turns to face her one last time. The clotted bellow that issues from him sounds bleak, brutal and self-destructive as he thunders, "*Where the action is! Where everybody is! There's no action here!*" With *Barbara* staring after him in shock, *David* runs down the back side of the stairway and disappears offstage as the scene ends.

Deauville/Paris/St. Tropez - Solitary Wanderings

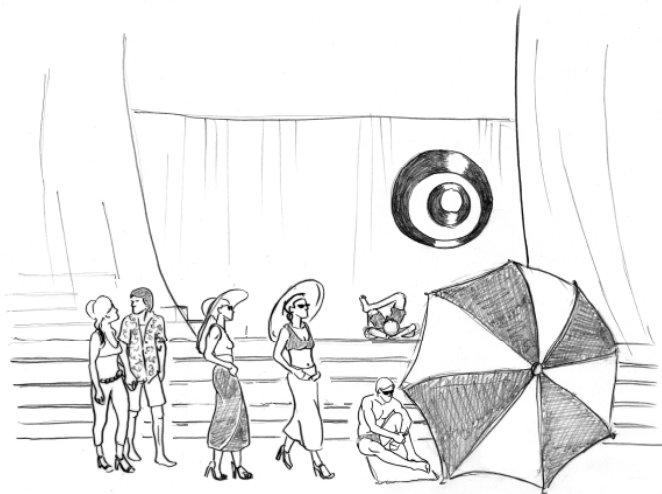
At this point in the play, Scott makes an unbelievably quick, *blink-and-it's-done* costume change. In the space of a few measures of music that accompany a negligible dance interlude, he achieves a complete transformation from jeans, flannel shirt and Timberland-style boots to full, black-tie evening attire. *David* reappears in the same location on stage from which he had exited in the previous scene. One hand thrust indifferently into his pocket, he strides up the back of the staircase into what is now a Deauville casino. As he looks around the room, *Comfort* calls out to him with an overloud and over-enthusiastic greeting. She hurries over to him and throws her arms around his neck, asking where he's been "*hiding*." In response, *David* gives her a rather distracted, lukewarm hug with one arm around her waist and simultaneously waves the other arm at *Mike*, who follows close behind her. *David* seems conspicuously out of synch with the brittle, hollow gaiety exhibited by *Mike* and *Comfort*. Some vital part of him is clearly not present, and the thrill-seeking euphoria of gambling hasn't intoxicated him as it has his friends. But he appears determined to keep to this self-destructive path even though the glittering excitement he has chosen over developing his talent and reciprocating *Barbara's* love now provides pain instead of pleasure. But at the very least, his drug-of-choice still provides some measure of escape. So *David* endures rather than enjoys *Mike's* effusive account of *Comfort's* luck at the gaming tables and follows him slowly, half-heartedly when she orders them away to a table of their own. "*What happened to you and Barbara?*" *Mike* asks as they approach the other table. *David* replies in a flat, dismal tone, "*I blew it*." When *Mike* gaily counters that it was bound to happen, *David* makes a pointed objection. "*No, I blew it. Me*," he emphasizes, owning responsibility for the break-up and voicing the references to himself in a tone of angry self-reproach.

Mike, however, remarks with avuncular bonhomie that, "*true love never bought any groceries*," then presses chips into *David's* hand and propels him to the roulette table. Twice, *David* bets, "*Everything on zero*." His lifeless voice and apathetic manner remain determinedly gloomy, as his wager quite obviously announces his current opinion of himself and his future. But on the second spin of the wheel, the croupier calls out, "*Zéro!*" *David* turns a bemused look on *Mike* and says tentatively, "*I won*." *Mike* slaps him on the back and replies, "*See David, you're alive again!*" And that is all it takes to ensnare *David* once more in the familiar patterns of his profligate lifestyle. "*Hey Comfort, you brought me luck!*" he calls out loudly. Like flipping a switch, his voice and attitude suddenly echo the forced heartiness of his "*pals*." But just as suddenly, Deauville, to which *David* had fled with such urgency and anticipation, can no longer satisfy his need for *more* – more excitement, more adventures, more people, more and more distance from his work, himself and the love he left behind. "*Come on*," he calls out, hastily advancing on *Comfort*. "*Let's get out of here. Let's move on!*" he demands, his tone deepening into an insistent growl as the edgy, manic desire for movement, any movement, drives him feverishly

onward. *Comfort*, a little confused by *David's* capricious desire to leave, agrees but qualifies, "*Where do you want to go?*" So *Mike* chimes in to suggest St. Tropez. "*That's what we want – St. Tropez!*" *David* exults with that same fevered rumble in his voice, responding jubilantly but so quickly and instinctively that it seems his reaction would have been the same if *Mike* had suggested they all go to *Hell*. But before *Comfort* deserts Deauville and the scene of her gambling triumphs, she first asks if they will know anybody in St. Tropez. "*Anybody?*" *Mike* repeats rhetorically. Then he and *David* bellow in unison, "*Everybody!*" And with that, the three chums clasp their arms around each other and hurry raucously off to stage right.

The casino disappears and we are once again in *Barbara's* Paris flat. She is alone and in her own words "*miserable*" when *Mollie* comes to see her. *Mollie* warmly greets her young protégé like a mother receiving a beloved lost child back to her bosom. When she sees *Barbara* so unhappy, she declares that having a man walk out is no worse than having a "*bad cold*." Moreover, *Mollie* has a remedy. "*What I always do*," the older woman advises, "*I soak in a hot tub until I'm all shriveled up...*" But *Barbara* stops her in mid-sentence and confesses with quiet solemnity, "*Mollie ...I want him back*." *Mollie* replies with equal gravity, "*Oh my darling, the trouble is, he'll be back*." With a little further questioning *Mollie* concludes that *David* left because *Barbara* kept pushing him to write. "*Yes, there's nothing like the inspiration of a good woman to make a man leave home*," *Mollie* remarks, her biting wit tempered by a great deal of kindness. *Barbara* objects that *David* really *can* write and appeals to *Mollie*, the editor, for her professional opinion. The older woman emphatically agrees that *David* can write "*like a streak*" and calls him a fool for squandering his talent. So *Barbara* begins to devise a plan with the hopefulness that only a young woman in love can muster. "*If he's with me, if I take him someplace*," she begins. But now it's *Mollie's* turn to stop *Barbara*. "*You tried that once*," she says firmly. "*Did it work?*" She goes on to tell *Barbara* a very hard truth, soothing the pain by walking to her side and putting an arm around her shoulders. "*If he turns up again, there's only one thing you can do for him, the very best thing: send him home*." "*Home!*" *Barbara* echoes in dismay. But *Mollie* emphasizes that *Barbara* should send *David* home to America to work. "*It's the only thing that can save him. Life's too easy for him here*," *Mollie* adds, "*Send him home*." *Barbara* pleads, "*But I love him!*" with a soft note of desperation adding to the quiet intensity in her voice. But *Mollie* persists, "*Especially if you love him*." Once more she counsels *Barbara* that if she truly loves *David*, she must tell him "*three little words*" that are not "*I love you*," but rather "*Yankee, go home*." Then *Mollie* prepares to leave but directs the young model to come to her office in the morning. "*I want to put you to work again*," she says briskly, offering *Barbara* the essential tonic of her profession to help heal her broken heart. *Louis de Pourtal* soon arrives at *Barbara's* flat and tries to convince her to come back to him. He tells her that *David Jordan* is not for her – that he will never be able to take care of her. But *Barbara* informs *Louis* in that quiet, earnest tone she uses when she speaks of her feelings for *David*, "*If he were to come back tomorrow, I would leave you again. I couldn't do*

that to you.” She adds with fondness that leaving him twice would be “*such a dirty trick*” and thanks him for asking her to come back. But they both agree that *Louis* must find a new “pupil,” and he too takes his leave. *Barbara* is alone as a piano begins to play the slow, sad strains of “*Nobody Told Me*.” She reprises the last verse of the song in a soft, melancholy voice, as she looks out into the lonely distance and the lights fade.



Next we go to the beach at St. Tropez. The scene plays out under a large, abstract, spherical stencil of scenery that descends from the flies. Lit to a fiery brightness, it represents the white-hot Mediterranean sun. The ensemble wear classic beach costumes: the men are shirtless and clothed only in tight white trunks; the women wear meager tropical print bikinis with long beach wraps in flowing fabrics that are tied low on the hips and slit almost to the waist on one side. Their accessories include grand, wide-brimmed, circular sun hats, big sunglasses, and high-heeled platform sandals. *David* wears faded and frayed denim cut-offs that rise high up on his thighs. His feet are bare, and his calves and thighs display the strikingly long, lean but powerful musculature of a runner. He wears a dark orange, boxy shirt that hangs squarely from his broad shoulders and ends just at the top of his hips. Only one button of the shirt is fastened (sometimes the next to last button, sometimes the last button), revealing a glimpse of his powerful chest and a *tease* of chest hair in the deep open V. As the scene opens, he sits upstage on the platform atop the medium-height staircase with his back to the audience. Sometimes his feet rest on the steps at the back of the platform, sometimes he sprawls on one hip and one elbow with the opposite knee bent and that foot braced on the ground. *David* lounges without stirring while *Comfort* lies backwards on the taller set of steps to his right and sings the introduction to “*Eager Beaver*,” then subsequently rises and completes the refrain of her song.

Comfort is decidedly bored with St. Tropez and ready to move on but asks *David* impatiently what they have planned for the day. Before responding, *David* lies down flat on his back and stretches his long arms out wide to each side. Next he crooks one knee at a right angle to his prone body, then props the opposite heel idly on that bent knee. “*I don’t know*,” he

answers lazily, then gives a lethargic sigh and calls out, “*Mike?*” Although *David* never changes position, he adds an indifferent suggestion or two to the jam-packed agenda *Mike* details for the day: *Pamplona* for swimming, *Roches Fleuries* for lunch, *skin-diving off the Lazareff rocks*, *Beauvallon* for cocktails, *Cannes* for dinner and gambling. *Comfort* merely replies in a jaded tone, “*That’s all?*” *David* cocks his head at her in disbelief. *Mike* and *Comfort* now sing an interlude demanding, “*Action. Action. Lovely, lively action*,” and *Mike* repeats the refrain of “*Eager Beaver*.” All the while, *David* remains motionless, stretched out on his back in the sun. But at the end of his chorus, *Mike* pairs off with a particularly fetching beach beauty and takes her to a secluded spot on the strand. It isn’t long before *Comfort* notices his absence. “*Mike? Mike?*” she calls out loudly and none too patiently, then asks in a long-suffering tone, “*David what happened to Mike?*” *David* makes no effort to look for his friend but replies with the sun-drenched lethargy still blurring the edges of his voice, “*I don’t know. He was here a minute ago.*” So *Comfort* searches around for *Mike* and continues to call his name until she discovers him in a very compromising position with the nubile beach babe. “*You two-timing, double-crossing son-of-a-bitch!*” she shouts and takes a step backwards. The volume, venom and hurt in her tone cause *David* to bestir himself at last. Startled and off-balance, he drops his propped foot to the ground, throws an arm upward and lifts his head hastily to look sideways at *Comfort*. While she and *Mike* begin to argue, *David* rolls to a sitting position then warily gets to his feet, careful to keep his movements inconspicuous.

Mike makes a couple of feeble, *boys-will-be-boys* excuses for his infidelity: “*I was just admiring the view*,” or, “*It was just one of those little accidents.*” But *Comfort* knows exactly what “*it*” was and is absolutely *not* placated. “*Get the hell out of here. Get out of my life*,” she orders *Mike*, and adds, “*No man’s going to treat me like a wife!*” As his friends argue, *David* gingerly takes a few steps closer to them and shadows the pair cautiously, maintaining a discreet position behind but roughly between them, as if to protect them from themselves and the intensity of their quarrel. *Comfort* puts *Mike* on notice that if what he’s getting from her isn’t enough-- But he interrupts her and swears that it *is* enough. “*Look, I didn’t want it!*” he cries, “*If I could give it back to her right now, I’d do it!*” With that, *Comfort* slaps him hard. *Mike* backs away only a couple of steps before he advances on *Comfort* with an upraised arm, ready to strike her back. But *David* immediately jumps between the two, grabs *Mike*’s shoulders and shoves him roughly away with a shouted warning, “*Hey!*” Quickly *David* presents a physical challenge to *Mike*, standing just a few unflinching inches from him, staring him down and warning even more fiercely, “*Hey!*” With *David* confronting him so resolutely, *Mike* does indeed back down although he makes another excuse for his aggressive behavior by loudly complaining that he doesn’t like women slapping him. But *David* senses the immediate threat is past and crosses in front of *Mike* to move farther away from the couple. Meanwhile *Comfort* shrewdly asks *Mike* if he is quite so outraged by a slap if the women have “*hundred-dollar bills in their hands?*” *David* stands quiet and still with his back to his friends. Somehow his vaguely dispirited posture and somber

expression foreshadow the couple's inevitable breakup and reveal his own surprisingly deep sadness over *Comfort's* betrayal. This *David* represents quite a departure from the one, who at the beginning of the play agreed to meet *Mike* and his new girlfriend for dinner only after being assured that "*she pays.*" And so *Comfort* orders the philandering *Mike* to pack his clothes and get out of her life. He affects a carefree attitude and resigns himself to returning to Rome and "*those lousy Italian movies.*" He slaps an unresponsive *David* on the shoulder, promises to see him around the Via Veneto, and leaves the stage.

David remains, as he has been for the last several minutes, silent and motionless, standing with his back to *Comfort*, his somber, pensive gaze lowered to the floor. "*Well David,*" *Comfort* says, aiming her words at his back and trying to put a good face on things, "*I guess it's just you and me.*" She clearly assumes that *David* will be her escort now and suggests, "*Let's get out of here, huh?*" After trudging up the stairs at the left of the stage, she confides to him, "*I don't think much of this place.*" Slowly, almost reluctantly, *David* turns around to face her as she asks him where he would like to go. With a bit more of her customary brass, she proposes, "*Greece? Turkey? How about Vienna?*" *David* answers in a very soft voice that conveys a gentle note of regret, "*You don't need me, Comfort.*" She counters somewhat forlornly, "*But I like you, David.*" He takes a few, slow steps toward her and says in the same soft, compassionate voice that now also bears an undertone of shame: "*There are a lot of guys like me and Mike, who'll be glad to show you a good time on your money.*" As if to soften the sting of his words, he moves still closer to the stairs where she stands and continues, "*Europe's full of bums like me,*" underscoring the insulting label with a note of distaste and self-reproach before adding, "*You'll never be lonely.*" *David* seems to be sharing responsibility for *Mike's* faithlessness by admitting that he and his former friend are cut from the same cloth. Or perhaps *David* finally understands that running away from *Barbara's* love amounts to his own act of infidelity. Either way, *Comfort* isn't much consoled by the thought of some other companion. She walks down the steps toward *David* and says, "*But I'd rather have you,*" then continues with a sad little plea; "*Don't you like me, David?*" With gentle, sincere affection *David* tries to soothe her. "*Sure, Comfort, I do,*" he murmurs as he moves past her and reaches back to touch her hand tenderly, "*But I wouldn't be any fun.*" He has walked to the left side of the stage and once more turned away from *Comfort*. His voice resonates with more energy and certainty as he continues, "*You just did something for me, Comfort.*" She is a perplexed and asks him, "*What?*" *David* gently tries to make his meaning clear. "*When you hit Mike?*" he says, giving his words the sound of a question, "*You hit me...*" He pauses and exhales a faint puff of air when he says, "*me,*" as if he really were being hit, not by *Comfort's* hand but by a stunning realization. "*...You hit me real hard,*" he finishes, the sincerity of his disclosure all but palpable. But *Comfort* grows more confused and tentatively asks him what he means. *David* shakes his head with weary regret and says as if talking to himself, "*I've got to get out of your life.*" But turning around and walking to her side, he corrects himself immediately and insists, "*No, that's*

not fair. Out of my life, this life. Suddenly it's..." he pauses with a muted sigh and makes a small, despairing movement of his head from side to side as if searching for words. Then as the energy leaves his voice like air let out of a balloon, he concludes dejectedly, "*...not much of a life at all.*" Apprehension fills *Comfort's* response as she asks him, "*What are you going to do?*" Very quickly and softly *David* answers, "*I don't know.*" Then he reaches out a hand to gently caress her cheek and says with affection, "*Goodbye, Comfort. You'll get along.*" He walks away from her and climbs the stairs at stage left, continuing in a hearty, encouraging voice, "*You know your way around Europe now. You'll get along fine.*" After a brief moment, *Comfort* calls out to him in an imperative tone, "*David!*" He stops near the top of the stairs and turns around to face her again. She adds more softly but just as insistently, "*I don't want to be alone.*" *David* moves his gaze from *Comfort* toward the horizon. "*Neither do I,*" he concludes quietly and with a subtle note of astonishment in his voice as another realization takes hold of him: regardless of how many people surround him, without *Barbara* he is alone. He then descends the back of the staircase and walks off the stage. *Comfort* begins to sing a reprise of "*Eager Beaver,*" at first in a soft, sad voice but then with more and more zest and appetite as she finds consolation in the bevy of lusty beach boys that have returned to attend to her and transport her offstage.

Paris - Transcendent Love

We return to *Luc's* studio in Paris where *Jeanette* and *Luc* are shooting a special fashion layout. With *Mollie*, they once more wait for *Barbara* to join them. As in the first scene, *Barbara* arrives, late and breathless, but this time with a new escort in tow: an Italian gentleman named, *Marcello*, whose father owns "*most of Milan.*" After making a flurry of excuses for being late, *Barbara* changes into a sumptuous gown and steps onto the platform, ready to pose for *Luc's* cameras. Suddenly *Jeanette* sees that *David* has unexpectedly returned and greets him uncertainly. *David* does not immediately enter the studio but remains at its edge at far stage left. His voice and behavior both markedly subdued, he says quietly, "*Hello, Jeanette... Luc... Mollie.*" But his eyes never leave *Barbara*. Indeed it's as if no one else occupies the room but her. His intent, impassioned gaze suggests the magnetic draw she exerts on him and reveals all too clearly his desire to cross the room and take her in his arms. *Luc* introduces the Italian to *David* but *David* makes no reply. Instead, he apologizes for interrupting *Luc's* session, all the while keeping his eyes fixed hungrily on *Barbara*. "*I didn't know you were busy, Luc,*" he says in the same quiet, tentative tone, "*I just dropped in on the chance...*" Clearly this *David* is much chastened from the one who returned to Paris in the first scene expecting an expansive welcome and liberal hospitality as if they were his due. An obviously uncomfortable *Luc* insists that they won't be long, but then hesitantly offers, "*Mollie, I can do this any time...*" However, the editor replies with a touch of scorn that if *Luc's* "*guest*" doesn't mind, she wants to take some pictures. Immediately *Barbara* voices a quiet but fervent objection, "*Mollie... please.*" The editor persists that if *Barbara* doesn't say "*no*" right now, it will be harder in the future. *Barbara*

calmly but decisively answers, "I'll have to find that out." These exchanges swirl around *David* without seeming to affect him. He focuses solely, deeply on *Barbara* as if the two of them occupy a separate plane of existence where no one else's voice or presence has any meaning.

And so *Luc* and *Jeanette* fade off stage, and *Mollie* withdraws with *Marcello*, passing him off gaily to *Luc's* other models. The moment the others begin to leave, *David* moves inexorably toward *Barbara*, his pace slow and hypnotic, his eyes never leaving her face as if he could drink in the emerging nearness of her. Reaching her, he stands directly opposite her merely an arm's length away and breathes a deep, quiet sigh. Proximity to *Barbara* seems to have restored breath and life to *David's* being, or perhaps he had been holding his breath from the first moment he saw her again, until just now when he stands close to her at last.



Still, *David* neither speaks to, nor moves toward *Barbara*, his delay suggesting that the right to decide how their encounter will proceed belongs to her. But after a moment's hesitation, she throws her arms around his neck and buries her face in his shoulder. Only then does he enfold her in his arms and hold her close. From that moment on, *David's* tender touch and the pronounced note of loving compassion in his voice convey his exclusive concern for *Barbara*. His only desire now seems to be to comfort *her*. All thoughts of himself - his writer's block, his self-absorption, his longing to return to her - disappear when he sees how deeply he has hurt her. "Crotch-a-mighty!"

he croaks with a sympathetic smile in his voice, instantly returning her to the time in *Honfleur* when they were so happy and intimate, "You're not up on your bean-watah." Through her tears, *Barbara* instantly answers, "No!" "Bluer'n a whetstone?" *David* asks gently, continuing his Maine metaphor. *Barbara* replies in a forlorn little voice, "Oh much bluer than that." *David* has held *Barbara* in his loving embrace all this time, but at the sound of her reply he wraps her even closer in his arms. "No more," he vows, and then repeats again slowly, "Nooooo more," his voice growing deeper and drawing out the pledge to invest it with all the sincerity and understanding in his heart. *Barbara* too hugs *David* a little tighter and protests, "You went so far away." *David* responds with a touch of amazement in his voice, "Not far enough," as he loosens his embrace and takes a step backward, still holding *Barbara* lightly around the waist. He shakes his head in denial but then lowers it again to search out her eyes and says tenderly, "There's no escaping you. There's no..." He pauses and looks away from *Barbara*, searching for words to express how futile was his attempt to run from her, before he concludes solemnly, "...getting away from you."

Meanwhile the orchestra has played a few measures of "Look No Further" as an introduction. Now *David* sings the opening verse of "No Strings" to *Barbara* as he continues to hold her gently and look lovingly into her eyes. "It may be true/ At least it has been said/ That the strongest chain in the world/ Is a hair from a woman's head." Sliding his hands down her arms, he takes both her hands into his and steps back again so that their arms stretch out to their full extent. "But I suspect/ For us at least/ The strongest cord of all/ Is nothing, but nothing, at all." He sustains the note for its full value, then seamlessly, without pause or breath asks, "May I walk you home?" Still holding her hands, he moves close to her once more and captures her eyes with an intense, compelling look before he concludes, "I've something to tell you." As she did before but this time with a hint of playfulness, *Barbara* cautions, "It's a long walk home." And as before *David* responds, "It's - a - nice - day," but now his deliberately slow words vibrate with implicit meaning and his voice grows deep and husky with yearning, anticipation and promise. *Barbara* makes a soft sound like a fond laugh, then remarks, "Like the day we met." Still holding her eyes steadily with his own, *David* merely raises his head in agreement. Then *Barbara* concludes, "I'll go change." So he carefully escorts her up the second tier of stairs. Offering her one hand and placing his other hand beneath her elbow to steady her against getting tangled in the short train of her gown, he supports her until she disappears behind the dressing curtain.

Alone for the moment, *David* sings the refrain of "No Strings" as an impassioned meditation on the bond between *Barbara* and himself and on what surely must be their ideal future together. When he sings, "No other bonds at all," he indicates "no" with an emphatic shake of his head. After first referring with sympathy to the "little folk who need the help," he sings of "vows and such," as he faces forward and opens his arms wide, then brings his downstage foot in to meet its mate with a brisk, rhythmic and weighty tread on the last word of the phrase. Holding up *their* relationship as the perfect model, he

sings “*We are much too tall*,” as he explicitly draws himself upright, turns toward *Barbara’s* dressing room, raises his arm high and moves his hand in the barest hint of a circle as a salute to her. Toward the end of the song, he sits on a lower step at stage left and sweeps one arm out to the side to indicate the “*perfect thing*” that marriage will mean for them. But finally he sings that this too will come about with “*no strings at all*.” Now *Barbara* emerges from behind the dressing curtain, wearing the street clothes she wore on their first walk through Paris. She sings the refrain again with an eager optimism to equal that of *David’s* performance, while he looks on with transparent love and pride. As soon as she finishes the verse, he leans toward her from his seat, then rises and goes to her as if drawn to her side by the very strings they sing about. He kisses her tenderly, and they sing the short coda together. Their voices blend softly on the last note then build to a strong crescendo, each voice perfectly matching itself to the volume of the other.

*No Strings-no strings
Except our own devotion;
No other bonds at all.*

*Let the little folk who need the help
Depend upon vows and such;
We are much too tall.*

*No ties-no ties
Except our own emotion.
We’ll hear some silent call.*

*If marriage comes, we’ll let it come
As one of those perfect things
With no strings at all.
A perfect package with no stings at all.*

(Richard Rodgers; *No Strings*; ©1962; Williamson Publishing)

Barbara reminds *David* that he wanted to walk, and he asks, “*Same place? In the shadow of the Eiffel Tower?*” She nods and says that nothing has changed. But he replies, “*Yes*,” in a firm, positive tone. “*Everything*,” he adds, his voice deep and earnest as he dips his head expressively with a hint of pride and pleasure. He looks like he is about to present her with a surprise that he knows will delight her. But he simply says, “*Let’s go*,” and offers her his arm. Although she is uncertain what his last remark may mean, *Barbara* takes his arm as he looks down at her with visible love. They begin to walk, but not before *David* places his free hand warmly over hers as it rests in the bend of his elbow, and she places her free hand atop his. Their separation ended, the lovers seek to affirm their reunion with frequent and adoring touch. A few steps further on, *Barbara* asks what *David* meant by saying, “*everything*” has changed. He continues their walk but replies as he looks over at her, “*Well, let’s just say that I’ve changed. Would you settle for that?*” Now he stops and turns to face her directly, taking a deep breath and drawing himself upright before confessing, “*I’ve stopped running. I’m going to work*.” He utters the last word like a commitment, stressing the ending consonant so that it explodes on an audible puff of air. “*Oh David!*” she cries and throws her arms around him with joy.

For an instant, he delays, standing straight and unmoving, before he wraps her in his arms and nestles her against him. His voice husky and intense, he tells her he has another question for her. “*How would you like to go and live in the South of France?*” he asks, pressing her away from him and taking both her hands into his so that he can look into her eyes. “*And work!*” *Barbara* says, partly asking and partly prompting. *David* makes a deep nod with his head to indicate agreement and excitedly tells her that the house on Cap Ferrat is wonderful – small, but right on the sea. Then he takes her by the hand and leads her forward, walking at a brisk pace as he explains with effusive animation, “*Actually, it’s the house of a friend of mine, Mario Russo, the Italian movie producer*.” *David’s* words come even more rapidly now, and he pulls a gradually more reluctant *Barbara* along after him, saying, “*He’s a good one; he does good things*.” Finally she stops following him and repeats with noticeable uncertainty, “*And he offered you this house*.” *David* turns back to face her and takes her by the shoulders. Clearly eager, a bit overly so, he strokes his hands over her upper arms and exults, “*More than that. He offered me a job*.” *Barbara* echoes, “*A job?*” with even more uncertainty.

David begins to tow *Barbara* along again as he walks quickly onward and gives an exuberant description of how he “*bumped into*” the producer on the train coming back to Paris. “*As soon as he saw me, he grabbed me*,” *David* says, mimicking a bear hug and making his voice deep and raspy to emphasize his depiction. After only a few steps, *Barbara* stops walking again, while *David* moves forward with almost feverish energy. “*And the money’s not bad*,” he rationalizes, “*Not bad at all*.” He turns back toward *Barbara* again and continues almost without stopping for breath, “*And he wants me to stay with the script all the way through the shooting*,” he takes hold of her shoulders and finishes with keen anticipation, “*and write the additional dialogue*.” Anxiety invades the tone of *Barbara’s* response when she objects that they don’t give Pulitzer Prizes for “*additional dialogue*.” *David* bends his torso forward insistently to emphasize his agreement and answers, “*No, they don’t!*” on a rising inflection that infers of course *not*. But then he adds as he leans toward her and seeks her eyes to make her understand, “*But it’s a way to make money to buy time!*” *Barbara* responds in utter disbelief, “*For what?*” He answers at once, his pitch rising again urgently, “*To do what I want to do! To write!*” Immediately and with heavy scorn *Barbara* asks him, “*Where? Here? In Paris? Or in the South of France, where all your charming friends can find you?*” Then she grabs his shoulders in her turn and gives him a little shake to restore sanity, pleading, “*David, you’re fooling yourself!*” *David* looks solemnly into her eyes, and his voice grows deep with the gravity of a pledge as he vows, “*I can do it with you*.” Of course, *David* believes absolutely that he can do what he promises, but *Barbara* dashes his overblown optimism without mercy. “*No!*” she insists, predicting accurately that he will fall into the trap again, that his friends will turn up and seduce him again. Now she turns away from him and walks downstage, determined not to play a part in another such tragedy. “*You’ll be devoured again*,” she cries desperately, “*And I won’t be able to save you*.”

While *Barbara* is laying out this sad future, *David* remains where she left him, standing motionless, head bowed, arms hanging at his sides. His overwrought optimism seems thoroughly deflated; his attitude, defeated. But as soon as she stops speaking, he rushes to her side, his gait almost clumsy with his urgent need to reach her. “Then what? What?” he demands in a desperate appeal for an alternate choice. Standing beside *Barbara*, *David* searches her face while his own expression shows apprehension that approaches dread. But *Barbara* remains facing the front and neither looks at, nor speaks to him, for a long, awkward pause. Finally she turns only her head toward him and says with quiet conviction, “Go home.” *David* stares at her for several seconds, dumbstruck and wounded to his core. Then as if reeling from a jolting impact, he takes two hesitant steps backwards, staring at her intently and seeking some reprieve from her quiet command, before he drops his eyes, turns away and moves off toward stage right. He stands with his back to *Barbara*, looking with lowered, vacant eyes into the emptiness that seems to loom over his future without her. Then, softly and mournfully, she begins to sing a fragment of “*Maine*.” “Far away, cross the bay/ Goes an old train.” Even more quietly, she almost whispers, “Woo-hoo, woo-hoo,” and allows the phrase to hang, unresolved, in the air. When *David* hears the sound of her voice, he lifts his head and barely cants it in the direction of her song, as if listening to something vaguely familiar in the distance, like the actual whistle of a train. As her hushed voice fades, he stands in silence staring off toward stage right, but after a moment begins to speak in a tentative, distant voice. “There’s a little house way out by the quarry... It’s been abandoned for years,” he says as if he were talking to himself. Now he turns and faces directly forward, his posture straighter and somehow more open as though he has come to a decision. “I can fix it up myself,” he muses and then continues with a bit more energy and confidence in his voice, “I’m very handy with a hammer.” Neither of them looks at the other. Rather they both face forward and look out toward the audience. *Barbara* says with concern in her voice, “David, you’re going...” He finishes her sentence like giving the answer to a question, “Home.” He invests the word with the sound of healing closure that still somehow bears a trace of uncertainty; he seems determined to do what must be done, but still not completely confident of his power to persevere. *Barbara* says hopefully, “To work,” making a statement of her words rather than a question. And *David* replies, “Really work,” with noticeably quiet and composed resolve. He adds almost to himself, “The kind of work I haven’t done for...” He pauses, shakes his head emphatically in a measured gesture of regret, and adds softly, “... too many years.”

David turns to face *Barbara* at last and says with much more vigor and enthusiasm, “And you’ll finally get to see your hackmatack trees.” He walks to her side and adds in an eager, hearty tone, “And the lobster boats with their spankers out on Jericho Bay.” But *Barbara* seems shocked by his suggestion. She turns only her head in his direction and asks uncertainly if he wants her to go with him. “Of course,” *David* answers with absolute conviction, then adds softly as if the alternative is unthinkable, “I can’t go without you.” *Barbara* crosses behind him and walks a short distance away toward stage right as

David turns around and follows her with his eyes. Her voice soft and faltering, she asks, “Back to America?” He responds with a firm but quiet, “Yes.” She asks him what she would do there, as if she can’t quite perceive this future he seems so sure about. He responds decisively, “You’d be my wife,” lifting his chin and presenting the title to her in advance with great respect. But *Barbara* at last turns to face him and replies in a small voice filled with genuine apprehension, “David, I’m afraid.” Profoundly empathetic, *David* seems to experience her acute fear, and it pains him deeply. “No,” he croons soothingly, then goes to her side and takes her hand in one of his. He strokes the length of her arm with his other hand in a compassionate caress and adds with utmost gentleness, “Don’t be.” In a sorrowful voice, *Barbara* tells *David* that Paris is her home, her “safe and beautiful world.” She practically pleads with him, “Can I leave it for yours?” implying that, for her at least, his world in the States might represent not just an ugly distortion of her current reality, but actual danger. But *David* looks amazed that she even asks the question and replies with a strong, persuasive, “Yes!” He takes hold of her shoulders in a gentle but insistent grip as he vows, “I won’t go without you.” A long, soundless pause follows. *David* drops his head to search her lowered eyes and nods once deeply in a gesture of encouragement, mutely urging her – pleading with her - to give him the answer he wants to hear. Finally she says with a little smile in her voice, “But of course I’ll go.” Immediately, he wraps her in his arms, lifts her off the ground and carries her several feet to the right, voicing a low chuckle of joy and contentment from deep in his chest before he puts her down. She cannot help but laugh with him. Then although his shoulder muffles her words, she continues, “I have to go. I’m your wife.”

Still wrapped in his arms, *Barbara* asks if they’ll leave soon. *David* takes a step back from her although he still holds onto her shoulders and promises ardently, “As soon as we can.” Then *Barbara* turns away and moves downstage a few steps, saying that he’ll have to tell her what to pack. “I don’t think I have the clothes for a rugged, coast-of-Maine woman,” she concedes with a small smile. *David* tosses one arm out to the side to indicate how inconsequential matters of style are in Maine and says with a spontaneous little laugh, “You can get them at the general store.” She turns toward him again and unconsciously betrays her reluctance to trade the trappings of her success for a life of anonymity by saying, “I would like to take all my beautiful Paris dresses. May I?” He shakes his head and replies in a gentle but rational tone, “You won’t have much use for them there,” allowing his answer to hang on an upraised inflection that suggests the decision is hers to make, despite the impracticality of her wish. She responds with gaiety that seems more feigned than actually felt, “I can wear them to the Saturday-night dances! They have Saturday-night dances, don’t they?” *David* doesn’t answer right away. His expression quickly becomes closed and somber. He can no longer look at *Barbara*, but shifts his eyes away and drops them to the floor. His voice barely audible, distant, and devoid of inflection, he says, “Yes, quite often.” She immediately understands what has troubled him: he correctly envisions the antagonism their inter-racial marriage would arouse in his little New England town. And now *Barbara* foresees it too. “But we

won't go," she states dully. *David* immediately takes a long step forward, bringing him to her side as he offers her his nearness for protection. His manner fierce, forceful and unwavering, he pledges, "Of course we'll go!" She lifts her head to meet the resolute look in his eyes and says firmly, "Once. To show we're not cowards." She takes a quick step closer to him and puts her arms around his neck, commenting brightly, "The hell with the dresses! I'll give them away." Then with a bravely positive air she adds, "No, I'll sell them. We need the money!" But *David* remains unresponsive to her caress. His arms hang by his sides bleakly while she hugs his neck. His voice very deep and solemn, he murmurs, "Look *Barbara*, it's not going to be easy," as he lifts one arm and drops it again in a gesture of futility. Although he stands passive for her embrace, she presses him toward her a little and answers in a matter-of-fact tone, "Of course it's not going to be easy. We're neither of us fools." At last, he places both of his hands on her forearms as she says, "We know it's not going to be like Paris." *David* strokes her upper arms tenderly and answers, "No one's going to ask you to dinner at *Maxim's*," his voice dejected and thickened with sadness for the isolation she will have to endure. He lowers his eyes and continues, "You'll be alone a lot of the time. I'll be working..." allowing the phrase to hang unfinished, perhaps already knowing that no resolution for their predicament exists. But *Barbara* remains steadfast in her determination to minimize the obstacles. "I'll read and I'll sew," she says, her arms still around his neck, "I might even join the ladies' sewing circle," she adds playfully. At that his head comes up sharply, and he looks at her with desolation and profound empathy in his eyes. She reads the "ladies" inevitable rejection in his expression and responds tonelessly, "No." He can only drop both his head and his arms in anguish and shame. "Well, anyway," she says, trying to remain hopeful, "I'll go for long walks through the woods and along the shore," but *David* is shaking his head in dissent and already beginning to back away.

He turns from her with a sharp, agitated pivot and strides angrily away toward stage left. "What a damned foolish thing this is," he shouts, his voice growing more anguished and incensed with every word. The thought of this beautiful, vibrant, intelligent woman relegated to the life of a virtual hermit because of their love for each other sickens him. Alarmed by his outburst, *Barbara* stares after him and asks anxiously, "What?" He walks a few more troubled paces away and replies with a mere hint of tenderness, "That your warm and lovely world..." but now his voice grows deep, harsh and exasperated, "...should be so *bad* for me," he wheels around to face her, stretches out his upstage arm, and concludes, "and the world I'm going back to, so impossible for you," emphasizing the word 'impossible' with an explosion of angry breath and a contemptuous wave of his outstretched arm. Suddenly afraid of what he intends to do, *Barbara* insists, "David, I'm going with you!" He lifts his chin adamantly and says with blunt, uncompromising severity, "No, you're not." She implores, "David!" But he cuts short her plea with a curt, harsh denial. "No!" he says again, brooking no opposition. Still his own crushing sorrow at having to leave her causes his suddenly thick voice to break as

he says, "I won't let you." Despite his own anguish, he steadies his voice as he steels his resolve, looks at her intently and says, "This is your home." Then he walks toward her and adds with no less persistence although grief almost shatters his voice again, "You're staying here where you belong." *David* places gentle hands on either side of her face, leans forward to look into her eyes and vows with quiet, heartfelt sincerity, "I'll be back, I promise." His words come more quickly now but just as tenderly, "As soon as I've done what I have to do; found a way to write again." He strokes her shoulders and upper arms with tangible love and adds passionately, "Nothing could keep me from you." Now he leans forward a little more to capture her lowered eyes and asks, "Will you wait?" as his love and his need for her almost constrict his throat. *Barbara* looks up and meets his eyes at last. "What'll I do until then?" she asks forlornly. He takes a moment to really look into her face, and her sadness visibly distresses him. But he makes an answer that sounds more like an entreaty, "You'll go on as you are..." *Barbara* interrupts him, taking hold of his hands that still rest on her shoulders and asking wretchedly, "And at night? Alone? Then?"

Afflicted by her despair, *David* drops his arms to his sides impotently as she puts her arms around his neck once more. "How do I live without you?" she cries in desperation. He cannot return her searching gaze. Looking down, he shakes his head inconsolably and seems to swallow hard, then says, "There's only one way." His chest rises and falls on an anguished breath. "Say to ourselves that this never happened," he continues relentlessly, breaking his own heart as he does so. "It was all in our minds," he persists as sorrow clots his voice again and nearly smothers his words. Slowly he raises his head and looks steadily into her eyes, not even trying to hide the love there although his words sound unyielding. "You are something that hasn't happened to me yet," he declares firmly. After stroking her shoulders gently, he slides his hands down to hold on to her upper arms as if seeking strength from her touch. But then he looks away from her quickly and pledges, "It's the only way I'll be able to live."



He inhales a deep, ragged breath then removes her hands from around his neck. Holding them together in both of his, he kisses them reverently and asks in a voice that breaks with acute anguish, "Do you understand?" *Barbara* can only stare at the ground as he steps away from her and turns to face the front. "Can you say that?" he asks, holding on to one of her hands and turning his head to look off toward the left. With

another fortifying breath, he draws himself upright. Facing squarely to the front, he lifts his chin and declares valiantly, “*We never met.*” In her turn, *Barbara* faces the front as well and echoes in a much smaller voice, “*We never met.*” Enunciating slowly and distinctly as he emphasizes the qualifier “*yet,*” *David* resolves, “*We have yet to meet,*” and pumps her hand once in a gesture of support. Now *Barbara’s* voice rings out with more strength and clarity. “*We have yet to meet,*” she repeats. Maybe the lovers trust that some not-too-distant future will smile on their union. But for now, in the silence that follows their mutual renunciation, *David* drops *Barbara’s* hand and lets his arm fall desolately to his side. The lovers stand together, never glancing at each other but looking straight before them. As they force themselves to forget the love that has bound them so intimately together, tears glitter noticeably in both pairs of eyes. For an instant, a visible hint of nausea convulses *David’s* features, so physically disgusted is he by the obligation to leave the woman who gives his life meaning and by the irrational bigotry that ultimately tears them apart.

But *David* staunchly ignores his own torment, and his soft, hauntingly pure and sweet voice echoes, *a cappella*, from the quiet stage as he sings the first verse of, “*The Sweetest Sounds.*” Then the orchestra comes up, and *Barbara* sings the second verse. The sundered pair finish the song with voices blended in harmony, ending the play as they began it, heedless of each other and looking with hope-filled eyes to the future. As they sustain the last notes of the song, they walk to opposite sides of the stage and off into the wings, but not before pausing to look out toward the audience with lifted heads, while spotlights illuminate their expectant faces.

Coda

The institutionalized racial discrimination in the United States at the time *No Strings* originally opened is never actually mentioned in the play. In 1962, that subject was not yet part of candid national discourse and certainly not something that could be debated openly on a Broadway stage. Although court-mandated desegregation of public schools had previously taken place in 1954, at the time this show debuted legalized racial bias was still an established fact of American society and was only beginning to be challenged outright – with violent recriminations. The bombing of the Alabama 16th Street Baptist Church (a rallying point for civil rights activities) that killed four innocent little African-American girls did not occur until 1963, the year after *No Strings* opened. *Freedom Summer*, the Mississippi voter registration drive that resulted in the kidnap and murder of three young civil rights workers, was launched the next year in 1964. And the following year, 1965, the first *Freedom March* for voting rights began with 600 civil rights workers attempting to go from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. The non-violent protesters were halted at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, six blocks after they set out, by the full might of the Alabama State Troopers and mounted Dallas County Sheriff’s Deputies, wielding billy clubs, tear gas, and bull whips. It was this *Bloody Sunday* that finally shook the nation’s sensibilities. Two days later Martin Luther King, Jr., led a “symbolic” march to the bridge, garnering

court protection for a third, full-scale march from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery and establishing a precedent for the enforcement of the Civil Rights Act passed the year before. Even so, anti-miscegenation laws, which prohibited interracial marriage, sex and cohabitation, remained in force in some states until 1967, when they were finally ruled unconstitutional by the Warren Court.

No Strings debuted in the early days of our shameful national struggle around race relations, and its perceptive handling of this issue proved in many ways to be prescient. But the cruel discrimination, which in 1962 still lay beneath the seemingly polite surface of the nation’s mores, appears in *David’s* manifest anguish and nauseated anger when he calls the lovers’ dilemma “*impossible.*” He rightly sees that the American society he wants to return *Barbara* to would marginalize, negate, perhaps even brutalize her because of the color of her skin. But he refuses to allow that. Ultimately, *David’s* relationship with *Barbara* becomes a life-changing experience that grants him the courage to put his own desires aside and give her up rather than subject her to such vicious racial bias.

MUSICAL SYNOPSIS

Time: 1960s

Place: Paris, Monte Carlo, Honfleur, Deauville, St. Tropez

Act I

“The Sweetest Sounds”.....*Barbara and David*
 “How Sad” *David*
 “Loads of Love” *Barbara*
 “The Man Who Has Everything” *Louis*
 “Be My Host” *David, Comfort, Mike, Luc and Gabrielle*
 “La La La” *Jeanette and Luc*
 “You Don’t Tell Me” *Barbara*
 “Love Makes the World Go” *Mollie, Comfort and Dancers*
 “Nobody Told Me” *David and Barbara*

Act II

“Look No Further” *David and Barbara*
 “Maine” *David and Barbara*
 “Nobody Told Me—Reprise” *Barbara*
 “Eager Beaver” *Comfort, Mike and Dancers*
 “No Strings” *David and Barbara*
 “Maine” *Barbara and David*
 “The Sweetest Sounds—Reprise” *David and Barbara*



MEET THE CAST OF *NO STRINGS*

May 12, 2007

Transcribed by Sharon Major

Cast photos: Jo Fox; screen capture: Sharon Major; Opening night photos: courtesy of Reprise.org

As cast members file onstage and take seats, **Jim Gardia** (Producing director for Reprise! Broadway's Best) introduces each of them, including Kay Cole, the director, and Gerry Sternbach, the musical director.

Audience member: Diahann Carroll attended on opening night. Are you free to share any of her comments with us?

Jim Gardia: She was in tears, and she's coming back with a group of twenty next week.

Sophina Brown (*Barbara*): First of all, it was just amazing to have her here, and I think I speak for everyone here when I say that. Luckily it was kept a secret from me, 'cause I would have pooped my pants!



Scott (covering his eyes and laughing): Not in those Bob Mackie gowns!

Sophina: She was really proud of the production, and she kept saying that she was so thrilled that it was being done again. One of the cool things that she passed on to me was that she was fine when she walked into the theater, but as soon as she heard the opening music, she remembered that it had been her intro music and her waiting in the wings. At the time [1962] she had just had her baby girl, and it brought back this rush of remembering that every time she was at the top of the show, she had two more hours until she could get back home to her baby. She said, "Now my baby is 46."



Gerry Sternbach, Scott and Sophina Brown

She also said that she was really glad that Scott and I were able to be so physical with each other, especially at the top of Act II. Back then she and Richard Kiley had to keep their distance. Even though it was the first inter-racial kiss on a Broadway stage, that was it. They couldn't hold each other and touch each other, and really be—physically—a couple, because it was still so taboo.

Gerry Sternbach (Musical Director): Last night a friend brought her mother, who as a girl had seen the first national tour of *No Strings* with Barbara McNair in Kansas. This was in late 1963, and she said there were protesters in front of the theater. It was surprising to me. But this was a typical thing that people would protest, [whenever] there is ignorance about [something]. I'm sure that the people who protested probably hadn't seen the show and [its] humanity. The racial aspect of the show was very palpable at that time.

Joe Culliton (*Louis*): I think it is one of the great values of this play that it isn't at all "dated," but it is "of its time." It takes us back and makes us realize how far we've come as a society. It was really on the cusp—right before the civil rights movement, right before the women's movement, and certainly right before the sexual revolution and the pill.



(l to r) Joseph Culliton (Louis de Pourtal), Matthew Ashford (Mike Robinson), and Vanessa Ross (Ensemble)

Audience member: On that note of how much things have changed, our ten-year-old niece is very interested in musical theater, so her parents rented *Showboat* for her to watch. She just didn't get the racial aspect of the story. She had no frame of reference. She did understand the romantic stuff, but not the racial...

Gerry: That's fantastic! I think we have come a long way.

Bets Malone (*Comfort O'Connell*): It's fantastic that this is where we are now and what we've lived through. But it's important for us to never forget what we went through. We'll

take steps backward if we don't teach our children about what was happening in our world. <applause>



Bets Malone played Comfort O'Connell

These shows are history lessons now, and it's so important to keep this kind of theater alive because of that.

Audience member: As an avid watcher of *Quantum Leap*, [I think] that show was doing the same thing.

Audience member: It seems this show has more dialog and less singing. How does that impact the actors and the director? Does it make it easier or more difficult?

Kay Cole (Director): The thing that is wonderful about this piece is that it is a play with music. The goal for us was to celebrate the play and embrace the play with the music of Richard Rodgers. And I think we did that very well. The red pen was out quite a lot, but not with the play. It's lovely that you mentioned that.



Gerry and Kay Cole (director)

Sophina: Especially with an audience like you, it makes it so much easier. You were so great today! (Scott claps silently alongside Sophina.)

A lot of times audiences are looking for these huge musical spectacles and I notice this even on Broadway. I don't want to mention any names <cough—*Lion King*> <audience laughs> No, no, I love *Lion King*!

But sometimes there are so many visual effects, and so much smoke and mirrors and things going on, you sometimes lose the story. What Kay did—which was such a thrilling experience to be a part of—she put the story first. She put the

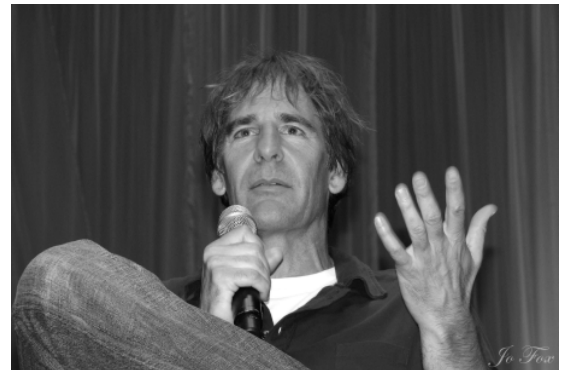
words that we were singing first, and the music came out of the moment that she created within the play.



Sophina

It was really a great thing to experience as an actor, because that is the part that we all cherish the most—being able to be storytellers.

Scott (David): I think combining an older piece like this, and to take and try to ground it in “today” for today's audience—to approach it that way, with as much reality as we possibly could—you had to have a director like Kay who would go along with that. And you need to have a musical director who would accept that. A lot of times a musical director might say, “Okay, now it's my turn. Here comes a song. I have a great band, and we're going to kick butt with this music.” Gerry was very much, “Let's stay in the moment. What do we learn from the song?” We keep it flowing that way.



Scott

And good casting! Here's a wonderful cast of actors who are also great singers. It was a very simple approach to a piece that has a lot of stuff going on, even today. It feels like we are all on the same page, and as Sophina said, when we have a great audience, like today, it feels like we are doing the right thing.

Gerry (first to Scott): Thank you for the acknowledgement, by the way.

I want to add that when Kay and I, and Christine [Kellogg], our wonderful choreographer who's not here, were having meetings, we talked a lot about this. Some of you may not know this but when they did the show in 1962, there were contractual things, such as: Diahann Carroll had to have, after ten minutes, another song. If you are familiar with the original cast album, she sings a chorus, then [Richard Kiley] sings a

chorus, and then they both sing a chorus. There is no new information.

When I work as a musical director, I always say: If you are going to say something or repeat it, there must be a reason that's compelling you to do that. If we all found out there was no reason to do that, let's cut to the chase and move on, so the actors can move on with the storytelling. I think we did a very good job of that.

Audience member: When you say that we are a great audience, what does that mean?

Sophina: We can feel your energy up on stage. Please know that whenever you go see a live performance, we all are connected to each other. It's a circle. You guys were laughing in the right places. We can feel your energy and know that you were enjoying us and you were with us and you were for us. And we appreciate it.

Jim Gardia: Thank you so much for staying. I have to release them now, so they can go to dinner.



Ruth Williamson played Mollie Plummer



Brent Schindele played Luc Delbert

Complete Cast for No Strings

Barbara Woodruff..... Sophina Brown
 David Jordan..... Scott Bakula
 Jeanette Valny..... Carla Tassara
 Luc Delbert..... Brent Schindele
 Mollie Plummer..... Ruth Williamson
 Mike Robinson..... Matthew Ashford
 Louis dePourtal..... Joseph Culliton
 Comfort O'Connell..... Bets Malone
 Gabrielle Bertin..... Tracy Powell
 Marcello Agnolotti..... John Todd

Ensemble

Audrey Cain, Bradley Dodds, Cherish Hamutoff, Katie Horwitch, Todd Christian Hunter, Monica Lee, Tracy Powell, Rebecca Rainboldt, Vanessa Ross, Kate Roth, Anna Schnaitter, Kelly Tatro, John Todd

The Orchestra

Conductor: Gerald Sternbach; *Contractor:* Joe Soldo; *Alto Sax I/Clarinet:* Gary Foster; *Alto Sax II/Flute:* Greg Huckins; *Tenor Sax I:* Lee Callet; *Tenor Sax II:* Phil Feather; *Baritone Sax:* John Mitchell; *1st Trumpet:* Larry Lunetta; *Trumpets:* Larry McGuire, Pete Desiena, John Furno; *1st Trombone:* Chauncey Welsch; *2nd Trombone:* Bill Elton; *Bass Trombone:* Bryant Byers; *Bass:* Chuck Berghofer; *Percussion:* Mark Converse

**Opening Night, May 8, 2007
 The Freud Playhouse at UCLA**



Sophina Brown with Diahann Carroll, who originated the role of Barbara Woodruff on Broadway in 1962



Joe McFate (l) and award-winning designer Bob Mackie were nominated for a 2007 Ovation Award for creating the costumes in this production of No Strings



Sophina and Scott

More opening night photos at: <http://www.reprisebroadwaysbest.blogspot.com/>
 Above photographs courtesy of Reprise! Broadway's Best and their website, <http://reprise.org>