

THE SHUBERTS

AND
THEIR

PASSING
SHOWS



The
UNTOLD TALE
of
ZIEGFELD'S
RIVALS

JONAS WESTOVER

THE SHUBERTS AND THEIR
PASSING SHOWS



Geoffrey Block, Series Editor

Series Board

Dominic McHugh Jeffrey Magee
Tim Carter Carol J. Oja
Kim Kowalke Larry Starr
Stephen Banfield, *emeritus*

South Pacific: Paradise Rewritten
Jim Lovensheimer

Pick Yourself Up: Dorothy Fields and the American Musical
Charlotte Greenspan

To Broadway, To Life! The Musical Theater of Bock and Harnick
Philip Lambert

Irving Berlin's American Musical Theater
Jeffrey Magee

Loverly: The Life and Times of My Fair Lady
Dominic McHugh

"Show Boat": Performing Race in an American Musical
Todd Decker

Bernstein Meets Broadway: Collaborative Art in a Time of War
Carol J. Oja

"We'll Have Manhattan": The Early Work of Rodgers and Hart
Dominic Symonds

Agnes de Mille: Telling Stories in Broadway Dance
Kara Anne Gardner

The Shuberts and their Passing Shows: The Untold Tale of Ziegfeld's Rivals
Jonas Westover

**THE SHUBERTS
AND THEIR
*PASSING SHOWS***

The Untold Tale
of Ziegfeld's Rivals

JONAS WESTOVER

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

© Oxford University Press 2016

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction rights organization. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Westover, Jonas, author.

Title: The Shuberts and their Passing Shows : the untold tale of Ziegfeld's rivals / by Jonas Westover.

Description: New York : Oxford University Press, [2016] | Series: The Broadway legacies series | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016008634 | ISBN 9780190219239 (bound book : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780190219260 (oxford scholarship online) | ISBN 9780190219277 (companion website)

Subjects: LCSH: Revues—United States—20th century—History and criticism. | Shubert, Jacob J., 1878?–1963. | Shubert, Lee, 1873?–1953. | Shubert Organization—History—20th century.

Classification: LCC ML1711.5 .W47 2016 | DDC 792.609747/1—dc23 LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2016008634>

Hardcover 9780190219239

UPDF 9780190219246

EPUB 9780190219253

Oxford Scholarship Online 9780190219260

Companion Website 9780190219277

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed by Sheridan Books, Inc., United States of America

TO JOHN GRAZIANO,
for opening the curtain in the first place,
and

TO PAUL CHAROSH,
for letting me hear their voices in so many ways.

CONTENTS



<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>List of Musical Examples</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>A List of Passing Show Personages</i>	<i>xvii</i>
<i>Foreword by Geoffrey Block</i>	<i>xxv</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xxvii</i>
<i>About the Companion Website</i>	<i>xxix</i>
Introduction	1
1. A Twelve-Hour Show Squeezed into Three: The Creative Forces Behind <i>The Passing Shows</i>	5
2. A Matchless Mélange of Mirth and Melody: The Stars of <i>The Passing Shows</i>	35
3. The Hebrew Messenger Boy and the Thespian: The Howard Brothers	63
4. A Downpour of Talent, A Niagara of Beauty: Chorus Girls and Chorus Boys	87
5. The Mastodon of Musical Extravaganza: Song, Dance, and Scenic Effects	121
6. A Sure Cure for the Blues: Creating <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i>	151
7. A Carnival of Travesty: Textual and Musical References in <i>The Passing Shows</i>	181
8. America's Foremost Musical Institution: The Shuberts, Ziegfeld, and Their Battle for Supremacy	201
9. As New, Bright, and Welcome as the Morning Sun: The Birth of a Legend and the Demise of a Genre	227
Postscript	251
Appendices	253
Bibliography	263
Index	267

LIST OF FIGURES



1.1.	Cover for sheet music selections from <i>The Passing Show</i> (1894). Author's Collection	8
1.2.	Postcard featuring the Winter Garden Theater, 1916. Author's Collection	12
1.3.	"The Making of a Girl" sheet music cover. Author's Collection	19
1.4.	Title page for <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i> overture manuscript. Shubert Archive	22
1.5.	"Champagne Girl" Grace Keeshon from <i>The Passing Show of 1917</i> . Courtesy of Grapefruit Moon Gallery	25
1.6.	The Court of King Solomon scene, <i>The Passing Show of 1919</i> . Author's Collection	26
2.1.	Winter Garden anniversary photograph, 1921. Shubert Archive	36
2.2.	Ed Wynn in the garage scene, <i>The Passing Show of 1916</i> . Author's Collection	40
2.3.	George W. Monroe as Lily, <i>The Passing Show of 1915</i> . Author's Collection	43
2.4.	Marilynn Miller as "Youth" and Willie Howard as "Charlie Chaplin," <i>The Passing Show of 1915</i> . Author's Collection	49
2.5*.	Astaire advertisement in <i>Variety</i> , 1918	55
3.1.	The four dialect types: German ("Dutch"), Irish, Black, and Hebrew. Author's Collection	66
3.2.	The Howard Brothers, 1908. Bert Levy cartoon from <i>Variety</i>	67
3.3*.	Howard Brothers advertisement in <i>Variety</i> , 1906	68
3.4.	Willie and Eugene Howard as Androcles and a Roman Centurion, <i>The Passing Show of 1915</i> . Author's Collection	75
4.1.	"The Language of the Fan," <i>The Passing Show of 1917</i> . Shubert Archive	91
4.2.	A Squab Farm "chick," <i>The Passing Show of 1918</i> . Shubert Archive	92
4.3.	"Gold, Silver, and Green," chorus girl costume sketch, <i>The Passing Show of 1924</i> . Shubert Archive	95
4.4.	Cartoon by Herb Roth in the <i>Green Book Magazine</i> , 1912	98
4.5.	Alyne Whalen in <i>The Passing Show of 1924</i> . <i>Red Pepper</i> (December 1924 Issue). Author's Collection	101

4.6.	Candid photo taken backstage at the Garrick Theater, Chicago, <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i> tour. Author's Collection	105
4.7*	June Elvidge. Author's Collection	106
4.8.	Nita Naldi's "Halloween Girl" costume, <i>The Passing Show of 1918</i> . Shubert Archive	108
4.9.	Joan Crawford in the "Beaded Bag" number (seventh from right), <i>The Passing Show of 1924</i> . Photo courtesy of Grapefruit Moon Gallery	109
4.10*	Chorus girls selling tickets to Wall Street. <i>Binghamton Press</i>	111
5.1.	Prohibition cartoon from Clarinet part, <i>The Passing Show of 1919</i> . Shubert Archive	125
5.2.	"Carnegie" ("Handy Andy") sheet music cover, <i>The Passing Show of 1912</i> . Author's Collection	126
5.3.	Remick's advertising proof for "Pretty Baby" and "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles." Shubert Archive	128
5.4.	Theodor Kosloff, Maria Baldina, and Alexis Kosloff, <i>The Passing Show of 1915</i> . Author's Collection	137
5.5.	Swirskaya and Dunne, <i>The Passing Show of 1916</i> . Author's Collection	139
6.1.	Undated cartoon of women's club (gym). Unknown magazine source. Shubert Archive	163
6.2*	Eugenics Girls, <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i> . See New York Public Library Digital Collection, White Studios Key Sheets, Photo #26	164
6.3.	"A Eugenic Wedding" by A.B. Walker (fl. 1900–1930), <i>Life Magazine</i> , Date unknown. Shubert Archive	164
6.4.	"The Sloping Path," <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i> . Shubert Archive	174
7.1.	"Salvation Nell" sheet music cover. Author's Collection	185
7.2*	Olga Petrova. Author's Collection	188
7.3*	The Queen of the Movies and Mr. Varenka, <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i> . See New York Public Library Digital Collection, White Studios Key Sheets, Photo #5	189
7.4*	Kitty MacKay, <i>Passing Show of 1914</i> . See New York Public Library Digital Collection, White Studios Key Sheets, Photo #13	190
7.5*	Kitty MacKay, <i>Kitty MacKay</i> . Author's Collection	190
7.6*	"When Martha Was a Girl" sheet music cover. Author's Collection	198
8.1.	Jardin de Paris stage (ca. 1906, as the Olympia Roof Garden). Shubert Archive	206
8.2.	Winter Garden interior, stage left. Shubert Archive	206

8.3. The Rath Brothers on the cover of “My Isle of Golden Dreams.” Author’s Collection	216
9.1* and 9.2*. Scibilia’s Broadway Passing Show matchbook cover, 1939. Author’s Collection	244
9.3. Scibilia’s Broadway Passing Show matchbook inside, 1939. Author’s Collection	245
9.4. Advertisement for <i>The Passing Show of 1924</i> . Author’s Collection	246

Images available on companion website

LIST OF TABLES



1.1. Fall, Spring, and Summer Revues at the Winter Garden Theater	10
3.1. Songs Performed by Willie and Eugene Howard in <i>The Passing Shows</i>	77
4.1. Chorus Members in Three Winter Garden Revues	103
5.1. The Instrumentation for <i>The Passing Show of 1912</i>	124
6.1. Early Cast List with Roles, <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i>	153
6.2. Scenarios for <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i>	157
6.3. Scripts for <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i>	163
6.4. The Structure of <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i>	171

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES



5.1. First violin part and violin obbligato part from “Kissable Lips”	130
7.1. Chorus from “Hazaazaa,” <i>Sari</i> . Emmerich Kálmán	193
7.2. Chorus from “Sari Dance,” <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i> . Sigmund Romberg	194
7.3. Chorus from “The Midnight Girl,” <i>The Midnight Girl</i> . Adolf Philipp	194
7.4a and 7.4b. Chorus from “The Midnight Girl,” <i>The Passing Show of 1914</i> . Sigmund Romberg	196

A LIST OF *PASSING SHOW* PERSONAGES



Performers, Producers, Professionals, and Participants
Associated with the Revues

The Passing Show (PS) each person/act was involved in is mentioned
at the end of each entry.

P. DODD ACKERMAN (1876–1963): Scene designer and painter. Incredibly prolific designer, Ackerman was responsible for dozens of shows including *The Firefly* (1912) and *No, No, Nanette* (1925). He ran a studio in Brooklyn and employed a large number of theatrical builders and seamstresses. PS 1915, 1916, 1917.

ADELAIDE AND HUGHES: MARY ADELAIDE DICKEY (1884–1960) and JOHN J. HUGHES (ca. 1887–1920) were a dance duo active in vaudeville during the 1910s. They used a creative mixture of classical and popular styles. PS 1912.

FRED ALLEN (1894–1956): Comedian. Allen began in vaudeville, but went on to great success in many forms of entertainment, including on the Broadway stage, in movies, and television. *The Fred Allen Show* was the top-rated program on radio during the mid-1940s. PS 1922.

SAM ASH (1884–1951): Comedian and singer. A vaudevillian who made records early in his career, Ash appeared on Broadway throughout the 1920s, but went on to Hollywood in 1929, appearing in many serials. He was in over two hundred films, mostly playing bit parts. PS 1922.

FRED AND ADELE ASTAIRE: Fred (1899–1987) and Adele (1897–1981) were dancers and singers whose career began when they were small children and continued as a partnership into the 1920s, notably in *Lady Be Good* (1924) and *The Band Wagon* (1931). Adele quit performing after marriage in 1932, while Fred went on to become a central star of film musicals. PS 1918.

HAROLD ATTERIDGE (1887–1938): Writer, librettist, and lyricist. Born in Chicago, Atteridge wrote lyrics for several songs that found their way into Broadway shows, including *Madame Sherry* (1910). He moved to New York in 1910 and was soon after hired by the Shuberts. He wrote the book and lyrics to every edition of *The Passing Show* on Broadway. PS 1912–1924, 1926, 1932.

(GEORGE) WATSON BARRATT (1884–1962): Scene designer and artistic director. Trained as an illustrator, Barratt was hired by the Shuberts in 1918 and consequently was the principal scene designer for (reputedly) over three hundred of their productions. One of the most influential scene designers in Broadway's history, Barratt's early career was primarily his work on the Winter Garden revues. He was also an important patron and supporter of regional theater and art. PS 1918–1919, 1922–1924, 1932.

BILLIE BURKE (ZIEGFELD) (1884–1970): Actress. Burke came from a family of entertainers and began performing in 1903. She was successful on the stage, first in London, then New York, and eventually Hollywood (in films). Her most famous role was that of Glinda the Good Witch in *The Wizard of Oz* (1937). She perpetuated her husband (Florenz Ziegfeld’s) name and show after he died through later productions. PS 1934, 1936, 1943.

HELEN CARRINGTON (1895–1963): Actress and singer. Began as a chorus girl in *The Passing Show* and eventually became a well-known comic and character actress. She was featured in *Plain Jane* (1924) and *Queen High* (1926) and remained on the stage into the 1930s, notably in *The Band Wagon* (1931). She also made films. PS 1914, 1915, 1918.

LINCOLN J. CARTER (1865–1926): Playwright, manager, builder, and inventor. The Chicago-based Carter had a remarkable career writing highly emotional melodramas from the late nineteenth century into the twentieth. His shows toured widely and were very popular. He was also known for his stage inventions and effects. PS 1916.

JOSÉ COLLINS (1887–1958): English singer and actress. The daughter of Lottie Collins, the singer known for “Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay,” Collins starred in *The Merry Widow* by age 15 and was brought to America by the Shuberts in 1911 for *Vera Violetta*. She was known for an excellent soprano voice. PS 1914.

HOMER B. CONANT (1887–1927): Costume designer and illustrator. Conant was a Shubert employee during the 1910s and 1920s, providing many sketches for dozens of shows. During the same time, he also drew for many periodicals, including *The Broadside* and *Theatre Magazine*. PS 1914–1917, 1919 (possibly more).

FRANCES DEMAREST (fl. 1910s): Singer and actress. Demarest was a success in vaudeville and on Broadway, with featured roles in several shows, including *Madame Sherry* (1910) and *The Royal Vagabond* (1919). PS 1914, 1915, 1916.

ERTÉ (1892–1990): Costume designer. Erté was a Russian artist partially responsible for the Art Deco style through his illustrations, costume work, stage designs, jewelry, and especially fashion. PS 1922.

FRANK FAY (1891–1961): Actor and comedian. A star in vaudeville by 1920, he also performed in a number of Broadway shows. He was the lead in *Harvey* (1944). Fay was also well known in Hollywood into the late 1940s, after which he became a writer for television. PS 1918.

HARRY FISHER (1868–1923): Comic actor in vaudeville and on Broadway. He was the “straight” man to George W. Monroe’s overbearing female characters. The two were successes in such shows as *The Midnight Sons* (1909) and *The Sun Dodgers* (1912). PS 1914, 1915.

IRENE FRANKLIN (1876–1941): Actress, singer, lyricist, and comedian. Important female performer through songs like “Redhead” in vaudeville, she had several Broadway appearances before turning to film in the 1930s. PS 1917.

TRIXIE FRIGANZA (1870–1955): Boisterous comedic actress. Active in vaudeville and in numerous Broadway productions, her early successes include *The Prince of Pilsen* (1903) and the pre-*Follies* revue, *Higgeldy-Piggledy* (1905). She was also a noted suffragette. *PS* 1912.

BERNARD GRANVILLE (1886–1936): Actor, singer, dancer, publisher. Originally considered a rival to Jolson, Granville was successful in vaudeville and on Broadway. He was particularly known for replacing Vernon Castle in *Watch Your Step*. He had a movie career in his later years. *PS* 1914.

CHARLOTTE GREENWOOD (1890–1978): Comedian, dancer, and singer. Beginning as a chorus girl, the six-foot-tall dancer got noticed, going on to vaudeville and Broadway. She found great success as the “Letty” character in a number of musicals, including *So Long, Letty* (1929). She went on to star in television and movies, notably playing “Aunt Eller” in the film of *Oklahoma!* (1955). *PS* 1912, 1913.

“TEXAS” GUINAN (1885–1933): Actress, singer, speakeasy owner. Guinan began in vaudeville, and sang in several productions in 1909–1911. She was known for her vivacious, brash personality and appeared in several revues. During Prohibition she ran many speakeasies, where she acted as hostess and also put on revues of her own. *PS* 1912.

ERNEST (ERNIE) HARE (1883–1939): Singer. Active on Broadway through the 1910s, especially in revues, Hare began recording records in 1918 with great success, and eventually paired with Billy Jones to form the “Happiness Boys.” They became two of the highest-paid performers on radio throughout the next two decades. *PS* 1912, 1915.

GEORGE HASSELL (1881–1937): British actor and comedian. Hassell was active in America after 1906, often in dramatic roles; he was in *The Girl from Brazil* (1916), after which he turned mainly to comedy. *PS* 1918, 1922, 1923.

PORTLAND HOFFA (1905–1990): Comedian and singer. Hoffa began in vaudeville, worked on Broadway in the 1920s, and then moved to radio with husband, Fred Allen. She was also active in television. *PS* 1922.

EUGENE HOWARD (1881–1965): Comedian and singer. The older brother in the Howard Brothers act, he was usually the “straight” man for his brother Willie, but he also took on many raucous comic roles. The two were considered the central stars of *The Passing Show* series and many of George White’s *Scandals*. Eugene quit the act to become Willie’s manager in 1940. *PS* 1912, 1915, 1918, 1921, 1922.

WILLIE HOWARD (1886–1943): Comedian and singer. The younger brother in the Howard Brothers act, Howard was considered among the first of the Jewish comedians to incorporate Yiddish humor and accents in the act. He was an important star on Broadway, especially in revues, appearing in Gershwin’s *Girl Crazy* (1930). He also released recordings and starred in several short films. He appeared in the first *Passing Show* in 1912 and also the final version, in 1945/6, which played only in previews. *PS* 1912, 1915, 1918, 1921, 1922, 1946.

JOBYNA HOWLAND (1880–1936): Actress. Her career began in 1899, and she performed in many stage works, often comedies. Also active in movies, especially the Woolsey and Wheeler comedies, beginning with *The Cuckoos* (1930). *PS* 1912.

J.C. HUFFMAN (1869–1935): Director. Originally from Ohio, he performed as a child actor and singer before he was a director. Eventually he gained an international reputation and began working for the Shuberts as early as 1906. He was responsible for the direction of most of the Winter Garden revues, including *Artists and Models* and the *Greenwich Village Follies*, as well as many of the Shuberts' large-scale operettas. *PS* 1914–1924, 1926

ALEXIS KOSLOFF (ca. 1888–1983): Russian dancer and choreographer. Alexis followed Theodore to the United States after a high-profile career in Europe. He worked for the Shuberts for more than a decade. He also made films, but was based in New York, where he performed at the Metropolitan Opera and ran a dance studio. *PS* 1915.

THEODORE KOSLOFF (1882–1956): Russian dancer and choreographer. A member of Diaghilev's Ballet Russes, Kosloff came to America in 1912 and was instrumental in bringing high-quality dance to several venues, including the Winter Garden revues. He moved to Hollywood in 1917 to act and eventually run a dance studio. His wife, Maria Baldina, was a frequent dance partner and co-instructor. *PS* 1912, 1915.

The Lockfords: ZITA AND NARO LOCKFORD (formerly Lebateau) (fl. 1920s). Parisian acrobats and dancers. Their specialty was an “adagio” act. *PS* 1922, 1924.

JACK MASON (fl. 1910s–1940s): Choreographer, dancer, performer, and manager (not to be confused with the contemporary composer of the same name). Mason was active just after the turn of the century in both vaudeville and on the Broadway stage. His dancing partner was Lois Whitney. Mason choreographed some of the Winter Garden revues in the mid-1910s but also worked for several other producers. *PS* 1914, 1915, 1918.

ARTIE MEHLINGER (1886–1959): Vaudeville singer who toured widely as a part of Step, Mehlinger, and King during the 1910s, and he also teamed with singer George Meyer. The tenor wrote lyrics for several Tin Pan Alley songs, including “Hiawatha's Melody of Love,” and he was strongly associated with others, such as “Carolina in the Morning.” *PS* 1913, 1914.

EMILY MILES (1892–1947): Actress and singer. Miles began as a chorus girl, then became an understudy, and eventually took on a principal role in many *Passing Shows*. She retired in 1922 when she married Willie Howard. *PS* 1914–1918, 1921, 1922.

MARILYN(N) MILLER (1898–1936): Singer, dancer, and actress. Miller began performing as a child in vaudeville as part of her family's troupe and then moved onto the Broadway stage. Her star turns in shows such as *Sally* (1920), *Sunny* (1925), *Rosalie* (1928), and *As Thousands Cheer* (1933) brought her incredible popularity. She was also a Hollywood star, reprising her roles in *Sally* (1929) and *Sunny* (1930) in movies. *PS* 1914, 1915.

GEORGE W. MONROE (1857–1932): Female impersonator/comedian active in the 1880s until the 1910s. He was particularly known for his Irish matron character, “Aunt Bridget,” in “The Doings of Mrs. Dooley” (1902) and other shows. He and Harry Fisher worked together in such shows as *The Midnight Sons* (1909) and *The Sun Dodgers* (1912). *PS* 1914, 1915.

NITA NALDI (1894–1961): Actress. Naldi began as a chorus girl, but she became nationally famous as a movie star after being featured in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920) alongside John Barrymore. *PS* 1918.

NAZARRO TROUPE: Nat Nazarro Jr., J. Edward Nazarro, and Erman Nazarro, with more members possibly included in the overall troupe. Gymnasts and acrobats. Nat Jr. was a singer and dancer as well. Troupe: *PS* 1914. Nat Nazarro Jr.: *PS* 1914, 1922, 1923.

OSCAR RADIN (1874–1957): Conductor and composer. Russian by birth, Radin became a violinist in Pittsburgh, but soon turned to conducting. He worked in small companies until 1906, when he settled in New York and began working on Broadway until 1929. He began to compose scores for films after 1932, and conducted the music for several, including *Mad Love* (1935). Uncle of Oscar Levant, he was one of the most important musical theater conductors of his time. *PS* 1912–1917, 1919.

GEORGE AND DICK RATH (formerly George Meigs [dates unknown] and Wilbur Richard “Dick” Cameron [1894–1975]): Acrobats, singers. The duo was an adagio act that was active in vaudeville and on Broadway from the 1910s into the 1930s. They were at the center of a major lawsuit between Ziegfeld and the Shuberts in 1920. *PS* 1919.

FRANCIS RENAULT (ca. 1893–1955): Female impersonator, singer, and comedian. A “boy singer” in Gus Edwards’ 1908 *School Days*, Renault performed in vaudeville. As an adult, Renault found great success as an impersonator with an expensive wardrobe and a beautiful falsetto voice. He opened his own club in Atlantic City in 1924, and eventually performed at the Metropolitan Opera and over forty times at Carnegie Hall. *PS* 1922.

BLANCHE RING (1871–1961): Vaudeville and Broadway performer, especially known for her “signature” songs, which included “I’ve Got Rings on My Fingers.” Ring often invited audiences to sing along with her performances. She married Charles Winninger after appearing together in *The Yankee Girl* (1909). *PS* 1919.

ISABELLA RODRIGUEZ (dates unknown): Spanish dancer. Rodriguez danced in Europe, but fled in 1915 due to the war. Originally from Barcelona, she was known for her abilities with the castanets and was considered a specialist in Catalan styles. *PS* 1918.

SIGMUND ROMBERG (1887–1951): Composer. Romberg was born in Hungary but he moved to America in 1909. A central figure in the Shubert’s creative team, Romberg wrote dozens of shows for the producers, including most of their Winter Garden revues and popular operettas of the 1920s, such as *Blossom Time* (1921), *The Student Prince* (1924), and *The Desert Song* (1926). *PS* 1914, 1916–1918, 1923, 1924.

CHARLES RUGGLES (1886–1970): Actor and comedian. Ruggles began working on the stage in 1905 and performed regularly until 1929. He appeared in many silent films during the 1910s and continued finding success in comedy movies up until his death. *PS* 1918.

FRANK SADDLER (1864–1921): Orchestrator. Saddler was an expert arranger, working in the Midwest for some time before moving to New York. His most famous collaborator was Jerome Kern. Saddler's students include many of the most important Broadway orchestrators from the 1920s and beyond, most notably Robert Russell Bennett. *PS* 1912–1919.

JEAN SCHWARTZ (1878–1956): Composer. Schwartz was a popular Tin Pan Alley composer and pianist. He had a vaudeville routine and was the designated accompanist for the Dolly Sisters. He was one of the most sought-after Broadway tunesmiths of his time, and eventually he wrote for film. *PS* 1913, 1918, 1919, 1921, 1923, 1924.

JACOB J. (J. J.) SHUBERT (c.1879–1963): Youngest of the Shubert Brothers he became deeply involved with overseeing productions after Sam's death. The Winter Garden revues, including *The Passing Shows*, were his projects.

LEVI (LEE) SHUBERT (c.1871–1953): Oldest of the Shubert Brothers, he was frequently responsible for the financial affairs of the firm.

SAM SHUBERT (c.1875–1905): The family of nine emigrated to Syracuse, New York, from Poland around 1881, and he was the first of the brothers to become involved in theater with a small onstage role. After various positions with theaters, he became a theater manager in 1897 and soon after was a tour manager before moving to New York City and establishing his family's business. He was killed in a train accident in 1905.

ETHEL SHUTTA (1896–1976): Actress and singer. Shutta began her career as part of her family's vaudeville show. Well-known as a Broadway performer, most notably in *Whoopee!* (1928), she also had a prolific career on radio, both with her husband, bandleader Geroge Olsen, and with Jack Benny. She made a remarkable comeback to the stage in Sondheim's *Follies* (1971). *PS* 1922.

ERNEST ROMAYNE "MA" SIMMONS (1865–1954): Costume supervisor. Simmons was one of the Shuberts' most trusted employees, performing an array of tasks. He worked for the firm from 1912 until just before 1950. Simmons was involved in some way with each of *The Passing Shows*.

COUNTESS THAMARA DE SWIRSKAYA (1888–1961): Russian dancer and pianist. Swirskaya studied in St. Petersburg and Paris, performed for Grieg, and had a successful career in both Europe and America, traveling between the two on multiple occasions. She appeared on film, on Broadway, in vaudeville, and with the Metropolitan Opera. Her first American national tour was in 1910, complete with a dancing troupe and orchestra. She continued to perform throughout the 1920s as a dancer and settled in Los Angeles, playing piano into the 1950s. *PS* 1916.

FRANK D. THOMAS (fl. 1905–1920): Scene designer and inventor. Designed “effects” that made use of film as early as 1913 at the Winter Garden. *PS* 1913, 1914.

TRADO TWINS: FRANK (1904–1980) AND PETER (1904–1969) TRADO were actually twin brothers who worked as a comedy duo active in vaudeville and eventually in films. *PS* 1922, 1923.

NED WAYBURN (1874–1942): Dance instructor, director, and choreographer. Wayburn was one of the primary figures in the development of dance during the early twentieth century, running a school for chorus girls and staging his own revues. He was an important force in the early Winter Garden revues. *PS* 1912, 1913.

CHARLES WINNINGER (1884–1969): Actor in vaudeville, Broadway, and eventually a well-known film presence in movies. He played “Cap’n Andy” in *Show Boat* (1927). He married Blanche Ring after they appeared together in *The Yankee Girl* (1909). *PS* 1919.

ED WYNN (1886–1966): Comic actor active in vaudeville, on Broadway, on film, and also television. Wynne was a major star of revues, especially in his own shows in the 1920s and 1930s. *PS* 1916.

FLORENZ ZIEGFELD, JR. (1867–1932): Theater producer and impresario. His father ran the Tocadoero Club in Chicago, immersing Ziegfeld in the world of entertainment at a young age. Best remembered for his series of revues begun in 1907 called the *Follies*, he also produced a number of other key shows, including *Show Boat* (1927). The Shubert brothers negotiated the rights to the *Follies* property after Ziegfeld’s death.

FOREWORD



In contrast to plot-driven musical comedies and operettas, the perennially popular revue genre from the 1890s to about 1930 featured skits, songs, dances, stylish sets, and female pulchritude within a looser narrative, albeit often constructed within a unified thematic framework. In 1912, the producers and brothers Lee and J. J. Shubert launched an annual series of revues called *The Passing Show*, a name borrowed from the revue (then designated “review”), which begat the form in 1894. From 1912 to 1924, with the exception of 1920, the Shuberts’ *Passing Shows* became the reliable annual rival of Florenz Ziegfeld’s *Ziegfeld Follies* (1911–1925, 1927, and 1931), formerly more simply and less-indulgently designated as the *Follies* (1907–1910). *The Shuberts and Their Passing Shows: The Untold Tale of Ziegfeld’s Rivals*, the pioneering new Broadway Legacies volume by Jonas Westover, the young but distinguished scholar of the revue genre, “challenges the notion that Ziegfeld and his *Follies* were the only important revues of the era” and offers a comprehensive rediscovery of a major series of shows that unfortunately has been largely “passed” over by history.

From the beginning, the Shubert brothers’ consistently successful series of *Passing Shows* provided a worthy alternative to those of their local rival and arguably served as an unrivaled repository for present and future stars and both rising and established talents. The first edition not only included a score by Louis Hirsch but also interpolated Irving Berlin’s early hit “Everybody’s Doing It Now” to accompany stage action and another Berlin song, “The Ragtime Jockey Man,” for Willie Howard, who would gain more lasting fame for his role as Gieber Goldfarb in the Gershwin’s *Girl Crazy* in 1930. Following Hirsch and Berlin’s opening gambit, the ever-present Sigmund Romberg became the Shuberts’ main “house” composer for well over half the remaining revues (1914, 1916–1919, and 1923–1924), enhanced by proven interpolated popular songs by lesser-known composers. Audiences at one of these Romberg shows, *The Passing Show of 1916*, also witnessed the first George Gershwin song to be performed on the Broadway stage. Most of the lasting songs, however, were not composed by Romberg or Gershwin, but several fondly remembered songs offered by composers now largely forgotten, most notably Tony Jackson’s “Pretty Baby” from the 1916 edition (credited to composer Egbert Van Alstyne and lyricist Gus Kahn), and two perennial hits from 1918, Lee S. Roberts’s “Smiles” and John Kелlette’s “I’m Forever Blowing Bubbles.”

In addition to Willie Howard and his brother Eugene, the central stars of numerous *Passing Shows* who deserve and receive a chapter of their own in this volume, Westover introduces readers to Marilyn (later Marilyn) Miller, the future star of Jerome Kern’s *Sally* (1920) and *Sunny* (1925), as a fifteen-year-old talent who lit up the Broadway stage in *The Passing Show of 1914*. We also meet the phenomenal new brother-and-sister dance team of Adele and Fred Astaire in 1918, *Show Boat*’s future Cap’n Andy, Charles Winninger, in 1916 and 1919, and in the 1916 edition Ed Wynn, the future star of Rodgers and Hart’s *Simple Simon* (1930), the voice of the Mad Hatter

in Walt Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) and Uncle Albert in the Disney version of *Mary Poppins* (1964). The 1922 edition featured the young Ethel Shutta, who in her seventies could still stop a show when she belted Stephen Sondheim's "Broadway Baby" in another *Follies* nearly fifty years later in 1971. The final *Passing Show* edition of 1924 offers yet another fascinating historical footnote since it led to the discovery of Joan Crawford, one of the forty-five carefully chosen girls in the chorus, reduced from the eighty members who graced the stage when the series began its long run in 1912.

In *The Shuberts and Their Passing Shows* Westover, who has published articles on *The Passing Shows* and other early revues, guest edited a special issue on the revue in *Studies in Musical Theatre*, and contributed 406 articles on diverse topics in the second edition of *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, follows his award-winning dissertation at CUNY on *The Passing Show of 1914* with new research that examines the legacy of all *The Passing Shows*. After a chapter on the genesis of the revue genre, Westover moves on to individual chapters on the many stars in *The Passing Shows* firmament, including the Howard brothers, female and male choruses and the early career of chorus girl Joan Crawford, the songs and their acclaimed orchestrations by Frank Saddler and Robert Russell Bennett, and the role of dance and scenic design. The two chapters on *The Passing Show of 1914* explore the interplay of character, dialogue, and song, and engage the meanings behind a wide range of parodied material within their social contexts.

The rivalry between the Shuberts and Ziegfeld recalls the story of another Schubert, the nineteenth-century composer Franz Schubert, whose life and music was set to the hit musical *Blossom Time*, produced by the Shubert brothers in 1921. Just as Franz Schubert's story seems incomplete without at least acknowledging his more famous contemporary, Ludwig van Beethoven, it seems nearly impossible to tell the story of the Broadway Shuberts and their *Passing Shows* without taking into account what their neighbor and rival Ziegfeld was up to. For this reason, the final chapters generously document, analyze, and clarify the often acrimonious and litigious personal and professional feud between the Shubert brothers and Ziegfeld as it moved "from neutral to spiteful." Readers will also learn about the ironic twists that befell *The Passing Show* after the death of Ziegfeld in 1932 and the subsequent rise of the Ziegfeld Myth for which the Shuberts, who produced later editions of the *Ziegfeld Follies*, played a conspicuous part.

Thanks to Jonas Westover's *The Shuberts and Their Passing Shows: The Untold Tale of Ziegfeld's Rivals*, readers of this rigorously researched and copiously illustrated history will gain a vivid and vicarious understanding of a series of revues that, while seemingly ephemeral, served as a fertile breeding ground of talent and ideas and a Broadway legacy that was anything but a passing one.

Geoffrey Block
Series Editor, *Broadway Legacies*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



I have many people to thank for their encouragement and support throughout this project. The first would have to be John Graziano, who, as I mentioned in the Dedication, was the first to suggest diving into this era and (specifically) thinking in more depth about the revue as a genre. John and Roberta Graziano were steadfast supporters of my work and consistently offered suggestions and help with the project, a gift for which I will be forever grateful.

I also want to thank Paul Charosh, whose knowledge of the music of this era was essential to my understanding the context for many of the references. He was one of the few people who knew many of the individuals that I encountered for the first time as part of my research. Our daily conversations about performers such as Irene Franklin and Victor Herbert gave me a much broader perspective on the entire cultural milieu, which repeatedly helped remind me that I needed to approach the material on its own terms rather than through my own distant lens. He is also one of the kindest people I have ever known and a true friend.

The Shubert Archive was almost a miracle to me, both in the materials it housed, and also concerning kindness of the staff. My primary contact there was Mark Swartz, who answered my questions and provided materials with swiftness and thoughtfulness, and I am deeply thankful for his enthusiasm and encouragement. He also put up with my ramblings concerning new finds and new ideas, and I must also appreciate him for that. Maryann Chach and Sylvia Wang were also helpful and patient with me, and I cannot thank them enough for their aid. The Shubert Archive also kindly provided me with the permission to use materials from virtually every part of their vast collection, including scripts, lyrics, music, advertising materials, and a seemingly unending ream of personal communications between the Shuberts themselves, their staff, and the hundreds that were a part of their cultural milieu.

I wish to thank Geoffrey Block and the unidentified readers for Oxford, all of whom made incredibly useful suggestions as to the overall shape of the final product and concerning many of the details. Norm Hirschy has been an excellent guide down the road of my first book, always willing to field my frequent questions. David Grayson gave me helpful feedback on some of the chapters. The community of musical theater scholars has been very generous with their time and attention. This has been particularly true of those involved with the Society of American Music, where I have given multiple papers at conferences, inundating my colleagues with *Passing Show* research. I wish to especially thank Tom Riis, Ryan Bunch, Trudi Vorp Wright, Ben Sears, Brad Connors, Gillian Rodger, Michael Pisani, Sarah Schmalenberger, Tim Brooks, Anna Wheeler Gentry, Dominic McHugh, Dominic Symonds, Dan Shore, Meg Farrell, and Jennifer Jones Wilson for their suggestions, willingness to listen, and discussions concerning the topic. Richard C. Norton provided some important information about songs. I also want to thank Grant Hayter-Menzies for generously sharing documents from Charlotte Greenwood's unpublished memoirs that helped bring to life the experience of a newly hired cast member.

I must thank Bob Kosovsky at the Performing Arts Department of the New York Public Library as well. Bob helped orient me to the very large world of non-catalogued resources that the library holds. Martha Hayes at the Theater Museum of Repertoire Americana in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, was generous with her time and introduced me to their collection of Lincoln J. Carter materials. The Museum is a remarkable jewel of American theatrical resources that deserves greater attention.


This journey has included many surprises along the way, including many unusual finds in unusual places. One of these was Grapefruit Moon Gallery, a virtual store that specializes in popular art and illustration of the early twentieth century. I was thrilled to discover that one of the Gallery's locations was in Minneapolis, and one of the owners, Sarajane Blum, was kind enough to provide me with digital scans of the store's remarkable collection of chorus girl photographs. I must also extend my thanks to many eBay sellers who were willing to make photocopies of music and documents for me that otherwise would have been impossible to acquire.

Finally, I have to thank my friends and family. My parents, Bonnie and Allan Westover, have been a part of this journey since the day I left the Shubert Archive for the first time and called to tell them I was nearly hysterical with excitement about this new material. They both have been constant sources of encouragement; I cannot thank them enough. My mother went above and beyond the call of duty, proofreading each chapter through numerous drafts. I must also thank friends who have been with me through the whole process of the book, including Jane Wilson, Brok Kretzmann, and Tony Lee. A special thanks to the Monday night post-orchestra crew, which included Stephen Decker, Allen Teyvel, Chaise Loper, D.J. Kieley, Mac Boeck, and Loren Keller; without their help, I might have fallen victim to the mediocre and quit before the book was completed. And lastly, to the voiceless ghosts whose music we will never hear—I hope this is only the beginning.

ABOUT THE COMPANION WEBSITE



www.oup.com/us/thepassingshows

Oxford has created a Web site to accompany *The Shuberts and Their Passing Shows: The Untold Tale of Ziegfeld's Rivals*. Due to the large number of available figures, many images that help illuminate the text are provided here. The reader is encouraged to consult this resource in conjunction with the monograph. Online examples are indicated in the text with Oxford's symbol .

THE SHUBERTS AND THEIR
PASSING SHOWS

