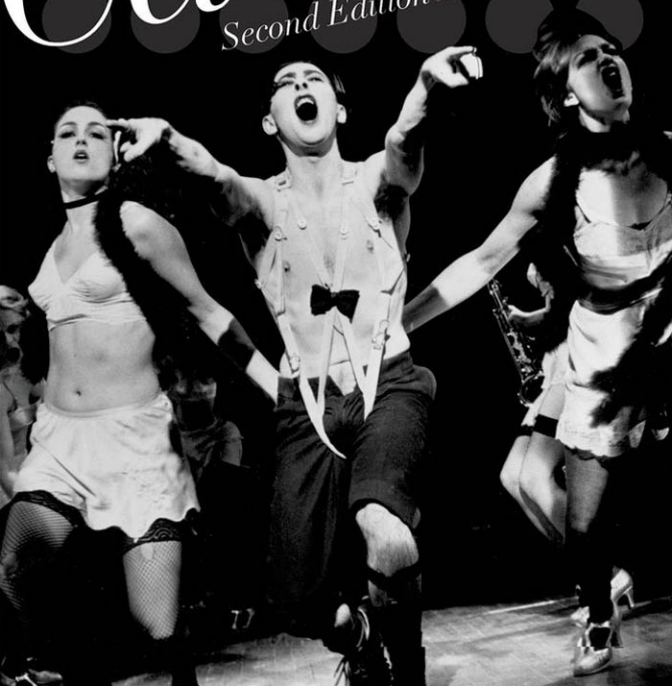


*the  
making of*  
**Cabaret**  
*Second Edition Keith Garebian*



THE  
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SECOND EDITION

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THE  
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SECOND EDITION

KEITH GAREBIAN

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FOR HAROLD PRINCE  
great artistic innovator  
whose version was the first

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## A NEW PREFACE

In his book *Harold Prince and the American Musical Theatre* (2005: 1), Foster Hirsch recalls a woman who left the opening night performance of *Cabaret* in Wilmington, Delaware, declaring: “It’s more than a musical!” Her exclamation suggests that the Broadway show had gone beyond European ethnicity and history on its way to success. As the musical’s librettist Joe Masteroff maintains, *Cabaret* is probably “the most imitated and influential” of Prince’s musicals (Hirsch 2005: 68). For one thing, the Emcee’s opening number (“Willkommen”) has become embedded in our cultural vocabulary, for example, leading Mel Brooks, in his film *Blazing Saddles* (1974), to have Madeline Kahn, playing a German chanteuse in the Dietrich *Destry* manner, greet every knock on her door with the trilingual invitation: “Willkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome” (Steyn 1997: 20). All joking aside, even on the surface *Cabaret* is not *just* a musical. The Berlin of the Third Reich, diluted for Broadway audiences, provides a symbolic edge that tips the show into the realm of fascinating metaphor. *Cabaret* is set in garish, sleazy, raucous, nervous, pre-World War II Berlin, but is it simply an American musical pretending to be German in the way that *My Fair Lady* (1956) thinks of itself as British? Certainly *Cabaret* does embody American showbiz, but it is very much defined by the German cabaret world. The Emcee literally beckons the cabaret’s cosmopolitan clientele with a greeting in three languages (German, French, English), and once inside we see the larger, outer world as in a mirror with ourselves reflected in it. John Kander and Fred Ebb keep faith with Harold Prince’s concept, giving the musical its special sound—actually a double score, one for book scenes, the other for cabaret numbers—and every artistic collaborator in the production helps in establishing the milieu and characters. In the

musical's first two Broadway incarnations, Ron Field's choreography was flashy but unromantic, playful but unsentimental. Just as *Chicago* (1975) defines itself by vaudeville (especially in the razzmatazz murder trial of Roxy Hart) and *West Side Story* (1957) by its repertoire of movement for the two rival gangs, *Cabaret* defines itself by the seductions of the Berlin cabaret world and Prince's resistance to many conventions of musical theater: his use of a symbolic frame, music as social comment, filmic devices, and expressionistic motifs (tilted mirror, blinder lights, black box setting, and spiral staircase).

At the time *Cabaret* arrived on Broadway, the musical was facing severe challenges to its health. As Carol Ilson explains in her book on Prince, the genre was in real peril. Times Square, the main area adjacent to the theater district, was getting sleazier with porno shops, prostitutes, and derelicts, "and there were perceived possible dangers to the theatregoing crowd" (Ilson 1989: 136). As ticket prices kept rising, producers reduced the number of performers in choruses as well as the budgets for costumes and sets. Meanwhile, following their television appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, the Beatles had become a sensation, and their new musical sound was having an immense impact on American showbiz. Gerald Bordman (1992: 643) has pointed out, "As far as memorable melodies went, the American Musical Theatre had suddenly become not very musical. With rare exceptions audiences rarely left new musicals singing their music." Songwriters were losing status to librettists and directors, and the trend was toward directors with "strong personalities and imaginative and artistic visions" (Ilson 1989: 136). In this context, *Cabaret* broke new ground. According to Scott Miller (1996: 27), it was "Hal Prince's first experiment in making a concept musical—a show in which the story is secondary to a central message or metaphor—a form he would later perfect with *Company*, *Follies*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, and other musicals." As Ilson (1989: 136) maintains, "Its unusual content and form, as well as its use of stagecraft, influenced the shape of the American Musical Theatre for decades afterward." Martin Gottfried (1984: 29) concurs, explaining further, "Since the concept musical was still in a formative stage this was a schizophrenic show. One-half of it was an orthodox musical play whose story unfolded in dramatic scenes with duly integrated book songs. The other half, however, startled and changed Broadway." But are these claims extravagant?

It has become the custom to see any innovative Broadway musical as a trendsetter, especially from the time of *Show Boat* (1927), through the

debuts of *My Fair Lady* (1956), *West Side Story* (1957), *Gypsy* (1959) and, more recently, with the advent of *Sweeney Todd* (1979) and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986). Certainly special claims can be made for these remarkable musicals, and there is no doubt that each left its important signature on the popular art form. As the world changes (along with technology and musical tastes), so do the best of Broadway musicals. The new millennium has seen the emergence of Michael John LaChiusa, Adam Guettel, Jonathan Larson (lamentably gone too soon), Jason Robert Brown, and their close collaborators. A new generation is extending and transforming the serious musical. Artistic categories have become increasingly blurred, and it is sometimes difficult to tell if a production is actually a musical or an opera or something in between. In fact, some theater professionals (such as Wiley Hausam) believe we have entered the age of the antimusical. This is not to say that the new, highly personal form of the musical is not a part of lyric theater but that it has taken on a postmodern character. The musical landscape has undoubtedly been changed by such shows as *Passion* (1994), *Floyd Collins* (1996), *Rent* (1996), *Parade* (1998), *The Wild Party* (2000), *Passing Strange* (2008), and *Next to Normal* (2009).

*Cabaret* is nonetheless a foster parent of this new generation because of its themes and clever form. “*Cabaret*,” writes Stacy Wolf (2002: 240), “is meant to unsettle.” Wolf draws attention to the fact that “most things in it can be read in two opposing directions, the result both of specific strategies and of long-standing Broadway conventions that have encouraged double readings, most notably through double entendre and camp.” Even well into its previews, the show was thought likely to fail. As Mitchell Morris (2004: 145) asserts: “With its seedy characters in *louche* entanglements, luridly placed against the scene of a declining Weimar Republic and a rising Nazi party, the show seemed to violate many of the most central conventions of the musical during its post—World War II heyday.” Broadway entertained little discussion of whether the musical genre could accommodate this show’s dark material. The producers and publicists dropped the names of Bertolt Brecht, George Grösz, Otto Dix, and Marlene Dietrich with such frequency that it became quite apparent that they were attempting to justify *Cabaret*’s distance from the standard model of the musical (Morris 2004: 146). The show was bruited to be a cautionary tale or parable, and its method of expression was said to consist of analogies, parallels, and metaphors rather than direct statement (Jones 2003: 242). Certainly by the time

of Sam Mendes's Broadway version, it was clear that *Cabaret* was a production that made deep, dark connections between Weimar and the present day because much of current popular culture has its roots in a peculiar brand of German aestheticism.

So, *Cabaret* is cognizant of many things in society and also aware of its own methods of expression. It is actually a metatheatrical musical—the first of its kind to set a trend—and though ultimately its narrative does have a split personality, it has a power and unpleasantness not commonly found on Broadway. The metatheatrical devices analyzed in this book are well known by musical lovers as much for their presentational force as for their ingenuity. These devices consist of a dramatic personage, a detail of decor, a peculiar kind of “doubleness” or duality, and the very audience of the musical itself. The Master of Ceremonies is both a detached chorus and a character in the story. He is a true *Master of Ceremonies* in that he introduces, interrupts, participates in, and extends the meanings of the songs and the club's novelty acts while exhorting the clientele to sit back, forget their troubles, and enjoy the deliberately lewd performances. He knows, of course, that what transpires onstage reflects what is occurring in Berlin society so that, in a sense, patrons of the Kit Kat Klub end up as voyeurs of their own public lives. The Kit Kat Klub is both cabaret setting and symbolic microcosm, and thus the performers onstage and the audience members (both in the club erected onstage and in the theater auditorium) are all incorporated within a single raffish, contaminated world on the verge of extinction. No less a distinguished musical scholar than Raymond Knapp (2006: 114) underlines this duality by claiming that *Cabaret* “has its cake and eats it too, on the one hand celebrating the Kit Kat Klub's festive escape from reality and using it as a ready platform for social protest, and on the other also suggesting that its decadence makes it directly accountable for fostering the then-incipient horrors of Nazi Germany.” Knapp possibly exaggerates, for it is highly questionable to blame sexual license and decadence for fostering Nazism, though there is no question that the cabaret decadence of Berlin introduced some people to a type of freedom they had never enjoyed before and that this freedom was both scary and deadly. Berliners and other Germans were desperate for change, especially from things they perceived as injurious to their way of life (Miller 1996: 29). So, Knapp's view cannot be minimized.

*Cabaret* does not pound home its points about Nazism or complicity. It does not forget its roots in the entertainment world. But it does combine

provocative subtleties with sheer showmanship. Although there are no singing nuns or dream ballets, there are Broadway compromises in the characters of Clifford Bradshaw, Sally Bowles, and Fräulein Schneider that don't go the entire way of their Christopher Isherwood models. And there are distinctly American elements, to be sure: in the glitzy show numbers with Las Vegas touches and in the sentimental pairings of Fräulein Schneider and Herr Schultz, of Sally and Cliff (conforming, as Hirsch claims, to the structural conventions of *Oklahoma!*), just as there are identifiable ethnic elements in the Yiddish idioms of Schultz and in the German anthem sung by the cabaret waiters and reprised by Ernst Ludwig and others. *Cabaret* is a celebration of its own energy, skill, and cleverness, and it demonstrates how Prince, for all his expertise in metaphor and metatheater, honored what Hirsch (2005: 4) calls "the performance impulse" by selling spectacles of the trashy and the sophisticated, of soft sentimentality and hard barbarism, of cold exploitation and warm vulnerability.

So, *Cabaret* is a rare balancing act that is both entertaining and instructive and that manages to make music, dance, dialogue, and decor part of the action rather than restrict them to serving as mere *divertissements*. This musical has given theater two of the finest major characters that many a performer has yearned to play. Sally Bowles has been interpreted by many actresses, from Jill Haworth, Liza Minnelli, Jane Horrocks, and Natasha Richardson to Joely Fisher, Molly Ringwald, Andrea McCardle, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Brooke Shields, Teri Hatcher, Gina Gershon, and Anna Maxwell Martin. The Emcee has been brought to various degrees and textures of life by Joel Grey, Barry Dennen, Alan Cumming, Brent Carver, Norbert Leo Butz, Raul Esparza, Neil Patrick Harris, Brad Oscar, James Dreyfus, Bruce Dow, and others. The Emcee and the Kit Kat Klub are an enduring legacy to American musical theater, for they leave an indelible mark on audience consciousness. Who can forget Grey's Emcee in top hat and tails, looking like a *compère* eager to please while also serving as satirist in his own right? As Hirsch (2005: 64) has suggested, Grey's embodiment was a case of Al Jolson becoming Bertolt Brecht. Who can forget the heavy, vulgar chorus line—surely the most unprepossessing one in Broadway history—kicking into a Nazi goose step led by the Emcee in drag? Who can forget Sally Bowles's private world becoming increasingly absorbed by the cabaret world or that same cabaret world materializing and then dematerializing before our very eyes?

From the first incarnation of the musical down to the Bob Fosse musical version and subsequent stage productions that have had the liberty of carrying Berlin decadence as far as the modern theater and social tastes allow, this musical has had the distinction of using sex (in its various permutations) as a way of indicating what was happening politically in Germany of that era. In her book *Vice Versa* (1992), Marjorie Garber discusses this point in detail, with special reference to the Fosse film, and I shall take up the matter in a later chapter, but it is important to declare that the first manifestation by Prince really cued the subject by practicing—for Broadway of its time—a truly daring form of theatrical sexual expression. By Isherwood's standards, of course, the original version was tame stuff, distorting the ambiguous sexual politics of its source to become, as John M. Clum (1999: 277) maintains, "the heterosexual romance Broadway audiences of the time expected." But as the script was revised and theater tastes developed, the story delved into bisexuality—most convincingly suggested in the 1972 Fosse film and culminating in the brilliantly daring Mendes production of 1998 that painted a lurid picture of what Clum calls "omnisexual desire."

Of course, for many audiences the stage spectacles have been outstripped by the images in Fosse's movie version, which was far more daringly tawdry and sexual even though the nucleus of the film—Minnelli's Americanized Sally—was a radical transformation, actually a betrayal, of Isherwood's material. And it is important to remember that Fosse's movie would not, perhaps, have come so startlingly to life without retracing the contours and impressions left by Prince's original musical production.

If *Cabaret* the stage musical no longer seems daringly innovative in comparison to, for example, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1998), it is still sexually suggestive and eminently playable, thriving as it does on its intrinsic form as a self-conscious, deliberately theatrical musical. Mendes, who presented the show in England's small Donmar Warehouse Theater in the winter of 1993, refocused the musical on certain songs that originally had been throwaway numbers and added a psychological dimension to Sally Bowles, showing her in the process of having a nervous breakdown during her climactic title number. This small-scale chamber version took risks in emphasizing the darker facets of the musical and underscored the point that no matter how much a contemporary director or actress alters the grain and texture of Sally Bowles, the musical triumphs as something much larger than a star vehicle.

Even Prince's own 1987 revival, though less theatrically satisfying than the original Broadway production, revealed that despite the softness at the heart of its libretto, *Cabaret* could bear reinterpretations that seek to release levels of meaning and feeling not usually explored in a commercial enterprise. This is probably because of the visual and thematic vocabulary that Prince and his collaborators created back in 1966. How this vocabulary developed is the story this book seeks to tell by means of a narrative that luxuriates in miscellaneous details. Knowing full well that a musical's spirit and meaning are best released in performance rather than in critical analysis, I have sought to balance the descriptive with the analytical. My text revels in the imaginative power and dynamic forward thrust of the many artists who created the original show yet tries to maintain an objective examination of the form and content of the musical that glowed with a zeal for theatrical originality. The material from Isherwood's Berlin stories and their stage adaptation by John van Druten, Prince's struggle to subordinate the heroine to the larger concerns of his musical, and Fosse's celebrated movie version should be regarded as the stuff of cultural history, for the genesis and evolution of Sally Bowles, the Berlin of her day, and the overall form of the narrative comprise an integral part of Prince's own fundamental engagement with culture and history in the very process of artistic creation.

This book is a stage history of a great American musical, and it tells many back stories of what went into shaping the show. It chronicles the genesis, evolution, and culmination of the work in its first Broadway incarnation. It aims at capturing some of the collaborative excitement expressed by the creators of this production as they struggled to construct the musical, and it also analyzes the show's artistic achievement in theatrical and cultural contexts. The real stars of a musical are its elements: libretto, score, production design, choreography, performances, and director's vision. So, this book examines these elements without seeking to murder as it inspects. A stage musical leaves many and various traces that new artists follow while leaving shades of their own, which is why this book takes note of some of the most significant revisions or reinventions of *Cabaret*. Although it draws on the work of many theater scholars and critics and uses every resource available to me (drafts of the libretto, print, radio, or video interviews, original set and costume designs, videotaped performances, production photographs, program notes, biographies, and academic essays), this book is not a textbook, but a compendious reference for any theater enthusiast or reader.

My original production history of the show, published in Canada in 1999, did not have the benefit of some important later scholarly works in musical theater, such as those by Knapp, Wolf, Morris, and others. Thus this second edition has been enormously enhanced by the insights of these scholars and by James Leve's excellent study of Kander and Ebb. It has been enriched also by new discoveries I made in the Prince, Ebb, and Boris Aronson archives, the three versions of Masteroff's libretto, and various videotapes featuring Prince, Aronson, and Kander—all through the graces of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The addition of large amounts of new material has allowed me to excise much of the extraneous biographical background on the major collaborators in order to concentrate more sharply on aesthetic and sociocultural issues that did not receive much discussion in the first edition.

Time tends to make revisionists of us all, and certainly this trend prevails in musical theater, where even the biggest hit musical can undergo radical transformations to mirror the changing zeitgeist. *Cabaret* is no exception, especially because it continues to be a popular show more than forty years after its Broadway debut. This second edition emphasizes this pattern of revisioning but always with the purpose of showing that no matter how significant a new version, it never truly obscures the original signatures of the first Broadway production. While a generalist can read this second edition as a full-length biography of a show, a specialist can read it for its evocation of artistic process and as a modest attempt to show how a great musical mirrors social and cultural history, its lens changed with each major reincarnation and thereby what is reflected in it.

*Keith Garebian*  
May 2010

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THE  
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## CHAPTER I

# SALLY BOWLES AND BERLIN

IT SEEMED AS IF NOBODY SERIOUSLY BELIEVED THAT CHRISTOPHER Isherwood's semiautobiographical Berlin stories or John van Druten's stage adaptation of the "Sally Bowles" story could be made into a Broadway musical. Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*, published in 1939, was a loosely connected sequence of diary entries and sketches of some of his experiences in Berlin before Hitler's rise to power. It took him almost four decades to reveal (in *Christopher and His Kind*) that he had gone to Berlin for homosexual fulfillment. Feeling inhibited in England because he could not relax sexually with boys of his own class or nation, he went to Berlin, where it was easy "to be infatuated" by such figures as "Bubi" (Baby), a pretty-faced, blue-eyed, blond beauty with a hard, almost hairless, muscular body (Isherwood 1976: 10–11). Isherwood frequented the Cosy Corner in a working-class district where small clubs catered to rough clients and where many gays felt more comfortable than in high-class bars of the West End. He also came to know Magnus Hirschfeld, sex researcher, expert on sexual deviancy, and tireless opponent of Paragraph 175—the German law that forbade sex between men. The pornographic and erotic fantasy pictures drawn by Hirschfeld's patients at his Institute for Sexual Science (Institut für Sexualwissenschaft) awed Isherwood, as did its museum of whips, chains, and torture instruments "designed for the practitioners of pleasure-pain; high-heeled, intricately decorated boots for the fetishist; lacey female undies which had been worn by ferociously masculine Prussian officers beneath their uniforms" (19).

What remained with him from those early years, after he had burned some of the diaries to save himself and others from embarrassment and legal sanctions, were an almost hallucinatory sense of the reality and unreality of Berlin and the fictional figure of Sally Bowles and, beside her, “like a reproachful elder sister,” the real Jean Ross, on whom Isherwood had based Sally and who remained his friend (in a “brother and sister” relationship) until her death in England in 1973 (Isherwood 1976: 51). *Goodbye to Berlin* portrays the soul sickness afflicting an entire society while telling four stories and presenting two diaries written in a deft prose style that avoids ideology. The material is concomitantly political and psychological, fusing (an often decadent) sexuality with insights into the flawed human spirit. Despite the documentary tone of much of the writing, the book uses a “dummy” persona (“Christopher Isherwood” being “a convenient ventriloquist’s dummy, nothing more”—Isherwood 1939: preface) who expresses the moral and political implications of textured realities. But what results ultimately, as various characters cross over from piece to piece and as a narrow chord of time binds the pieces together, is a seriocomic and chilling sense of unreality, a sort of

*Christopher Isherwood,  
1955 (Photofest)*



phantasmagoria of what is remembered about events that occurred sometimes so quietly, so swiftly as to have become virtually incredible in retrospect.

This interplay of reality and unreality, as unsettling as a nervous dream, begins in the opening piece (“A Berlin Diary: Autumn 1930”) with a scrupulous description of decor that suggests a tarnished, degenerate way of life. The scenic interior, consisting of a small room smelling of “incense and stale buns,” a tall, tiled stove looking “like an altar,” a washstand built almost “like a Gothic shrine,” and a favorite chair suggesting “a bishop’s throne” (Isherwood 1939: 14), evokes the sense of something abnormally unreal. The big-bosomed, shapeless landlady, always peeping, spying, poking about, and her old lodgers—Bobby, “a pale, worried-looking, smartly-dressed young man who wears a hair-net,” Fräulein Kost, a florid blond prostitute with “large silly blue eyes,” and Fräulein Mayr, a music hall performer who is aggressively anti-Semitic—contrast with the rich Germans in a millionaire’s slum, for whom the political situation is quite unreal (21).

The rest of the book intensifies the dialectic of reality and unreality in notes that are darker and more disturbing than Sally Bowles’s colorful caprices. “On Ruegen Island” is an interesting summer portrait of a tense triangular and homoerotic relationship between Christopher and a group of “beautiful blond boys who are principally interested in body-building” (Garber 1995: 487) while “The Nowaks,” which documents life in a slum tenement, evokes a depressing feeling of grinding poverty and dehumanization. “The Landauers” provides flashes of insight into neurosis and describes a sour political climate that, despite the very evident tyranny, is “a little unreal” and which prompts victims to lose touch with existence. In short, this section is a “hallucination of the non-existence” of people, such as the prosperous but besieged Landauers (Isherwood 1939: 275–76). The final piece, “A Berlin Diary (Winter 1932–33),” has a depressing political moral: people can be made to believe in anybody or anything, as shown when Hitler becomes master of the city and as Isherwood finds the reality of his past experiences receding from him.

It was the Sally Bowles section, however, that fascinated most readers. The Sally of the novella is an English girl, an aspiring actress who sings at a club called the Lady Windermere, “an arty ‘informal’ bar, just off the Tauentzienstrasse,” named after a character in an Oscar Wilde comedy of manners (*Lady Windermere’s Fan*) but trying to resemble Montparnasse (48), with girls doing classical figure tableaux behind gauze, a large

dance hall with telephones on the tables, an orchestra in Bavarian costume whooping, drinking, and perspiring beer, and couples dancing “with hands on each other’s hips, yelling in each other’s faces, streaming with sweat” (65). Sally has a deep, husky voice and sings badly, “without any expression, her hands hanging down at her sides.” Yet “her performance is, in its own way, effective because of her startling appearance and her air of not caring a curse” what people think about her (49). Sally had come to Berlin with a girlfriend (Diana), an actress older than her and “the most marvellous gold-digger you can imagine,” who had been there before and believed they would both get work with the UFA (International Center for Culture and Ecology) that oversaw movie palaces in Weimar Berlin. Sally receives a small allowance from her wealthy parents at home, but her mother threatens to cut it off unless she returns soon. Consequently, Sally is willing to do anything to make money and get rich. Neurotically restless, she has a string of lovers, including the German Klaus (by whom she gets pregnant but then has an abortion) and the wealthy American Clive. Sally believes she is “a sort of Ideal Woman . . . who can take men away from their wives” but can never keep anyone for long. She remarks of herself: “I’m the type which every man imagines he wants, until he gets me; and then he finds he doesn’t really, after all” (84–85). Their initial amusement with each other eventually palls, especially after she accuses him of being a dilettante without energy or ambition. Christopher confesses to feeling jealous about her success with men and writes at the end that his novella is a tribute to her (121).

But the Sally of fiction is not fully Jean Ross. The latter, raised in luxury in Egypt, was the daughter of a Scots cotton merchant, had “a long, thin handsome face, aristocratic nose, glossy dark hair, large brown eyes,” and was “more essentially British than Sally; she grumbled like a true Englishwoman, with her grin-and-bear-it grin. And she was tougher” (Isherwood 1976: 52). She never seemed sentimental or felt sorry for herself, and, like Sally, she boasted continually of her lovers. She sang occasionally in a nightclub and shared lodgings with Isherwood for a while in Fräulein Meta Thurau’s flat in Nollendorfstrasse 17. After Berlin, Ross returned to England, joined the Communist Party, and had a daughter out of wedlock with Claud Cockburn, whom she never married. Her daughter, Sarah, later became a crime novelist writing under the name Sarah Caudwell. Isherwood transformed Jean into Sally, giving her a surname taken from Paul Bowles, an American composer and writer best known for his novel *The Sheltering Sky*, later turned into a

movie by Bernardo Bertolucci. Isherwood had met Bowles fleetingly in Berlin in 1949 but only became his friend years later. Ross and Isherwood enjoyed each other's company, but both were selfish and often quarrelsome. Jean, unlike Sally, never tried to seduce Christopher, though they did sleep together once, when their flat was overfilled with friends (York 1991: 236).

The story of Sally Bowles fascinated a number of readers, including Speed Lamkin, a gay American novelist and playwright whose only previous play of note (*Comes a Day*) had enjoyed a short run on Broadway in 1958. Isherwood's friend, he decided to adapt Isherwood's novella in collaboration with Gus Field, a young, self-assertive, self-glorifying Jewish screenwriter whom Isherwood had probably met when both were working at MGM. Their script outline (titled *Sally Bowles*) was thin. In the first scene, their "Christopher" is discovered in his Berlin room finding it impossible to write because of the loud noise coming from a party next door. Sally enters as the party giver and next door neighbor, and she asks for a loan of glasses. He is charmed by her, as Sally claims that their rooms are really two halves of one room and suggests that if the flimsy partition wall were torn down there would be more room to dance. Sally and her guests volunteer to help. Curtain. The second scene opens with Christopher awaking from a drunken sleep to find the wall down and rubble all about. Sally is in bed on the other side. He is at first horrified, then amused. Sally claims both will be much happier, and he accepts that he is now involved in her life (Isherwood 2000: 266).

Isherwood's close English friends Dodie Smith (playwright, novelist, and former actress) and her manager and husband Alec Beesley disliked this script intensely, objecting that breaking down a wall would be unworkable in actual performance. They contrived a plan. On a visit to John van Druten's ranch in the Coachella Valley of southern California, Alec (by prior arrangement) poked his head out of the swimming pool and asked, "Why not make a play out of Sally Bowles?" then quickly dove down into the water, leaving his wife to go to work on van Druten and convince him to take on the project (284). The friendly and charming van Druten had met Isherwood in New York in 1939, and they forged a friendship based on their shared belief in pacifism, a creed also shared by Alec Beesley. Of Dutch parentage, the English-born van Druten had a law degree but took easily to writing light comedies, making his mark on Broadway with *Voice of the Turtle* (1943), *I Remember Mama* (1944), and *Bell, Book and Candle* (1950). Van Druten quickly produced a first draft,