

# Six Memorable Musicals

Haywards Heath & District Probus Club



## Introduction

The title of this paper allows me to tell you about six musical films I consider to be memorable. You may disagree with my selection, and undoubtedly you have your own favourites. I have omitted Bing Crosby's *White Christmas* as I included it in a previous paper (Six Memorable Films). And, I've added a bonus musical as is my wont.

Musicals or musical film is a **film genre** in which songs by the characters are interwoven into the narrative, sometimes accompanied by singing and dancing. The songs usually advance the plot or develop the film's characters, but in some cases, they serve merely as breaks in the storyline. The musical film was a natural development of the **stage musical** after the emergence of sound film technology.

Here is my selection and why I chose them:

- **The Student Prince**, because it was one of the first (probably the first) musicals I saw at my beloved Orion cinema in Hassocks (I was a 15-year-old at the time) and my first experience of classical music. What a voice Mario Lanza had.
- **South Pacific**, because I loved the music (particularly *My Girl Back Home*), and my late Mother-in-law sang many of the songs at her Operatic societies. At the time, I was 19-years old.
- **Three Coins in the Fountain**, because (still a 15-year old) I was captivated by the romantic story and hearing Frank Sinatra sing the title tune - well, I was blown away. However, listening to it today, the vocals seem rather flat, but then perhaps that is down to the state of my hearing rather than Sinatra's singing.
- **Carmen Jones**, again because I loved the music and the singing by Harry Belafonte and Dorothy Dandridge was out of this world and left a big impression on me as a 15-year old.
- **Pal Joey**, simply because I am a huge fan of Rita Hayworth, Kim Novak and Frank Sinatra. I saw the film at the Hassocks cinema as a 19-year-old.
- **The Jazz Singer**, because I am a great fan of Neil Diamond and could listen to him singing all day long.

## The Student Prince

*The Student Prince* is a 1954 American **musical film** directed by **Richard Thorpe**. **Ann Blyth** and **Edmund Purdom** starred in the lead roles, with **John Ericson**, **Louis Calhern**, **Edmund Gwenn**, **S. Z. Sakall**, and **Betta St. John**. The film is an adaptation of the 1924 **opерetta of the same name** composed by the Hungarian-born American composer **Sigmund Romberg** with lyrics by **Dorothy Donnelly**, with the screenplay by **Sonya Levien** and **William Ludwig**.



The film was based on the stage play *Old Heidelberg* by **Wilhelm Meyer-Förster** (itself an adaptation of his obscure 1898 novel *Karl Heinrich*) and is about a bold young prince of a small German kingdom, who must choose between his romance with a barmaid and his impending royal duties. It was filmed and released in **CinemaScope** and **Anso Color**.<sup>1</sup>

Picture Credit: ScreenClip from Video © TCM, on Pinterest at <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/226165212506670736/>, video URL: <https://youtu.be/OI3Bcgh4Jko>

<sup>1</sup> This section, adapted and excerpted from Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

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Picture Credit: "Famous Arias And Songs Mario Lanza Orphee" by ClassicalCom is licensed under CC BY 2.0

The film gained some notoriety during production when original star **Mario Lanza** left the project before principal photography, necessitating his last-minute replacement by the lesser-known Edmund Purdom. However, we were not to be cheated of Mario Lanza's mellifluous voice because an agreement between studio **Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer** and Lanza meant that songs he had already recorded were used in the film, dubbing over Purdom's voice.

Mario Lanza was known to be rebellious, challenging, and ambitious. During most of his film career, he suffered from overeating and alcohol, which seriously affected his health and his relationships with directors, producers, and, occasionally, other cast members.

Hollywood columnist **Hedda Hopper** wrote that "his smile, which was as big as his voice, was matched with the habits of a tiger cub, impossible to housebreak." She added that he was the "last of the great romantic performers". His 1952 musical comedy, *Because You're Mine*, was his final million-selling hit song. The song received an **Academy Award** nomination for Best Original Song. After recording the soundtrack for *The Student Prince*, he embarked upon a protracted battle with studio head **Dore Schary** arising from artistic differences with director **Curtis Bernhardt** and was eventually dismissed by MGM<sup>2</sup>. He made three more films before dying of an apparent pulmonary embolism at the age of 38. At the time of his death in 1959, he was still "the most famous tenor in the world". Author Eleonora Kimmel concludes that Lanza "blazed like a meteor whose light lasts a brief moment in time".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Although some sources state that Lanza voluntarily walked off the film.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

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## Plot

Young Prince Karl, of a small kingdom within the **German Empire**, is sent by his family near the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to get a university education in the university city of **Heidelberg**. His grandfather was one of a handful of petty kings within **German-speaking** central Europe. Fictional Karlsburg may have been small, but it was fiercely proud of its history and traditions.

Karl has been raised most of his life for the military, but when it comes time for him to marry, the princess picked for him cannot stand his stiff formality. Ordinarily, this would not have been much of a problem but for the fact that Karlsburg has no great wealth, only good breeding. His tutor recommends that he be sent to a university to develop an easier, more pleasant and sociable manner.

He (eventually) slips into the social mix, becomes accepted as a "good chap" by his student peers, and falls deeply in love with Kathie, a pretty, popular, and musically inclined barmaid who holds "court" in the local **Biergarten**. Love notwithstanding, when his old grandfather dies unexpectedly, the young prince must marry the princess and take his place in the small kingdom that he is destined to rule. He returns for one last time to Heidelberg to bid Kathie a poignant farewell.

## Main Cast

- **Ann Blyth** as Kathie Ruder
- **Edmund Purdom** as Prince Karl  
(**Mario Lanza** as Karl's singing voice)
- **John Ericson** as Count Von Asterburg
- **Louis Calhern** as King Ferdinand of Karlsburg
- **Edmund Gwenn** as Professor Juttner

## Reception

The film was a big hit. According to MGM, it made \$2,528,000 in the US and Canada and \$2,813,000 in other countries, resulting in a profit of \$451,000.<sup>4</sup>

## Online Videos

- <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0047537/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otJuTZPTZBQ>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pjEWzgz8zU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDYp4wGeVSw>

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<sup>4</sup> Source: *The Student Prince* at IMDb

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## *South Pacific*

*South Pacific* is a 1958 American **romantic musical film** based on the 1949 **Rodgers and Hammerstein** musical *South Pacific*, which in turn is loosely based on **James A. Michener's** 1947 **short-story** collection *Tales of the South Pacific*.<sup>5</sup> The film was directed by **Joshua Logan** and starred **Rossano Brazzi**, **Mitzi Gaynor**, **John Kerr** and **Ray Walston** in the leading roles with **Juanita Hall** as **Bloody Mary**, the part that she had played in the original stage production.<sup>6</sup>

*South Pacific* was nominated for three **Academy Awards**, winning the **Academy Award for Best Sound** for **Fred Hynes**. The setting for the film is the year 1943, during World War II, on an island in the South Pacific.



Picture Credit: Screen Clip from Trailer at: <https://youtu.be/LSuPYEdeLPI> of Rossano Brazzi (playing Emile De Becque) singing to Mitzi Gaynor (playing Nurse Nellie Forbush)

### The Plot

The story is set in wartime (World War II) but has neither a pro-war nor anti-war theme, but instead, its themes are racial and class prejudice and their pernicious effect upon human behaviour.

Nellie Forbush (Mitzi Gaynor), from Little Rock, Arkansas, now a nurse in the US Navy, falls for middle-aged expatriate French plantation owner Emile De Becque (Rossano Brazzi) but recoils upon discovering that he has fathered two mixed-race children. When Nellie leaves him, the heartbroken Emile agrees to take on a dangerous espionage mission with Lieutenant Joseph Cable. Nellie struggles to reconcile her social prejudices with her love for Emile. After she spends time with his children and comes to care for them, she fears that Emile may not return alive from the mission he has chosen following her rejection of him.

Racial prejudice is candidly explored throughout the musical, most controversially in the lieutenant's song: *You've Got to Be Carefully Taught*. Supporting characters, including a comic petty officer and the Tonkinese girl's mother, help tie the story together.

The film's secondary romance, between lieutenant Cable and a young Tonkinese woman, explores his fears of the social consequences if he were to marry his Asian sweetheart. An epidemic of malaria hits the island of Bali Ha'i. Having visited Bali Ha'i often to be with Liat, Cable is also ill but escapes from the hospital to be with Liat.

<sup>5</sup> Written by James A. Michener in 1946, *Tales of the South Pacific* is a Pulitzer Prize winning collection of sequentially related short stories about World War II. The stories were based on observations and anecdotes he collected while stationed as a lieutenant commander in the US Navy on the island of Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides Islands (now known as Vanuatu).

<sup>6</sup> This section, adapted and excerpted from Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

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Cable (US Marine Lieutenant Joseph Cable (played by John Kerr)) had arrived on the island from Guadalcanal, having been sent to take part in a dangerous spy mission, the success of which could turn the tide of the war against Japan. Cable's mission is to land on a Japanese-held island and report on Japanese ship movements. The mission begins with plenty of air support. Emile and Cable land on the other side of the island undetected. The two send back reports on Japanese ships' movements in the "Slot", a strategic strait; American aircraft intercept and destroy the Japanese ships. When the Japanese Zeros strafe the Americans' position, Emile narrowly escapes, but Cable is killed.

## Main Cast

- **Rossano Brazzi** as Emile de Becque (Giorgio Tozzi as Emile's singing voice)
- **Mitzi Gaynor** as Ensign Nellie Forbush
- **John Kerr** as Lieutenant Joseph Cable, USMC (Bill Lee as Cable's singing voice (uncredited))
- **Ray Walston** as Luther Billis
- **Juanita Hall** as Bloody Mary (Muriel Smith as Bloody Mary's singing voice (uncredited))
- **France Nuyen** as Liat
- **Russ Brown** as Captain George Brackett
- **Jack Mullaney** as The Professor
- **Ken Clark** as Stewpot (Thurl Ravenscroft as Stewpot's singing voice (uncredited))
- **Floyd Simmons** as Commander Bill Harbison

## Production

The making of the film followed the successes of the film versions of Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* (1955) and *Carousel* (1956 film). The film was produced by "South Pacific Enterprises", a company created specifically for the production, owned by Rodgers, Hammerstein, Logan, Magna Theatre Corporation (owners of the Todd-AO widescreen process), and **Leland Hayward**, producer of the original stage production. **20th Century Fox** partially invested in the production in exchange for some distribution rights.

The producers' original plan was to have **Ezio Pinza** and **Mary Martin**, the two leads of the original Broadway cast, reprise their roles for the film, but Pinza died suddenly in May 1957. Had he lived to perform in the film, the producers would have cast Martin. Instead, **Doris Day** was offered the part of Nellie, but passed on the opportunity. **Elizabeth Taylor** tested for the same role, but was rejected by Rodgers after she suffered stage fright in her audition. Logan later heard her sing but was unable to persuade Rodgers to change his mind. Ultimately, **Mitzi Gaynor**, who had prior work in musical films, and had tested twice for Nellie, was cast in the role. **Rossano Brazzi** was cast as Emile, a role that was first offered to such established stars as **Charles Boyer**, **Howard Keel**, **Vittorio De Sica** and **Fernando Lamas**. Walston, a noted Broadway musical actor, played the part of Seabee Luther Billis, which he had previously played on stage in London.

## Location

**Hanalei Bay**, on the Hawaiian island of **Kauai**, served as the filming location, with **Emil Kosa Jr.**'s matte paintings providing distant views of the fantastic island Bali Ha'i. A second unit filmed aerial views of **Fijian** islands while some sources claim footage of **Tioman Island**, off **Malaysia's** southeast coast, were also featured.

## Musical numbers

- "Bloody Mary"
- "There Is Nothing Like a Dame"
- "Bali Ha'i"
- "A Cock-Eyed Optimist"
- "Twin Soliloquies"
- "Some Enchanted Evening"
- "Dites-moi"
- "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair"
- "I'm in Love with a Wonderful Guy"
- "Younger Than Springtime"
- "Happy Talk"
- "Honey Bun"
- "My Girl Back Home"
- "You've Got to Be Carefully Taught"
- "This Nearly Was Mine"
- "Finale"

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## Release

Magna Theatre Corporation, which originally owned a stake in the film, handled the distribution of the **roadshow theatrical release** in Todd-AO, while Fox distributed the film for its general release in CinemaScope. It opened at the **Criterion Theatre** in New York City on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1958 before opening in **Miami Beach** on 24<sup>th</sup> March and **Philadelphia** and **Chicago** on 26<sup>th</sup> March and expanding to a further eight cities within a month. Originally shown in a nearly three-hour roadshow version, it was later cut to two-and-a-half hours for general release. The film was re-released six years later and by **The Samuel Goldwyn Company** in 1983.

## Box office

*South Pacific* earned \$7 million in **theatrical rentals** in the United States and Canada from its roadshow release. It reached **number one at the US box office** in its eighth week of release and spent three weeks at number one. It was off number one for one week before returning for another three weeks. It spent another two weeks at number one in August 1958 for a total of eight weeks. It was withdrawn from general release at the end of 1960 with rentals of \$16.3 million.

In its 1964 reissue, the film earned another \$1.2 million in rentals, taking its total to \$17.5 million. The film was a big hit in the United Kingdom, and the film played continuously at the **Dominion Theatre** in London for nearly four-and-a-half years grossing \$3.9 million at the theatre. After four years of release in the UK (and prior to its general release), it had grossed \$9.4 million, surpassing *Gone With the Wind* as the **highest-grossing film in the United Kingdom**. However, it performed poorly in other European countries such as France, Germany and Italy. *South Pacific* was the highest-grossing Rodgers and Hammerstein musical film until *The Sound of Music* was released seven years later.

## Videos

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwYvWF5j0a8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSuPYEdeLPI>
- <https://youtu.be/VPf61Tsjsjk>



Picture Credit: Screen Clip from Trailer at: <https://youtu.be/jKnIF2bjPBc> of John Kerr (playing US Marine Lieutenant Joseph Cable)

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## *Three Coins in the Fountain*

*Three Coins in the Fountain*<sup>7</sup> is a 1954 American romantic comedy-drama film directed by Jean Negulesco and starring Clifton Webb, Dorothy McGuire, Jean Peters, Louis Jourdan, and Maggie McNamara and featuring Rossano Brazzi. The film (originally titled: *We Believe in Love*) is based on the 1952 novel *Coins in the Fountain* by John H. Secondari and written by John Patrick. The story is about three American women working in Rome who dream of finding romance in the Eternal City.

The film's main title song, *Three Coins in the Fountain*, was sung by an uncredited Frank Sinatra. It went on to become an enduring standard. The film was made in Italy during the "Hollywood on the Tiber" era. At the 27th Academy Awards in 1955, the film received two Academy Awards — for Best Cinematography and Best Song — and was nominated for Best Picture.

### The Plot

Three American women working as secretaries in Rome, Italy, share a spacious apartment and the desire to find love and marriage, each experiencing a few bumps in their journeys to romance. The women - newcomer Maria (Maggie McNamara), romance-seeking Anita (Jean Peters) and the more mature Frances (Dorothy McGuire) – each fling a coin into Rome's Trevi Fountain, making a wish as they do so. But, at first, Anita, who says she is planning to return to the United States to marry, declines.



Picture Credit: Screen Clip from Trailer at <https://youtu.be/7KvoyBrUbBM> showing the three women at the Trevi Fountain

Soon, Maria is pursued by a dashing prince (Louis Jourdan), Anita finds herself involved with a forbidden coworker (Rossano Brazzi), and Frances receives a surprising proposal from her boss (Clifton Webb). All three women vow to one day return to Rome.

Anita takes Maria to the agency where she works and introduces her to Giorgio Bianchi, a translator with whom she works. Maria senses that Anita and Giorgio are attracted to each other, though Anita states that the agency forbids its American and Italian employees to fraternise. Later that evening at a party, Maria is attracted by the handsome Prince Dino di Cessi, despite being warned by Frances and Anita about his being a notorious womaniser. His girlfriends become known as "Venice girls" after he takes them to Venice for romantic liaisons. Dino charms Maria, telling her to ignore what she's heard about him. After the party, Anita and Maria walk home, and Anita admits that she has no fiancé waiting back in the United States. She's leaving because she believes she has a better chance of finding a husband in America; wealthy Italian men are not interested in mere secretaries, and the men who are interested are too poor. As they walk, Maria is pinched by a man who pesters her until she is rescued by Giorgio, who then asks Anita to go with him the next day to his family's country farm to attend a celebration. Anita reluctantly agrees. And so, one thing leads to another and they all live happily thereafter.

<sup>7</sup> This section, adapted and excerpted from Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

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## Cast

- Clifton Webb as John Frederick Shadwell
- Dorothy McGuire as Miss Frances
- Jean Peters as Anita Hutchins
- Louis Jourdan as Prince Dino di Cessi
- Rossano Brazzi as Giorgio Bianchi
- Maggie McNamara as Maria Williams
- Howard St. John as Burgoyne
- Kathryn Givney as Mrs Burgoyne
- Cathleen Nesbitt as Principessa

## Critical response

The film generally received positive reviews upon its theatrical release, particularly for its colour and CinemaScope widescreen cinematography of Italian filming locations. In his review in *The New York Times*, Bosley Crowther wrote, *Three Coins in the Fountain is quite clearly a film in which the locale comes first. However, the nonsense of its fable tumbles nicely within the picture frame.* Crowther underscored the film's visual appeal to the audiences of his time.



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## *Carmen Jones*

*Carmen Jones*<sup>8</sup> is a 1954 American musical film starring Dorothy Dandridge and Harry Belafonte, produced and directed by Otto Preminger. The screenplay by Harry Kleiner is based on the lyrics and book by Oscar Hammerstein II, from the 1943 stage musical of the same name, set to the music of Georges Bizet's 1875 opera *Carmen*. The opera was an adaptation of the 1845 Prosper Mérimée novella *Carmen* by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy.

*Carmen Jones* was a CinemaScope and DeLuxe Color motion picture that had begun shooting within the first 12 months of Twentieth Century Fox's venture in 1953 to the widescreen format as its main production mode. *Carmen Jones* was released in October 1954, exactly one year and one month after Fox's first CinemaScope venture, the Biblical epic *The Robe*, had opened in theatres.



The film takes the story of the cigarette-maker Carmen and the Spanish cavalry soldier Don Jose and translates it into a modern-day tale of a parachute factory worker and a stalwart GI named Joe who is about to go to flying school and marry his girlfriend. Conflict arises when a prize-ring champion captures the heart of Carmen after she has seduced Joe and caused him to go absent from the army without leave.

Picture Credit: Screen Shot from Video on IMDb.com ([HERE](#)) showing Dorothy Dandridge and Harry Belafonte. Owners rights are duly acknowledged.

### The Plot

Set during World War II, the story focuses on Carmen Jones (Dorothy Dandridge), described as a *shameless* vixen. She works in a parachute factory in North Carolina. When she is arrested for fighting with a coworker who reported her for arriving late for work, the leader of the Army guards, Sgt. Brown (Brock Peters), assigns handsome Corporal Joe (Harry Belafonte) to deliver her to the civilian authorities over 50 miles away. This is much to the dismay of Joe's fiancée Cindy Lou (Olga James), who had agreed to marry him during his leave before his reporting for flight school and an eventual officer's commission. En route with his prisoner, Joe decides he wants to deliver Carmen to return to Cindy Lou and his leave as soon as possible. He takes his jeep on the road warned unsuitable for motor vehicles to save time. Carmen suggests she and Joe stop for a meal and a little romance, but he refuses, intensifying her determination to seduce him. The jeep ends up hopelessly stuck in a river. Carmen suggests they spend the night at her grandmother's house nearby and continue their journey by train the following day, and that night Joe succumbs to Carmen's advances. The following day, he awakens to find a note in which she says that although she loves him, she cannot deal with time in jail and is running away.

Already on a slippery slope, Corporal Joe is demoted to private and locked in the stockade for allowing his prisoner to escape. Cindy Lou arrives for a visit just as a rose from Carmen is delivered to him, prompting her to leave abruptly. Having found work in a nightclub, Carmen awaits his release. One night champion prizefighter Husky Miller (Joe Adams) enters with an entourage and introduces himself to Carmen, who expresses no interest in him. Husky orders his manager Rum Daniels (Roy Glenn) to offer her jewellery, furs, and an expensive hotel suite if she and her friends Frankie and Myrt (Diahann Carroll) accompany him to Chicago, but she declines the offer. Just then, Joe arrives and announces he must report to flying school immediately. Angered, Carmen decides to leave with Sgt. Brown, but Joe severely punches him. Realising he will be sentenced to a lengthy prison term for hitting his superior, Joe flees on a train to Chicago with Carmen.

<sup>8</sup> This section, adapted and excerpted from Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

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Tired of being cooped up in a shabby rented room, Carmen gets dressed and leaves under the guise of buying groceries. Since he can't leave the room at all lest he is arrested, Joe questions her. Carmen goes to Husky Miller's gym to ask Frankie (Pearl Bailey) for a loan. Frankie tries to convince Carmen to sit in Husky's corner so they all can be well taken care of, but Carmen is in love and refuses to double time Joe. Husky wrongly believes she has returned to him, but she refuses his advances before leaving. Husky tells his entire entourage that they are cut off financially until they produce Carmen (who he nicknames Heatwave). Carmen then pawns a piece of jewellery to buy groceries before returning to Joe's room. When she returns not only with a bag of groceries but a new dress and shoes, Joe questions how she paid for them. Offended that he is accusing her of cheating, the two argue, and she goes to Husky's hotel suite dressed in her new clothes. Frankie begins fortune-telling with cards, and Carmen takes it all lightly until she draws the nine of spades. Carmen interprets it as a premonition of her impending death and chooses to enjoy the rest of her life no matter how long or short it is.

Cindy Lou hasn't given up on Joe and arrives at Husky's gym in search of Carmen since she is the only one who knows of Joe's whereabouts. An angry Joe arrives, having evaded capture and intent on getting Carmen back. Although Cindy Lou is present, he ignores her while ordering Carmen to leave with him. Husky intervenes, and he is threatened by a concealed knife Joe has brought with him. Husky's people try to get him to stand down due to his fighting prowess, but they can't since Joe won't stop. Joe is hit with a few blows before Carmen helps him to get away. Joe asks why if she no longer loves him, but she reveals it's because she can't bear to see anyone cooped up. She then tells Cindy Lou to go home and find someone worthy of her.

Joe escapes the Military Police and attends Husky's big fight. Dressed to the nines, Carmen, her friends and Husky's entourage escort Husky to the ring. He falters in the first round but comes back to beat his opponent in the second. Husky runs to Carmen's loving arms after winning, but they are parted after he is lifted on his entourage's shoulders. Joe grabs Carmen as she follows Husky to his dressing room and pulls her into a storage room, where he begs her to return to him. Angry that she has moved on, he claims he should have killed her. In a matter of fact manner, she tells him that what they had is over, and there is no going back for them. When Carmen continues to rebuff him and says he needs to kill her or let her go, Joe strangles her to death. A janitor finds him as he goes to alert the military police. He realises he is now going to die for committing murder.

## Production

The Broadway production of *Carmen Jones* by **Billy Rose** opened on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1943 and ran for 503 performances. When he saw it, Otto Preminger dismissed it as *a series of skits loosely based on the opera with a score simplified and changed so that the performers who had no operatic training could sing it*. In adapting it for the screen, he wanted to make "a dramatic film with music rather than a conventional film musical," so he decided to return to the original source material—the Prosper Mérimée novella—and hired Harry Kleiner, whom he had taught at Yale University, to expand the story beyond the limitations imposed upon it by the Bizet opera and Hammerstein's interpretation of it.

Preminger realised no major studio would be interested in financing an operatic film with an all-Black cast, so he decided to produce it independently. He anticipated United Artists executives Arthur B. Krim and Robert S. Benjamin, who had supported him in his censorship battles with *The Moon Is Blue*, would be willing to invest in the project. However, the two felt it was not economically viable and declined. Following the completion of his previous film, *River of No Return*, Preminger had paid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox \$150,000 to cancel the remainder of his contract, so he was surprised when Fox head **Darryl F. Zanuck** contacted him and offered to finance the film while allowing him to operate as a fully independent filmmaker. In December 1953, he accepted \$750,000 and began what became a prolonged preproduction period. He hired cinematographer **Sam Leavitt** as director of photography, **Herschel Burke Gilbert** as musical director, and **Herbert Ross** as choreographer and began to scout locations.

On 14<sup>th</sup> April 1954, six weeks before principal photography was scheduled to begin, Preminger was contacted by **Joseph Breen**, the leader in the office of the **Motion Picture Production Code**. Breen had clashed with Preminger over *The Moon Is Blue*. Because he himself was sensitive to the issue of racial representation in the film, Preminger had no objections when Zanuck urged him to submit the script to **Walter Francis White**, executive secretary of the **NAACP**, who had no objection to it.

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Preminger began assembling his cast. **Harry Belafonte**, a folk singer who recently had introduced Calypso music to a mainstream audience, had only one film to his credit, but he had just won the **Tony Award** and **Theatre World Award** for his performance in **John Murray Anderson's Almanac**, and Preminger cast him as Joe. **Pearl Bailey's** sole screen credit was the 1948 film *Isn't It Romantic?*, but she had achieved success as a band singer and was familiar to television audiences and was assigned the role of Frankie. Joe Adams was a Los Angeles disc jockey with no acting experience, but Preminger felt he had the right look for Husky. Preminger was familiar with **Dorothy Dandridge** but felt she was incapable of exuding the sultry sex appeal the role of Carmen demanded, particularly after having seen Dandridge's performance as a demure schoolteacher opposite Belafonte in *Bright Road* (1953). At his first meeting with Dandridge, Preminger told her she was "lovely" and looked like a "model" or "a beautiful butterfly," but not Carmen Jones. He suggested she audition for the role of Cindy Lou. Dandridge took the script and left, and when she returned she was dressed and behaved exactly as Preminger had envisioned Carmen. The director was impressed enough to engage her as Carmen Jones.

The opening **title sequence** is the first film title sequence created by **Saul Bass** and marked the beginning of Bass's long professional relationship with Preminger. Bass also designed the film posters for the movie. The film had its world premiere at the Rivoli Theatre in New York City on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1954. The following February, it opened in London and Berlin, and in both cities, it played for more than a year in exclusive first-run engagements. Because of a technicality in French copyright laws on order of the estate of composer **Georges Bizet** (who wrote the opera on which the film was based), the film was banned in France until 1981. However, it was permitted to open the **1955 Cannes Film Festival**, where Preminger and Dandridge openly flaunted their romantic relationship for the first time.

## Cast and their roles

- **Harry Belafonte** as Joe, a soldier, selected for flight school; his singing voice is dubbed by LeVern Hutcherson
- **Dorothy Dandridge** as Carmen Jones, who pursues Joe because he alone ignores her; her singing voice is dubbed by **Marilyn Horne**
- **Pearl Bailey** as Frankie, one of Carmen's best friends
- **Olga James** as Cindy Lou, a young woman who loves Joe—and whom Joe loves until he falls in love with Carmen
- **Joe Adams** as Husky Miller, contender for heavyweight boxing champion of the world and pursuer of Carmen; his singing voice is dubbed by Marvin Hayes
- **Brock Peters** as Sergeant Brown, who, in his envy of golden "fly boy" Joe, tells Cindy Lou that Joe volunteered to take Carmen to jail when in reality he gave him no choice; he also forces him into a fight, leaving him to face a 4-plus-year jail sentence or run
- **Roy Glenn** as Rum Daniels, Husky's manager; his singing voice is dubbed by costar **Brock Peters**
- **Nick Stewart** as Dink Franklin, Rum Daniels' 'manager'; his singing voice is dubbed by costar **Brock Peters**
- **Diahann Carroll** as Myrt, another close friend of Carmen; Bernice Peterson dubs her singing voice

## Song List

- "Send Them Along" – Chorus
- "Lift 'Em Up an' Put 'Em Down" – Children's Chorus
- "Dat Love" ("**Habanera**") – Carmen
- "You Talk Jus' Like My Maw" – Joe and Cindy Lou
- "You Go For Me" – Carmen (Note: This song is the shortest reprise of "That's Love" in the soundtrack.)
- "Carmen Jones is Going to Jail" – Chorus
- "There's a Cafe on the Corner ("**Séguedille**") – Carmen
- "Dis Flower ("Flower Song") – Joe
- "Beat Out Dat Rhythm on a Drum ("Gypsy Song") – Frankie
- "Stan' Up an' Fight ("**Toreador Song**") – Husky Miller
- "Whizzin' Away Along de Track ("Quintet") – Carmen, Frankie, Myrt, Dink, and Rum
- "There's a Man I'm Crazy For" – Carmen, Frankie, Mert, Rum, and Dink
- "Card Song" – Carmen, Frankie, and Chorus
- "My Joe ("Micaëla's Prayer") – Cindy Lou
- "He Got His Self Another Woman" – Cindy Lou
- "Final Duet" – Carmen and Joe
- "String Me High on a Tree" – Joe

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## Awards and Nominations

- The film won the **Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy**. It was nominated for the **BAFTA Award for Best Film from any Source** but lost to **Richard III**.
- Dorothy Dandridge was nominated for the **Academy Award for Best Actress**, the first African American to be honoured in the category, but lost to **Grace Kelly** in *The Country Girl*, and the **BAFTA Award for Best Foreign Actress**, but lost to **Betsy Blair** in *Marty*.
- At the **5<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Film Festival**, the film won the **Bronze Berlin Bear** award. The film also won the **Golden Leopard** at the **Locarno International Film Festival**.
- **Herschel Burke Gilbert** was nominated for the **Academy Award for Best Scoring of a Musical Picture** but lost to **Adolph Deutsch** and **Saul Chaplin** for *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*.
- **Harry Kleiner** was nominated for the **Writers Guild of America Award** for Best Written American Musical.
- In 1992, *Carmen Jones* was selected for preservation in the **US National Film Registry** by the **Library of Congress** as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".

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## *The Jazz Singer*

*The Jazz Singer*<sup>9</sup> is a 1980 American musical drama film directed by **Richard Fleischer** and produced by **Jerry Leider**. The film stars **Neil Diamond** (in his acting debut), **Sir Laurence Olivier** and **Lucie Arnaz** and tells the story of a young singer who is torn between religious tradition and pursuing his dreams as a pop singer. Based on the **1925 play of the same name by Samson Raphaelson**, this film is the fourth adaptation of the play, after the 1927 and the 1952 theatrical adaptations and a **1959 television adaptation**.

Developed as a starring vehicle for Diamond, who had undergone a revival of popularity in the late 1970s, the film was initially intended to be produced by Paramount and AFD, with **Sidney J. Furie** directing and **Deborah Raffin** acting opposite Diamond. However, production was plagued with several delays in filming, the departures of Furie and Raffin, and numerous script rewrites.

*The Jazz Singer* was released by AFD on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1980 and was a critical and commercial disappointment, although it did make a substantial profit, doubling its \$13 million budget by making \$27.1 million (not including sales of the soundtrack album, which shipped quintuple platinum, or over 5 million copies, making it the most successful of Diamond's recording career). Critics panned the acting of Diamond and – unusually – Olivier while praising Arnaz's performance and Diamond's **accompanying soundtrack** and live musical performances in the film. The soundtrack eventually reached multi-platinum status, became Diamond's most successful album to date and one of the more successful film soundtrack albums in history.



Picture Credit: Screenshot from video on RollingStone at: <https://youtu.be/eZXcPva-xLA>. All rights of the owner are acknowledged.

### Plot

Yussel Rabinovitch (Diamond) is a young, fifth-generation Jewish cantor performing at the synagogue of his imperious father (Olivier). Yussel is married to his childhood friend Rivka, and has settled down to a life of religious devotion to the teaching of his faith. But on the side, he writes songs for a black singing group, and when a member of the quartet is arrested, Yussel covers for him at one of their gigs by wearing a black face. The nightclub engagement is a success, but one of the patrons notices Yussel's white hands and becomes outspoken. A fight ensues, and the band is arrested.

<sup>9</sup> This section, adapted and excerpted from Wikipedia, [HERE](#).

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Yussel's father comes to the jail to bail them out and discovers there is not a Yussel Rabinovitch there but a Jess Robin. His father questions him later, and Yussel confesses to him this is a professional stage name he uses when performing. His father tells him that his singing voice was to be used for God's purposes, not his own.

Bubba, a member of the *Four Brothers* singing group, is Yussel's best friend, although he only knows Jess. Bubba informs him that the band has a gig in Los Angeles, performing back-up vocals for a successful singer (Keith Lennox). Shortly after Bubba leaves, Yussel begins composing a song that will eventually become "**Love on the Rocks**". His wife Rivka notices him writing the song in his free time and senses that Yussel yearns for a bigger stage for his voice, but her values keep her grounded in the home life they have built.

Bubba calls from Los Angeles to inform Jess that Lennox loved *Love on the Rocks* and wants to record it, but they need Jess to come for two weeks to oversee the recording session. Jess finally views this as the opportunity he has been waiting for, but Rivka and his father are opposed to him going. But later at his father's 25<sup>th</sup>-anniversary party as shul cantor, his father relents and tearfully releases him. When Jess arrives in LA, he is picked up by music agent Molly Bell. She takes him to the studio where Lennox is recording, and Jess is shocked to find that his ballad is now being recorded as a hard rock song. During a break in recording, Jess asks the producer and Lennox if he can perform the song as a ballad, as he intended, so that Lennox can get an idea of the song's framing. They allow him to do so, and while recording the song, Molly decides that Jess's performance is the way the song should be done. However, Lennox is not convinced and fires the group. Later, Molly gets a tip from a friend as to where Eddie Gibbs, a booking agent, is having lunch. She gets into his car, uninvited, and has him listen to Jess' recording of *Love on the Rocks*. When Gibbs asks her who it is, Molly tells him that it is the new opening act for Zane Grey's television special. Gibbs is impressed, but says he can't book anyone from just a tape recording.

Molly arranges for Gibbs to visit a club where Jess is playing, thanks to Bubba, who is working there as a waiter. His performance convinces Gibbs to book Jess as an opening act for Zane Gray's television special. Meanwhile, back in New York, Cantor Rabinovich reminds Rivka that her place is by her husband's side. He pressures her to go to California and attempt to bring him home. Rivka arrives on Jess's opening night and tells Molly that their Jewish values are such and Jess needs to return home. The audience gives Jess a standing ovation, and he heads backstage and is reunited with Rivka. At the after-party, Jess is met by an enthusiastic crowd and offered a recording contract. Jess asks Rivka to stay, but she says she wants something different. Realising she has lost him, she returns home.

Days later, Jess meets Molly by the pier and confesses his love for her, telling her he and Rivka have separated. As time passes, the two grow close to each other, and Jess' career success continues. His father visits, attempting to persuade him to come home, but Jess refuses, insisting he's making a name for himself with his music career. Jess reveals that he and Rivka are divorcing, which devastates his father. To make matters worse, Molly suddenly arrives home. Jess attempts to explain the matter to his father, but to no avail, and he angrily disowns his son and leaves weeping. Heartbroken, Jess struggles at his recording sessions, taking out his anger on his bandmates, until he storms out of a recording session and drives away aimlessly. When his car runs out of gas on the highway, he hitchhikes and lives the life of a drifter for a few months. However, he eventually returns home to Molly when Bubba finds him and tells him she has given birth to his son. Molly once again meets Eddie Gibbs in his car and persuades him to allow Jess to perform on Zane Gray's television special.

At rehearsal, the day before **Yom Kippur**, Jess learns that his father is in the hospital with high blood pressure and won't sing **Kol Nidre** at the synagogue. Jess is initially reluctant to go to his father, vowing that he is dead to him, but Molly insists that he go or else she will feel guilty about it. Jess ultimately agrees and returns to sing at the synagogue. He attempts to make amends with his father, who refuses to speak to Jess until learning he now has a grandson, at which point the two finally reconcile. Lots of emotion at this point.

The film ends with Jess performing **America**, with his father and Molly in attendance.

# Six Memorable Musicals

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## Cast

- Neil Diamond as Yussel Rabinovitch/Jess Robin
- Sir Laurence Olivier as Cantor Rabinovitch
- Lucie Arnaz as Molly Bell
- Catlin Adams as Rivka Rabinovitch
- Franklyn Ajaye as Bubba
- Paul Nicholas as Keith Lennox
- Sully Boyar as Eddie Gibbs
- Mike Kellin as Leo
- James Booth as Paul Rossini

## Production

The idea for the remake came from producer Jerry Leider, who saw Diamond on a 1976 television special. Leider believed that Diamond could have the same crossover appeal as fellow singers Elvis Presley and Barbra Streisand, the latter of whom had recently starred in the successful remake of *A Star Is Born*. Encouraged by the remake's success, Leider decided to remake *The Jazz Singer*. However, an entire year would have to pass before rights to the remake could be figured out, as both Warner Bros. and United Artists claimed ownership. In Autumn 1977, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer put the remake in development, but the studio dropped the remake the following year. Associated Film Distribution picked up the rights and slated the film to begin photography again in May 1979 with Sidney J. Furie directing. However, in early 1979, Diamond underwent back surgery and invoked a clause in his contract allowing him to finish the original music before filming began. During this time, the studio and Leider did consider replacing Diamond with Barry Manilow, though they ultimately decided against it.

Meanwhile, Jacqueline Bisset was approached for the lead female role but asked for too much money. Furie initially wanted Lucie Arnaz, but she was appearing on Broadway, so Deborah Raffin was cast instead, as was Sir Laurence Olivier (as Cantor Rabinovitch, for a \$1 million, ten-week contract).

Filming commenced on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1980, but problems persisted. Furie, who had wanted to change the script from the beginning, ordered several major rewrites. These rewrites led to creative differences between Furie and Foreman, and the latter departed to be replaced by Herbert Baker, who completely rewrote the script with a different ending. Next to go was Deborah Raffin and Furie was able to cast Arnaz in her place. Then the studio fired Furie on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1980, to be replaced by Richard Fleischer. At last, by 28<sup>th</sup> April 1980, filming was completed.

## Box office

British impresario Lew Grade, who invested in the film, said the box-office "results were disappointing and we weren't able to recoup our prints and advertising costs". However, the losses were minimised because the movie had been presold to American television for \$4 million. Also, the soundtrack album was very successful and made more money than the film. The film made over \$27 million on a budget of \$13 million.

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## *Pal Joey*

*Pal Joey*<sup>10</sup> is a 1957 American musical comedy film, directed by **George Sidney**, and based on the 1940 novel by **John O'Hara** and loosely adapted from the **Rodgers and Hart** musical play of the same name. It starred **Rita Hayworth**, **Frank Sinatra**, and **Kim Novak**. The film was the penultimate collaboration of Rodgers and Hart and the first musical to feature an anti-hero lead. **Jo Ann Greer** sang for Hayworth, as she had done previously in *Affair in Trinidad* (1952) and *Miss Sadie Thompson* (1953). Trudy Stevens dubbed Novak's singing voice.



Picture Credit: "Frank Sinatra, Rita Hayworth; Pal Joey" by Movie-Fan is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/)

The film was directed by **George Sidney** and produced by **Fred Kohlmar**. The screenplay was by **Dorothy Kingsley**. The choreography was managed by **Hermes Pan**. **Nelson Riddle** handled the musical arrangements for the Rodgers and Hart standards "**The Lady Is a Tramp**", "**I Didn't Know What Time It Was**", "**I Could Write a Book**", and "**There's a Small Hotel**".

*Pal Joey* was distributed by **Columbia Pictures** and released on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1957. On a budget cost of \$3 million, it took more than twice that at the box office. Sinatra's earnings from the film paid for his new home in Palm Springs. He was so delighted that he also built a restaurant there dedicated to the film, named *Pal Joey's*.

Sinatra won the **Golden Globe Award for Best Actor - Motion Picture Musical or Comedy** for his role as the wise-cracking, hard-bitten Joey Evans. Along with its strong box-office success, *Pal Joey* earned four **Academy Award** nominations and one **Golden Globe Award** nomination.

*Pal Joey* is one of Sinatra's few post-*From Here to Eternity* films in which he did not receive top billing, which surprisingly went to Hayworth. Sinatra was, by this time, a bigger star, and his title role was predominant. When asked about the billing, Sinatra replied, "Ladies first." He was quoted as saying that, as it was a Columbia film, Hayworth should have top billing because "For years, she was Columbia Pictures" and that with regard to being billed "between" Hayworth and Novak: "That's a sandwich I don't mind being stuck in the middle of." As Columbia's biggest star, Hayworth had been top-billed in every film since *Cover Girl* in 1944, but her tenure was to end in 1959 with Gary Cooper in *They Came to Cordura*.

<sup>10</sup> This section, adapted and excerpted from Wikipedia, [HERE](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pal_Joey).



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## The Plot

The setting is San Francisco; Joey Evans (**Frank Sinatra**) is a second-rate singer, a heel known for his womanising ways (calling women "mice"), but charming and funny. When Joey meets Linda English (**Kim Novak**), a naive chorus girl, he has stirrings of real feelings. However, that does not stop him from romancing a former flame and ex-stripper (Joey says, "She used to be "Vera Vanessa the undresser...with the Vanishing Veils"), now society matron Vera Prentice-Simpson (**Rita Hayworth**), a wealthy, wilful, and lonely widow, to convince her to finance Chez Joey, a night club of his own.

Soon Joey is involved with Vera, each using the other for his/her own somewhat selfish purposes. However, Joey's feelings for Linda are growing. Ultimately, Vera jealously demands that Joey should fire Linda. When Joey refuses ("Nobody owns Joey but Joey"), Vera closes down Chez Joey. Linda visits Vera and agrees to quit in an attempt to keep the club open. Vera then agrees to open the club and even offers to marry Joey, but Joey rejects Vera. As Joey is leaving for Sacramento, Linda runs after him, offering to go wherever he is headed. After half-hearted refusals, Joey gives in, and they walk away together.

## The Cast

- **Rita Hayworth** as Vera Prentice-Simpson
- **Frank Sinatra** as "Pal" Joey Evans
- **Kim Novak** as Linda English
- **Barbara Nichols** as Gladys
- **Bobby Sherwood** as Ned Galvin
- **Judy Dan** as hat check girl (uncredited)
- **Hank Henry** as Mike Miggins

## Song List

Of the original 14 **Rodgers and Hart** songs, eight remained, but with two as instrumental background, and four songs were added from other shows.

- Pal Joey: Main Title
- "That Terrific Rainbow" - chorus girls and Linda English
- "I Didn't Know What Time It Was" (introduced in the 1939 musical *Too Many Girls*) - Joey Evans
- "Do It the Hard Way" - orchestra and chorus girls
- "Great Big Town" - Joey Evans and chorus girls
- "There's a Small Hotel" (introduced in the 1936 musical *On Your Toes*) - Joey Evans
- "Zip" - Vera Simpson
- "I Could Write a Book" - Joey Evans and Linda English
- "The Lady Is a Tramp" (introduced in the 1937 musical *Babes in Arms*) - Joey Evans
- "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered" - Vera Simpson
- "Plant You Now, Dig You Later" - orchestra
- "My Funny Valentine" (introduced in the 1937 musical *Babes in Arms*) - Linda English
- "You Mustn't Kick It Around" - orchestra
- Strip Number - "I Could Write a Book" - Linda English
- Dream Sequence and Finale: "What Do I Care for a Dame", "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered", and "I Could Write a Book" - Joey Evans

# Six Memorable Musicals

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## *The Temptations*

Forgive the pun, but I couldn't resist the temptation to include one other musical in this paper.

Early one morning in Autumn 2006, after a fairly sleepless night, I ambled downstairs to my study, switched on the TV, and discovered a film about *The Temptations* was just about to start. I didn't realise until then just how much I loved Motown music.

Picture Credit: "Temptations miniseries" by vidalia\_11 is licensed under CC BY 2.0



So, let me share with you the story of *The Temptations* and the film made about them in 1998.

*The Temptations* is a four-hour television miniseries broadcast in two-hour halves on NBC, based upon the history of one of Motown's longest-lived acts, with that name. The screenplay by Robert Johnson and Kevin Arkadie. Executive-produced by Suzanne de Passe, produced by Otis Williams and Temptations manager Shelley Berger, and based upon Otis Williams' *Temptations* autobiography, the miniseries was originally broadcast on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1998. It was filmed on location in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the spring of 1998. Allan Arkush directed the miniseries. Charles Malik Whitfield narrated it, and Smokey Robinson composed the theme music.

# Six Memorable Musicals

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The miniseries was based upon Otis Williams' book; as such, it came from his perspective: the focus of the story tended to be on Williams and Melvin Franklin, with David Ruffin and Eddie Kendricks seen as antagonists for much of the second half (although Kendricks was still given a more sympathetic portrayal than Ruffin).

Dennis Edwards was not heavily focused upon, nor was much said of the problems he later had with Otis Williams. Nevertheless, the miniseries gave a general overview of both the history of the group and that of Motown, and, thanks to de Passe's connection, the film was able to use authentic props and locations.

## Cast

- Charles Malik Whitfield
- D.B. Woodside
- Terron Brooks
- Christian Payton
- Leon
- Tina Lifford
- Jenifer Lewis
- Gina Ravera
- Obba Babatundé
- J. August Richards
- Vanessa Bell Calloway
- Christopher Reid
- Mel Jackson
- Smokey Robinson
- Alan Rosenberg
- Bianca Lawson

## Music

For those unfamiliar with Motown music, *The Temptations* are an American vocal group from **Detroit**, Michigan, USA. They released a series of successful singles and albums with **Motown Records** during the 1960s and 1970s. The group's work with producer **Norman Whitfield**, beginning with the Top 10 hit single **Cloud Nine** in October 1968, pioneered **psychedelic soul** and was significant in the evolution of **R&B** and **soul music**. The band members are known for their choreography, distinct harmonies, and dress style. Having sold tens of millions of albums, the Temptations are among the most successful groups in **popular music**.

## The Plot – How it all started

The story begins in 1958 when **Otis Williams**, then a teenager, runs to meet his friend **Elbridge "Al" Bryant** at a musical performance by **The Cadillacs**. Otis and the singer lock eyes, which when Otis credits as the moment he devoted his life to music. After the concert, Otis and Al go to a barber to get the Tony Curtis and DA-style treatment. Later, Otis arrives home for dinner, where his stepfather is angered by his hairstyle and pressures him to go to work at the assembly line instead of going into music, which Otis heatedly rejects. Six months later, Otis, Al and two new band members are singing on a street corner when they see another group of singers, the *Voicemasters*, across the street and are impressed by one singer's **bass voice**.

The next day after school, Otis spots the singer walking home and decides to follow him. The singer sees Otis and begins to run away, believing he is a gang member. Otis eventually catches him and introduces himself, finding out that the singer's name is **Melvin Franklin**, and invites him to join his group, *Otis Williams & the Siberians*. Melvin agrees, but only if his mother approves. After talking to Melvin's mother, Otis convinces her to let him join. The group, now with five members, are practising their singing after school one day when they notice a group of girls watching them and listening to them sing. Upon seeing this, the group follows them while singing "**Earth Angel**". The girls go their separate ways until one girl, Josephine, remains, and Otis asks her out on a date.

The following Saturday, the group are making out with the girls in a milk truck when they hear a call for their group to come to the radio station. After a hasty drive to the station, they find the 'radio station' turns out to be a run-down apartment. Johnnie May Matthews, the owner of the pirate radio studio in the basement, declares herself their new manager and producer and changes their name to *Otis Williams and the Distant*.

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In April 1960, the group was waiting to perform at a party where they met **Paul Williams**, **Eddie Kendricks**, singers for *The Primes*, **Diana Ross**, lead singer for the *Primettes*, **Smokey Robinson**, lead singer of *Smokey Robinson & the Miracles*, and **Berry Gordy**, founder and owner of **Motown Records**. Al arrives late at the party and shows hostility towards Eddie and Paul. *The Primes* and *Primettes* perform and the *Distant*s are impressed by their sound. After performing, Otis and Melvin see Berry Gordy entering the bathroom and follow him. After some talking, Berry gives them a business card to contact him later.

See more on the story and what happened next [HERE](#).

## Legacy and influence

**Berry Gordy**, the founder of the Motown record label and its subsidiaries – the highest-earning African-American business for decades - insisted that all his acts should appeal equally to white and black audiences. He employed an extensive creative team to help tailor Motown talent for the crossover success he desired. Motown **choreographer Cholly Atkins**, along with Paul Williams, created the trademark precise and energetic, yet refined, dance steps used by the Temptations onstage. The most famous of these, the *Temptation Walk*, or *Temptation Strut*, was adapted from similar moves by **the Flamingos** and **the Vibrations**. From those two sources, Atkins and Williams crafted the resulting signature dance routine.

During the 1960s and 1970s, several soul groups showed a significant influence from the Temptations, such as **the Trammps**, **Tavares**, **Manhattans**, **the Chi-Lites**, **Parliaments**, **the Dramatics**, **the Dells**, **the Spinners**, **the Softones**, **the Delfonics**, **Daryl Hall & John Oates**, and Motown labelmates **the Miracles**, **Four Tops**, **the Monitors**, **Gladys Knight & the Pips**, **the Originals**, **the Jackson Five** and **the Undisputed Truth**.

These acts and others showed the influence of the *Temptations* in both their vocal performances and their onstage choreography, and the *Temptations*' songs have been covered by several musicians, from R&B singers to white soul and reggae bands.

## Awards etc

- During their career, *The Temptations* released four **Billboard Hot 100** number-one singles and fourteen **R&B number-one singles**.
- Their music has earned three **Grammy Awards**. The Temptations were the first Motown recording act to win a Grammy Award – for *Cloud Nine* in 1969 – and in 2013, received the **Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award**.
- Six of the Temptations (Edwards, Franklin, Kendricks, Ruffin, Otis Williams and Paul Williams) were **inducted** into the **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** in 1989.
- Three classic Temptations songs, *My Girl*, *Just My Imagination (Running Away with Me)*, and *Papa Was a Rollin' Stone*, are among **The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll**.
- The Temptations were ranked at number 68 on *Rolling Stone* magazine's list of the 100 Greatest Artists of all time. I think they should have been ranked much higher.
- In 2018, the story of the Temptations served as inspiration for the **jukebox musical *Ain't Too Proud***, which opened on **Broadway** in March 2019. The show was nominated for **11 Tony Awards** at the **73rd Tony Awards** and won for **Best Choreography**.
- The Temptations were voted into the Michigan Rock and Roll Legends Hall of Fame in 2005. They received the **Lifetime Achievement Grammy Award** in 2013 and were officially inducted into the **R&B Music Hall of Fame** at the inaugural ceremony held at Cleveland State University.
- As of 2021, *The Temptations* continue to perform with founder **Otis Williams** in the lineup (he owns the rights to the *Temptations* name).

# Six Memorable Musicals

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Picture Credit: "Temptations miniseries" by vidalia\_11 is licensed under CC BY 2.0

## *Sources and Further Information*

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There's a great introduction to *Pal Joey* by Frank Sinatra on IMDb, [HERE](#). I recommend you watch it. And whatever you do, don't miss viewing the trailer to *The Temptations* movie (also on IMDb) [HERE](#).