

1: The Shape of Things ("The Surrey With The Fringe On Top")

In This Lesson

- *Form in the book of a musical and why shaping the dialogue to lead to a song is a primary skill.*
- *Form in the music and why the use of motivic repetition is important to theatre composers.*
- *Form in the lyrics and why rhythmic prosody is an essential skill for lyricists.*

OVERVIEW

What makes a musical a musical, as opposed to a play with music, or a revue? For example, we call *Oklahoma* the first great American musical because it was the first time all the songs had been consciously integrated into the book, and because it used all the theatre arts to tell its story: dialogue, music, lyrics, scenery, lighting, staging and dance. The award-winning show from a few years ago, *Once*, showed most of those attributes, but did not fully integrate the songs into the book. In *Once*, the songs were tangentially related to the characters and plot because one of the characters is a songwriter - and the songs were songs he wrote.

For the purposes of this course, we are talking about shows like *Oklahoma*, and *Hamilton*, narrative musicals with integrated songs. A truly integrated work requires the composer and lyricist to be dramatists first, composer and lyricist second. Revues and juke box catalog musicals are a different dish, not on the menu here. This is not to say that a play with music like the innovative show, *Once*, is without value, or that revues and juke box musicals like *Mamma Mia* have no place in the literature. These and other popular shows have great merit and offer hours of excitement and entertainment to their audiences – but they are not the topic of our discussion.

Oklahoma premiered in 1942 – more than 75 years ago. Young writers today will understandably find it old-fashioned, maybe even creaky with age. But it was the foundation of the modern musical, and all musical writers should study it and the hundreds of musicals that followed it, right up to *Hamilton* and beyond. There is a direct link from *Oklahoma* to *Hamilton* that may not be obvious at first glance. I am writing about the *elements* of musical theatre communication, which haven't changed a lot since *Oklahoma*. Musical idioms have changed. Stagecraft has changed. Many

stylistic changes have occurred, but the basic elements of how a musical marries its various arts – dramatic poetry, music, lyrics, scenery, costumes, dance, orchestration, staging, etc. – are still very much in evidence.

The book of a musical show is not at all the same as a play. Very often, what the bookwriter writes initially, before songs are added, *looks* like a play, especially today when stagecraft has made it possible for plays to be cinematically fluid. Fifty years ago plays were confined to one or two locations by scenic convention and only musicals offered scenic variety.

Variety is a good word to describe the standard American musical. It offers variety in musical style, combining ballads and up-tempo songs, varying rhythms and topics; it offers variety in scenic locations, sometimes presenting a dozen or more locations during the evening; it offers variety in characters, generally mixing plots and subplots and often setting one off against the other for contrast. The musical also usually involves extensive production values – costumes, lights, scenery, orchestrations, and large casts – especially on Broadway.

Given the popularity of vaudeville entertainment in the early decades of the 20th century, it is not surprising that the musical theatre took advantage of the audience's desire for variety and presented it to them in a different form. The earliest musical comedies had predictable and silly romantic plots, and the comedy was inserted, much the way a comedy team appeared in a vaudeville show, often having nothing at all to do with the plot of the show. The comedians were frequently vaudeville and burlesque veterans, hired to do their routine smack dab in the middle of the show, just to get the audience laughing.

Today, everything is integrated. Character and story values are respected. However, the audience's desire for variety has not sagged. Contrast and variety are still an important part of the form.

Since musical theatre is a story-telling form, the book of a musical needs to tell a story in a cohesive and identifiable way. Basically, stories are about people who want things and what they do to get what they want. The story ends when we learn whether they got it or not. Here are the three most important elements of a narrative that a musical needs to address:

The shape of the book

- A clearly defined beginning, middle and end

The beginning tells us who the central character is, what that person wants and probably the first thing the character does to achieve his or her heart's desire. In *Oklahoma*, Curly wants to take Laurey to the box social and invents a story about The Surrey With The Fringe On Top in an effort to get her to say yes.

The end tells us whether the character gets what he or she wanted. In *Oklahoma*, Curly and Laurey are married before the curtain falls, because Curly's desire to go to the box social was only an introduction to what he really wanted from Laurey.

The middle is everything between the beginning and the end, and ought to include rising and falling actions connected by cause and effect as the character meets and

overcomes or fails to overcome obstacles to his or her goal. In *Oklahoma* Curly has to vie with Jud for Laurey's affection, and ultimately must protect Laurey from Jud's unwanted attentions.

- A strongly motivated central character

The central character must want or need something (or want to avoid something) passionately. Musicals are not about people who don't know what they want or who have some vague urge to have something better for themselves. In *Oklahoma*, as much as Curly wants Laurey, Laurey wants to be courted, but doesn't quite know how to make it happen. She teases Curly about his desire to go to the dance with her in a coquettish effort to get him to make some statement of his intentions, and ultimately accepts an invitation from Jud calculated to make Curly jealous. This creates conflict and cements Curly's desire, setting him on a course of action.

- Something of importance depends upon the outcome of the story

Ultimately, what happens in the end must matter to somebody, and the audience must care about the outcome. It would be difficult to tell a story about somebody trying to decide whether to have a tuna sandwich or a ham sandwich for lunch unless one of the sandwiches is liberally spiced with arsenic. In *Oklahoma*, Jud is half-crazed with desire for Laurey, which makes him dangerous. In an effort to protect Laurey, Curly kills Jud in self-defense and faces prosecution. A quickly assembled judge and jury find him not guilty so he can go on his honeymoon with Laurey before the curtain falls.

Plot/subplot relationships

All musicals feature at least one subplot, and this is usually in some kind of contrast to the main plot. If the primary story is a serious romance, the subplot will probably be a comedic romance, and vice-versa. In *Oklahoma* the main plot is the triangle between Curly, Laurey and Jud, where Laurey accepts an invitation from Jud in order to make Curly jealous, not realizing that she is unleashing uncontrollable passions within Jud that could have serious consequences. The subplot concerns Ado Annie, Will Parker and Ali Hakim, but when Ado Annie tries to play one man against the other, Ali Hakim is willing to pay money to get out of the deal, a comic counterpoint to the main story.

There may be more than one subplot, but there will probably always be at least one. The subplot scenes let the main plot "cook" while the characters are offstage, and the main characters' offstage time permits changes in time and place within the story as well as time for costume changes for the principals. This insistence on subplot also permits the variety of experience that characterizes the musical form.

Generally the subplot is somehow connected to the main plot. The people are known to each other or related to each other in some way. In *Oklahoma* Ali Hakim is a peddler, a traveling man whom everyone knows because they all buy things from him. Ado Annie is a friend of Laurey's, and Will Parker is a friend of Curly's. Nothing happens in a vacuum. These connections make it possible for one scene to follow another with some logic and give a feeling of integrity to the whole.

Leading to songs

Many people think the book of a musical is the dialogue as opposed to the score or songs. However, this is not a precise or exact definition. The late Peter Stone, a well-

Peter Stone

2/27/1930 – 4/26/2003

Screenwriter, Bookwriter and
President of the Dramatists
Guild



Among Peter Stone's best-known works are the films *Charade* and *Father Goose*, and the musicals *1776*, *Woman of The Year*, *My One and Only*, and *The Will Rogers Follies*. He served as the member-elected President of the Dramatists' Guild from 1981 – 1999.

Quote: At early previews, the theater gossips are there, wishing you ill every night. They don't grant you any slack. Agents are in from Hollywood. Your friends are there. People who are going to spread the word-of-mouth. If something doesn't work, everyone will know.

known bookwriter of Broadway shows (*1776*, *My One and Only*, *Will Rogers Follies*), defines the book as the *structure* of the evening. This is probably a better way of thinking of the book. Much of the story is told in song today, and in some cases, musicals have little or no dialogue (*Evita*, *Les Miserables*, *The Most Happy Fella*) but there must be a definite structure to the show.

The work of the dialogue, if there is to be dialogue, is to tell the story in the most economical way possible *while* leading directly to the next song. Every scene in a musical has a high point of drama – success, failure, comedic conflict, something – and the songs are usually placed at or near this point, either to anticipate the drama, explore it or investigate its aftermath in terms of a character's feelings.

Unlike a play, the scene must be organized to produce the song. Generally scenes in a musical end with a song, but not all songs come at the ends of scenes. Rather, the song ends or completes a moment in the show. The ending of the song will draw applause. As the applause dies down the audience expects a new element to occur. If there is no scene change at the end of the song, something else may happen immediately after the song to get things going again – a new character appears, there is a knock at the door, a clap of thunder, an offstage explosion, a siren, a gunshot, a scream, a change of condition of some kind. Failing this sort of interruption, the song probably will not end, but will fade into underscoring as the dialogue and the moment continue without singing.

The first scene of *Oklahoma* is lazy and bucolic to begin with. Aunt Eller is churning butter, Laurey is hiding out in the farmhouse at first, and Curly is offstage singing "Oh What A Beautiful Morning." After Laurey comes out to hang the laundry, the dialogue works its way to the box social and Laurey coyly taunts Curly into admitting he has come to invite her to the event.

CURLY

You knowed it was me, so you set in there a-thinkin' up sump'n mean to say. I'm a good mind not to ast you to the Box Social.

LAUREY

If you did ast me, I wouldn't go with you. Besides, how'd you take me? You ain't bought a new buggy with red wheels onto it, have you?

CURLY:

No, I ain't.

LAUREY:

And a spankin' team with their bridles all jinglin'?

CURLY:

No.

LAUREY

'Spect me to ride on behind ole Dun, I guess. You better ast that ole Cummin's girl you've tuck sich a shine to, over acrost the river.

CURLY:

If I was to ast you, they'd be a way to take you, Miss Laurey Smarty.

LAUREY:

Oh, they would?

CURLY

WHEN I TAKE YOU OUT TONIGHT WITH ME
HONEY, HERE'S THE WAY IT'S GOIN' TO BE
YOU WILL SET BEHIND A TEAM OF SNOW WHITE HORSES
IN THE SLICKEST GIG YOU EVER SEE

CHICKS AND DUCKS AND GEESE BETTER SCURRY
WHEN I TAKE YOU OUT IN THE SURRY...ETC.!

Leading to the song is an important skill for the bookwriter to develop.

The shape of the Music

To begin, let's agree that often the shape of the lyric is determined by the music, especially if the music comes first. And of course, if the lyrics come first, the lyrics will determine the shape. Either way, the music and lyrics must work together to make the song intelligible for the audience. So, first: how do music and lyrics look and sound in different song forms?

Basically a song is a series of versus arranged in a particular way to create a form that creates a musical logic usually including Statement, Restatement, Departure and Conclusion (SRDC). A verse, before it is set to music, is like the stanza of a poem, words arranged usually in 3 to 5 lines (but sometimes more) exhibiting a metric integrity and generally establishing a consistent rhyming pattern.

Popular forms and theatre music

Theatre music has needs different from other forms of music, although often songs written for the theatre sound like songs written for the popular audience. In the Golden Age of the American popular song between 1925 and 1955, the Tin Pan Alley style song was the acknowledged popular form over most of the Western world. It had a very particular 32-bar format in four discreet 8-bar sections:

A – A – B – A

The virtue of this form is the three A sections, which are identical or nearly identical melodically. This means that in a single 32-bar refrain we will hear that music three times. In some songs, the central musical idea or motive is repeated several times within an A section, either exactly or in some sequential pattern with variations. This repetition of melody renders the song almost instantly hummable. If the refrain is sung more than once when it is first heard, say 2 or 3 times, you can do the math and figure out how many times that A section will be heard.

Since this form was the accepted form for a popular song in the Western world and gaining popularity in parts of the East, the music people heard in the theatre sounded very much like the music they heard on the radio. In fact, many popular songs of the day were first heard in Broadway shows. People would go to a new musical and hope to hear one or more songs that would become the hits of the near future. They wanted to be the first to hear them.

You would have to be tone deaf to leave a performance of *Annie Get Your Gun* and not be able to hum the song, “There’s No Business Like Show Business,” even if you had never heard it before. There are several refrains back to back the first time you hear it, it is used as change music many times throughout the show, there are reprises, it’s in the overture and the entr’acte, and it’s the exit music they play when you leave the theatre. This means you have heard the main theme possibly fifty or more times during the course of the evening.

The B section of an AABA song is generally set in a different key. This complicates the terminology, because young songwriters hear the key change and refer to the B section as the “chorus,” since that’s how they generally write a chorus today (i.e. in a different key from the verses). In the Tin Pan Alley lexicon, then, another way to say A A B A is to say Verse Verse Chorus Verse.

Naturally, not all songs in a musical show will have the form AABA. However, many will. And those that do not feature this form will replace it with another strong form that features enough melodic repetition to render it rememberable. Whatever your musical background is we want you to master the AABA form. We will ask you to write your assignments in this skills course in the AABA form. Don’t panic. It’s not as restrictive as it sounds. There is plenty of leeway here for creativity. You can write a preceding intro, and you may write several refrains of the song, connecting them with a contrasting C section and possibly ending with an extended coda..

Remember that the AABA song is generally composed of four 8-bar sections, so the refrain is 32 bars long. In an up-tempo song, this takes about 45 to 60 seconds, so there will obviously be more than one refrain or the song will go by so fast no one will

remember hearing it, let alone be able to hum it while leaving the theatre. Even a slow ballad generally only takes about two minutes to complete one refrain...maybe three minutes for an intro followed by a refrain and a half (INTRO - AABA – BA). Again in the Golden Age, three minutes was ideal because it was about the maximum time single records would play on one side.

There is another variation of the A-A-B-A song known as A-B-A-B' in which the B' recapitulates the A section in the last line or two, so what the audience hears is A-B-A then $\frac{1}{2}$ B + $\frac{1}{2}$ A. This plays more or less like a 16 bar tune in which the second chorus has an alteration at the very end, reminding us of the original melodic motive.

Here's an example of a lyric with the form ABAB' by Frank Loesser and Jule Styne:

A

I don't want to walk without you, baby
Walk without my arm about you, baby

B

I thought the day you left me behind
I'd take a stroll and get you right off my mind, but now I find that

A

I don't want to walk without the sunshine
Why'd you have to turn off all that sunshine?

B'

Oh, baby, please come back or you'll break my heart in two

(recapitulation of A)

'Cause I don't want to walk without you, no siree.ⁱⁱ

If the music doesn't return to the recapitulation of the A section, and doesn't restate the B section before winding up for its final, new statement, it would look like this example of a song by Harold Rome and Johnny Mercer written for the musical *St. Louis Woman*:

A

I'm gonna love you like nobody's loved you
Come rain or come shine
High as a mountain and deep as a river
Come rain or come shine

B

I guess when you met me
It was just one of those things
But don't ever bet me
Cause I'm gonna be true if you let me

A

You're gonna love me like nobody's loved me

Come rain or come shine
Happy together, unhappy together
And won't it be fine

C

Days may be cloudy or sunny
We're in or we're out of the money
But I'm with you always
I'm with you rain or shineⁱⁱⁱ

Within the form of a wonderful theatre song, something almost mystical takes place. The music and lyrics go together like a bareback dancer and her horse. It seems effortless. The audience is able to simultaneously hear and understand the lyric against the competing elements of the musical stage: sets, costumes, orchestrations, choreography, lighting, etc. And this is not an accident. It is the result of careful collaboration between the composer and the lyricist. It is very likely impossible to discuss theatre music separately from the lyrics, but we will try in the sections that follow. Try to understand that while we speak of the elements of music and lyrics.

Composers need to make themselves sensitive to the full intention and meaning of the lyrics. What is the appropriate rhythm of the words? What is the emotional content? Where does the lyric peak emotionally? What is the subtext of the lyric (i.e., what is the underlying thought that produces the words of the lyric)? It takes more than merely imagining a tune that "fits" the lyric. The music should explore the fullest potential of the lyric in the moment of the play. This is what the best theatre songs do, and there is no formula for composers to follow. How this effect is realized is something composers themselves have difficulty articulating.

Certainly, some composers achieve their effects by careful consideration of all the factors of the moment, using their personal musical tool box to put together the right elements for a particular song. The choice of a minor key, the choice of a key signature, the choice of an underlying rhythmic pattern (waltz, fox trot, samba, march, an asymmetrical time signature like 5/4), the harmonic palette (Should it be tied to the period of the play? Should this moment consist of only triadic harmony, using non-chordal tones for tension? Should there be 5 or 6-part harmony with lots of altered tones?), what about the tessitura where the voice "sits" or the vocal range of the melody itself...all of these and more may be conscious decisions on the part of the composer. They may also be made quite unconsciously by a composer who reads the play, reads the lyric and more or less simply hears the music. Neither way is better or worse. And of course there are many shades between the conscious-unconscious extremes.

Hummable songs

When people talk about hummable songs, they generally mean the song is rememberable. They hear the song in the show and are able to hum it as they leave the theatre and make the trip home...maybe not the whole song, but enough of it that they know they want to hear it again.

Lehman Engel

9/14/1910 – 8/29/1982

Composer, conductor, and Broadway musical director.



Among the 150 shows Lehman Engel conducted on Broadway are the titles *Goldilocks*, *Do Re Me*, *Take Me Along*, *I Can Get It For You Wholesale*, *Fanny*, *Wonderful Town*, *L'il Abner* and *The Consul*. He was nominated for a Tony Award 10 times, winning 6, in a category that no longer exists. He wrote incidental music for more than 25 plays including *St. Joan* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Perhaps his most lasting and important achievement was founding and supervising the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop in 1968, where writers were trained in New York, Los Angeles, Nashville and Toronto.

Quote: Musicals aren't written; they are constructed during the rehearsal process.

One of the key factors responsible for making a song rememberable is repetition. The more often one hears a melody, the easier it is to remember. The main reason the old favorites are so rememberable is that we have heard them so often throughout the years of our lives.

In the theatre, stagecraft has changed. At one time, music was used during scene changes that often took 20 or 30 seconds, time enough to reinforce the melody we had just heard. Today, the set changes during the applause that follows the song, still accompanied by music, but much more quickly than it used to do. And sometimes a change of location is instantaneous and cinematic, using lights and projections rather than physical scenery.

The actual song forms are also sometimes different. Although the A A B A form is still heard in the theatre today, and in some popular genres, like Country Western songs, newer forms have evolved. There is no longer one form that defines a popular song, nor is there one style of music that can be categorized as the popular song of today.

And whatever form a song takes, it won't be heard as often during a show on Broadway today as in the past. Today musicals seldom feature an overture, and those that do may only give a few bars of music to quiet the crowd before the curtain goes up. Reprises are rare anymore, considered old-fashioned and sentimental by some. Change music is limited because the stagecraft is so advanced.

The popular song today has many guises. It may be a country western tune (lots of A A B A songs in that genre), it may be a rap song, an MOR ballad, soft rock, hard rock, acid rock, jazz, hip-hop, or some other genre. All of these styles of music are popular today. There is no single form for the popular song of the present day, like there was in the Tin Pan Alley era. This means that the music we hear in the theatre may not be anything like the music we hear on the radio, unless we listen to the right station.

Lehman Engel taught that any musical genre could be made to work in the theatre as long as the overall score of a show provides enough variety. He pointed out that shows by Irving Berlin and Scott Joplin that tried to use exclusively ragtime music failed, whereas it is very

common to find a ragtime song in the middle of a Broadway score. Engel also maintained that the popular genres must be imitated and adapted for use in the theatre, rather than merely recreated there. This is because of the need for theatre songs to *develop* in the lyric, taking the character from one thought or condition to another. In many popular genres, the intention is to stay in one place, repeat endlessly, especially in rock music where the beat predominates and lyrics are secondary.

Theatre songs today still rely on strong forms: A A B A, A B A B' (A B A C), and A B A B (Verse-Chorus). Many of the songs in *Oklahoma* are A A B A in form such as "The Surrey With The Fringe On Top."

Oklahoma also includes other forms. "Oh What A Beautiful Morning," the opening song of the show, is an A B A B or verse – chorus song.

Other forms are used today, and the three cited above are sometimes tweaked a bit to create what sounds like a different form. Many contemporary writers take the liberty of experimenting with song forms, but generally rely on finding ways within any chosen form to reiterate melodic and rhythmic ideas in order to render the song more rememberable.

Within whatever strong form the composer chooses are hidden realities. There will be moments of rest in the melody, moments where a musical phrase seems to end or pause without making a final cadence or full stop. These moments, usually at the ends of phrases, are useful in organizing the lyrical thoughts, which must begin an end simultaneously with the musical phrases, and they often "tell" the audience where to expect the lyrics to rhyme. Music often "rhymes" by leading the hearer to expect a rhyme because of the shape of the phrases. In fact, it is imperative that rhymes occur where this happens, or the audience will be disappointed. Train yourself to listen for where the music "wants" a rhyme if you are a lyricist. If you are a composer, train yourself to make sure the shape of the melody assists and accommodates the rhymes the lyricist supplies.

This skills course focuses on the A A B A form because it is so common in musical theatre. However, the most important thing to say about song form in musical theatre is that within a given song, the form should be *strong* and *consistent*. In addition to helping to make the song rememberable, the form of the song - its physical shape, rhyme scheme, repeating musical sections, key changes and the number of refrains - helps an audience to receive the song. Once the form of a song is established, it should repeat consistently, unless a significant dramatic reason exists to change its structure. A fluid, dramatic scene might be musicalized, for instance, in a constantly evolving song form using an operatic approach to form. The complex form might be based on a single motive or it might introduce new motives as the drama dictates.

The most rememberable theatre songs feature motivic repetition, either verbatim as in "Oh What A Beautiful Morning" or by repeating the motive in different key relationships as in "Tea For Two." More useful even than the strong form is motivic repetition within each section as evidenced in these examples.

Motivic repetition in a strong form song is an important skill for the composer to develop.

The shape of the Lyrics

One of the biggest problems composers face when working with lyricists who do not have a musical background is that corresponding lines of lyric are not written with the same metric scansion. This means that even if the corresponding lines have the same number of syllables, the stresses or accents fall in different places in the line. This makes it impossible to use the same music in what is meant to be a repeating section of the song. Or if the same music is used, the words must be sung with misplaced accents.

This is less of a problem when the music is written before the lyrics, as long as the lyricist honors the melodic rhythms by creating phrases that match that lilt. If the lyrics come first they must scan properly if the composer is going to be able to make rhythmic sense out of them. This is especially important if a lyricist is working at some distance from the composer and they don't have the opportunity to work in the same room together frequently.

Song Forms

Here are the A sections from an A A B A song, "The Surrey With The Fringe On Top." The lyrics are arranged to show you how corresponding lines match up and scan exactly the same way (the stressed syllables are emboldened):

First line of each A section:

A-1: **Chicks** and **ducks** and **geese** better **scurry**

A-2: **Watch** thet **fringe** and **see** how it **flutters**

A-3: **Two** bright **side** lights **winkin'** and **blinkin'**

Second line of each A section:

A-1: **When** I **take** you **out** in the **surrey**

A-2: **When** I **drive** them **high** steppin' **strutters**

A-3: **Ain't** no **finer rig** I'm a-**thinkin'**

Third line of each A section:

A-1: **When** I **take** you **out** in the **surrey** with the **fringe** on **top**

A-2: **Nosey pokes'll peek** through their **shutters** and their **eyes** will **pop**

A-3: **You** c'n **keep** yer **rig** if you're **thinkin'** 'at I'd **keer** to **swap**^{iv}

Some of the matching lines seem to be a different length, but that is merely a matter of the number of letters in each word. Read each of the sets of lines aloud, one after the other. All three first lines scan exactly the same way, put the accents on the same syllables in each line. The same is true for the second and third lines.

Now look at the A sections in the proper order. Notice the shape of the B section. It is discernibly different and you would expect contrast in the music just by looking at the lyric:

Chicks and ducks and geese better scurry
When I take you out in the surrey
When I take you out in the surrey with the fringe on top

Watch that fringe and see how it flutters
When I drive them high steppin' strutters
Nosey pokes'll peek through their shutters and their eyes will pop

The wheels are yeller, the upholstery's brown
The dashboard's genuine leather
With isinglass curtains y'c'n roll right down
In case there's a change in the weather

Two bright side lights winkin' and blinkin'
Ain't no finer rig I'm a-thinkin'
You c'n keep yer rig if you're thinkin' 'at I'd keer to swap
For that shiny little surrey with the fringe on the top.^v

This accomplishes three things: First, the music of each A section can repeat exactly, reinforcing the tune. Second, the words and music work together rhythmically so that the audience can hear and understand the words easily. Finally, the rhythm of the first two lines and the first part of the third line are exactly the same. This permits musical repetition within the A section.

Notice that the 4th line of the final A section provides a coda to bring the refrain to an end, finishing the lyrical thought and putting a musical period on the music itself.

The term we use to describe the proper rhythmic marriage of music and lyrics is *prosody*. When the natural spoken rhythm of the words is not properly set to music and one or more syllables is mis-accented, we say the *prosody* is poor or wrong. It will be impossible for the composer to achieve perfect prosody *and* melodic repetition simultaneously unless the lyrics scan exactly from stanza to stanza.

Perfect rhythmic scansion is an important skill for the lyricist to develop.

ⁱ Lyrics from “The Surry With The Fringe On Top,” music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II.

ⁱⁱ Lyrics of “I Don’t Want To Walk Without You,” music by Julie Styne, lyrics by Frank Loesser

ⁱⁱⁱ Lyrics of “Come Rain Or Come Shine,” music by Harold Rome, lyrics by Johnny Mercer

^{iv} Op. cit. in i above

^v Op. cit. in i above