

Gary Cherpakov's Lyrics

Gary Cherpakov's music and lyrics are some of the most brilliant ever written for musical theatre. I felt that since we created the first three songs many decades ago and only of late do I realize the reasons why.

Gary said that he wanted his songs recognized in three notes on the TV show Name That Tune, and that they are. But it is the easy grace of his lyrics that is so stunning. The intricate rhyme schemes are simultaneously complex and effortless. The common conception is that a song is made of words and music, but a more precise definition is that a song is made of musical sounds and verbal sounds, that is word/sounds that are inherently pleasing and rhymes are inherently pleasing.

Where Gary differs and is superior to many Broadway lyricists is his ability to create the internal rhymes that so strongly bind the words together in an effortless number of pleasing sounds.

"I love a lackey in khaki, or a navy blue marine,
The new recruit in a brand new suit is cute although he's green."

In the above rhyme, Gary has substituted the word "suit" for the more correct word "uniform," but the listener accepts the word for the sake of the rhyme. This is similar to Cole Porter's reversal of *Dante's Inferno* when he rhymes "the nose on the great Durante" and "Inferno's Dante." Gary understands that lyrics are made with "sounds," not simply words.

There are seven rhyming words in the following two lines. Note that the one of the rhymes uses one word and then the first syllable of the next word: "spare-af...ternoons."

"I'd ride my mare to the Cheyenne state fair, to see dare-devils loop through the sky.
Crazy for air-craft, I'd spend all my spare-af...ternoons wondering how I could fly."

Or another example of internal rhymes.

"It was only a lark, a walk in the park that was all,
So when you're far across the sea, don't give a thought to me."

Or in jest on the trite moon, spoon, June rhymes, Gary lovingly wrote,

"I love to feel his kisses 'neath the moon,
He's sweeter than sugar on a spoon.
I've set my cap to marry him, know when? June."

"Set my cap to marry him?" Where did this quaint, old fashioned expression come from? Look it up. Find out how rare it is in our language. Even though you might not have ever heard it before, you know exactly what her intentions are. Sheer brilliance!

The vast majority of songs of other composers are written with obvious rhymes, love-dove-above, but Gary Cherpakov writes with rhymes that are unobvious, simply rhymes you have never heard before, anywhere, any time. And rhyme schemes that you have never seen before. "Show a lemon clemency." (Not it OH, JOHNNY)

Or, in humor and also make the point of the evil intentions of the General, Gary writes this. As you can see, the first two lines don't simply have ending rhymes, but also rhyme with an internal word in each of two lines: "vacation" and "reputation." Note the alliteration in the last line, "flog and flail."

"My viper's on vacation and my boa won't constrict.
This will ruin my reputation, tell me when do you predict?
Business as usual, filling up the jail,
Business as usual, I love to flog and flail."

All of the above is not to imply that Gary cannot be write simple, powerful lyrics.

"Dance around the world with me, we can watch it turn.
Dance around the world with me, so many things to learn,
We'll sail through the night on a magical flight,
Hold on tight, hold on tight, hold on tight."

What makes a brilliant musical "brilliant" is not the book; it is the music and especially the lyrics. Gary's lyrics show a unique brilliance of rhyme unseen in any other Broadway lyricist, present or past.