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Sonja Lowe- Production Dramaturg

The Setting

Place:

Bertie's luxurious New York apartment,
where he plans to make an extended stay.

Time: Spring, 1932.

Bertie's back! And this time his talent for trouble trails him to the Big Apple. When childhood chum Binkey Binkersteth knocks, one knacky notion leads to masterful mayhem and soon the notorious Knuckles McCann is fitting Bertie for a Chicago overcoat. Fortunately, the unflappable Jeeves is close at hand with a stiff cuppa joe and a penchant for putting things right!

The Playwright: Margaret Raether

Margaret Raether first encountered PG Wodehouse in the form of a battered secondhand paperback of *The Code of the Woosters* when she was in college. This, as Bogart once famously observed, was "the beginning of a beautiful friendship." A founding member of Rockford Illinois' Artists' Ensemble Theatre, most of Ms. Raether's plays have debuted either at Artists' Ensemble or at New American Theater of Los Angeles, where she spent two seasons as Playwright in Residence. Her plays are pounded out late at night while peering around a cat that likes to sit in front of her monitor.

Ms. Raether's trilogy of PG Wodehouse adaptations have been described as "bright and engaging as a garden party in May" (*Chicago Tribune*), "as dry as a well-made martini and equally potent" (*Herald Tribune*), and her writing "wonderfully captures the late British humorist's renowned wit" (*Seattle Times*).

An excerpt from an article by Elizabeth Davies: "...If you've been around Rockford's live theater scene long enough, you've undoubtedly come across Margaret Raether.

This mother of two has been performing in local plays and musicals here since her teen years, and these days her gift for comedy is lending itself to yet another role: playwright.

To date, Raether has penned 11 full-length plays, including mysteries, children's shows and adaptations. She spent two seasons as the playwright-in-residence at New American Theater.

"Everyone should have a Jeeves," Raether said. "I certainly wish I did. No matter what



disaster Bertie encounters, Jeeves extricates him effortlessly and with great panache." A graphic designer by day, Raether pours her thoughts into the keyboard during evenings and weekends. She creates characters — their worries, their fears, their shortcomings — and uses that inspiration to write their dialogue. Many of her lines are written with local actors in mind, as Raether imagines her words being spoken aloud.

And then, when she heads to the theater to see her words transformed onto the stage, Raether sits back and watches the audience soak up her story.

"It is immensely gratifying to have a whole room full of people burst into laughter at something that came out of my head," she said. "Once I discovered that I could do this, I became addicted."

Q&A with Margaret Raether

Q: How long does it take to write a play?

A: "Roughly two months, I guess, although at least a full month of that time involves being stuck at some point in the plot. As long as I know where a scene is going and who the people in it are, the dialogue flows pretty rapidly. I love dialogue, but plotting drives me crazy. "

The Author: P.G. Wodehouse

Sir Pelham Grenville Wodehouse (pronounced WOOD-house) was born in 1881 in Guildford, Surrey, England. After his education at Dulwich College, he began work as a banker but quickly left to pursue writing full time. He published his first book in 1902, titled *The Pothunters*. In 1914 he moved to America, though his tales retained their British charm and setting. By his death in 1975, it is estimated that he published 70 novels and 300 short stories, collaborated on 16 plays and adaptations, wrote books or lyrics for 23 musical comedies (including the acclaimed production *Anything Goes*), and penned the scenarios for 6 movies. In 1917, five of his musicals were simultaneously playing on Broadway. For his novels, he would often take over 100 pages of notes to map out the story prior to writing the actual tale. Wodehouse is most famous for his captivating humor, quick wit, absurd language, and plots filled with farcical scenarios for his iconic characters, including – of course – Bertie Wooster and his valet Jeeves.



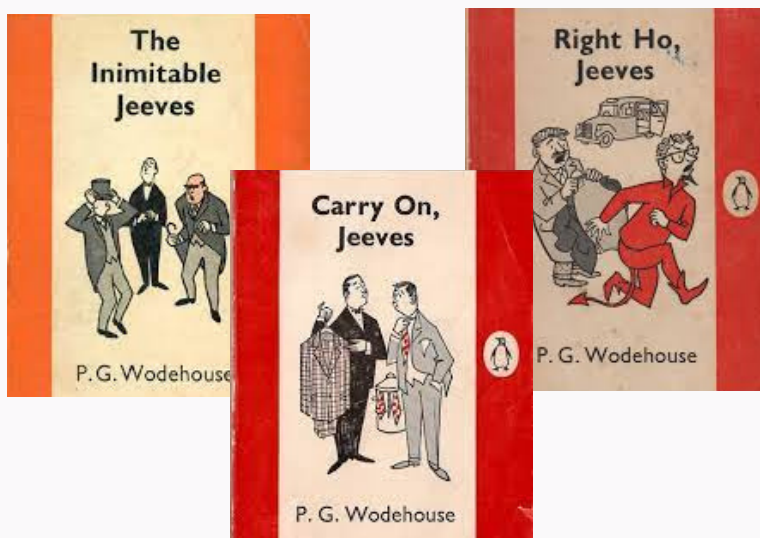
The first Jeeves novel, titled *Thank you, Jeeves*, was published in 1934. The final Jeeves novel was published in 1974 when Wodehouse was 92 years old.

Jeeves has become a cultural icon. He is aptly titled “the gentleman’s gentleman.” Interestingly enough, Webster’s dictionary defines “Jeeves” as a word meaning “a valet or butler, especially of model behavior.” In the 1990s, prior to Google, Ask.com had a service called “Ask Jeeves” where the character would fetch information for you based on your query.

Spin offs of Wodehouse’s original stories range from tv shows to movies to theatrical productions. The first appearance of Jeeves on screen was a 1936 film by Joseph Hoffman and Stephen Gross titled *Thank you, Jeeves*, whose plot differs markedly from Wodehouse’s novel by the same title. Many years later, in 1990, Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry starred in the award winning BBC comedy series *Jeeves and Wooster*. When it comes to play adaptations, Wodehouse himself (in collaboration with Guy Bolton) wrote a play titled *Come on, Jeeves* which premiered in 1954. In 1975, TONY award winner Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote a musical called *By Jeeves*, which initially flopped in the UK. The production was re-adapted in 2001, simply titled *Jeeves*, and produced in the US. In 2006, playwright Margaret Raether wrote *Jeeves Intervenes*, the first of 5 Jeeves spinoffs in her series, all later produced by NC Stage. <https://www.ncstage.org/uncategorized/p-g-wodehouse-and-the-ales-of-jeeves/>

The History of Jeeves and Wooster

Jeeves and Bertie are first introduced in a short story titled *Extricating Young Gussie*. Originally published 1915 in the *Saturday Evening Post*, this anecdote later appeared in a collection of Wodehouse’s work titled *The Man With Two Left Feet*. The story introduces Jeeves and Bertie, though notably, Jeeves only has two lines. The pair appear in a total of 35 short stories and 11 novels. Most of the short stories were published between 1915 and 1930.



The Players/Characters



Calder Shilling
as
Bertram Wilberforce Wooster

Our hapless hero, embarked on an American adventure armed only with his handsome fortune, his talent for trouble, and his remarkable manservant.



Richard Ngyuyen Sloniker
as
Jeeves

Bertie's valet and, in Bertie's own words, "one of the wonders of the world."



Miguel Castellano
as
Nigel "Binkey" Bingham-Binkersteth

Bertie's stagestruck, lovestruck chum, also residing in New York these days despite being inteded for diplomatic service in Washington.



Claire Marx
as
Ruby Leroy

An ambitious young actress and the object of Binky's desire.



Tyler Matthew Campbell
as
Knuckles McCann

A tough guy of dubious reputation who has taken an active paternal interest in Miss LeRoy's career. At least, she's been heard to address him as "Daddy".



Kelly Karcher
as
Vivienne Duckworth

A bespectacled, serious-minded Englishwoman on her first visit to the States. She is all too well acquainted with Bertie and Binky and has a low opinion of both.

Sources for Our Play

Dramaturg Note: *There is no novel or short story entitled, "Jeeves Takes a Bow." Playwright Margaret pulls plots and characters from multiple Wodehouse stories and also from the 1930s New York world depicted in the stories of the American writer, Damon Runyon. The style she evokes is reminiscent of the classic screwball comedies from Hollywood's golden age.*

Margaret Raether on the Inspiration for Jeeves Takes a Bow

"Jeeves Takes a Bow" is... um... loosely suggested by a couple of the New York stories, "Jeeves and the Chump Cyril" and "Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest." Alas, neither story features Ruby and her intimidating father, Knuckles. Those two characters were my invention with a hefty dose of Damon Runyon.

"Jeeves and the Chump Cyril" puts a reluctant Bertie on the fringes of show business when an unknown chappie appears in New York with a letter of introduction from Aunt Agatha. As Bertie remarks to Jeeves, "She says she wants me to look after this excrescence while he's in New York." Cyril (like Binky) is supposed to take up a position in Washington D.C. and chucks that plan to pursue a career on stage, undeterred by a complete lack of talent.

"Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest" has another chap foisted onto Bertie by Aunt Agatha (operating long distance). Lord Pershore is the unbidden guest planted on Bertie by his mother, Lady Malvern, a crony of Aunt Agatha's. Vivienne was hatched from a mix of these two characters. Lady Malvern is described as "an overpowering sort of dashed female who kind of numbs a fellow's faculties." Like Vivienne, she is writing an expose, although Lady Malvern is visiting American prisons to do her research, beginning with Sing Sing.

Lord Pershore, known informally as Motty, has never before been outside Much Middlefold in Shropshire. "Until you've been cooped up in Much Middlefold, you don't know what cooping is!" Motty is determined to sample the delights of the Big Apple and comes reeling home drunk at all hours, causing many a headache for Bertie.

So, basically those are the two stories I drew upon, very slightly.

P.G. Wodehouse, great wordsmith that he was, was utterly fascinated by American slang so I tried to inject as much of it as possible while I concocted my tale of Ruby, Knuckles and Binkey"

Damon Runyon



Alfred Damon Runyon (October 4, 1880-December 10, 1946) was an American newspaperman and short-story writer.

He was best known for his short stories celebrating the world of Broadway in New York City that grew out of the Prohibition era. To New Yorkers of his generation, a "Damon Runyon character" evoked a distinctive social type from Brooklyn or Midtown Manhattan. The adjective "Runyonesque" refers to this type of character and the type of situations and dialog that Runyon depicts.

He spun humorous and sentimental tales of gamblers, hustlers, actors, and gangsters, few of whom go by "square" names, preferring instead colorful monikers such as "Nathan

Detroit", "Benny Southstreet", "Big Jule", "Harry the Horse", "Good Time Charley", "Dave the Dude", or "The Seldom Seen Kid".

His distinctive vernacular style is known as "Runyonesque": a mixture of formal speech and colorful slang, almost always in the present tense, and always devoid of contractions. He is credited with coining the phrase "Hooray Henry", a term now used in British English to describe the upper-class version of a loud-mouthed, arrogant twit.

Runyon's fictional world is also known to the general public through the musical *Guys and Dolls* based on two of his stories, *The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown* and *Blood Pressure*. The musical additionally borrows characters and story elements from a few other Runyon stories, most notably *Pick The Winner*. The film *Little Miss Marker* (and its three remakes, *Sorrowful Jones*, *40 Pounds of Trouble* and the 1980 *Little Miss Marker*) grew from his short story of the same name. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damon_Runyon

Screwball Comedies

Screwball comedy is a film subgenre of the romantic comedy genre that became popular during the Great Depression, beginning in the early 1930s and thriving until the early 1940s, that satirizes the traditional love story...What sets the screwball comedy apart from the generic romantic comedy is that "screwball comedy puts the emphasis on a funny spoofing of love, while the more traditional romantic comedy ultimately accents love". Other elements of the screwball comedy include fast-paced, overlapping repartee, farcical situations, escapist themes, physical battle of the sexes, disguise and masquerade, and plot lines involving courtship and marriage. Some comic plays are also described as screwball comedies. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screwball_comedy



Recommended films to watch: *Bringing Up Baby* (1938) , *It Happened One Night* (1934), *The Thin Man* movies (1934)

Timeline of 1929-1936

1929-



1930-



1931-

1932-



1933-

From PBS's American Experience Series By the 1930s the radio was becoming a staple in many American homes. For the first time, citizens did not have to wait until the evening paper to get the latest news -- radios brought breaking news right into people's living rooms. The airwaves carried talk about jobs and the economy during the Great Depression, but Americans also heard news about incredible advances in science and technology, celebrities of aviation exploration, and political changes afoot in Europe. Here are some of the news and current events of the 1930s that might have been reported:

- The Wall Street Crash of 1929, also known as the Great Crash, the Crash of 29, or Black Tuesday, was a major American stock market crash that occurred in the autumn of 1929. It started in September and ended in mid November, when share prices on the New York Stock Exchange collapsed.
- More than four million people are unemployed as a result of the Wall Street Crash of 1929.
- Arizona scientists reveal their newest discovery -- a ninth planet they name Pluto, after the Greek God of the underworld. The discovery sparks public interest in space.
- The Nazi party becomes the second largest political party in Germany, overtaking the Communists.
- Symphony composer William Grant Still becomes the first Black American to have his music performed by a major orchestra. His piece, "Symphony No. 1 'Afro-American,'" is composed in 1930, performed by the Rochester Philharmonic in 1931, and four years later performed by the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall. For the first time, the 30th U.S. Census asks whether the respondents owned a radio, reflecting an increased interest in communication technology and consumer goods.
- Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior under President Hoover, drives a silver railroad spike to mark the official start of the construction of the Hoover Dam. The Hoover Dam was part of a larger public works relief program to create jobs for those struggling during the first years of the Great Depression.
- The President's Emergency Committee for Unemployment Relief reports that 5 million Americans are unemployed. Hoover's promise that the Depression would end quickly begins to seem hollow to the many Americans struggling to support their families.
- Congress and President Hoover approve The Star Spangled Banner, by Francis Scott Key, as the U.S. national anthem.
- Ernest Goodpasture helps advance scientific understandings of infectious disease when he publishes "The Susceptibility of the Chorio-Allantoic Membrane of Chick Embryos to Infection with Fowl-Pox Virus." By growing viruses in chicken eggs, he facilitates the production of crucial vaccines. Goodpasture's findings would earn him public praise and awards from the professional scientific community.
- In March, nine Black young men—one of whom is only 13 years old and the oldest 20—are falsely accused of raping two White women in Scottsboro, Alabama. They will come to be known as the Scottsboro Boys. The NAACP and American Communist Party, particularly the International Labor Defense, come together to form the Scottsboro Defense Committee. This committee ensures that the case is kept as public as possible and that America understands racism is at play.
- Charles Augustus Lindbergh, Jr., infant son of famous aviator Charles Lindbergh, is kidnapped from his home. Radio broadcasts are announcing the story to the nation.
- Amelia Earhart is the first woman to fly alone across the Atlantic. News of her landing in Ireland brings Earhart instant international fame. She will later receive awards from the U.S. Congress, the French Government and from President Hoover.
- Franklin Roosevelt accepts the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. In his speech at the Democratic National Convention, he states: "I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American people." His "new deal" would become the name of his strategy to bring America out of the Great Depression.
- 1932 Benjamin Nathan Cardozo, a Sephardic Jew, becomes the first Latino named to the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany. Hitler's rise to power is a critical turning point for Germany and for the world. He proposes eliminating traditional party politics, creating a unified one-party state and eradicating all opposition to the Nazi party. News of the power shift worries American leadership and political pundits, who believe Hitler's extremism could lead to a dark future. 12
- New U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt gives his first radio "fireside chat," directly connecting to the American public. Radio allows Roosevelt to calmly and collectively explain his methods for social change, and gives a boost to his public standing. The radio also allows him to reach the American people while concealing his polio symptoms.

1933-

cont.



- Beer containing up to 3.2 percent alcohol becomes legal after over 15 years of Prohibition. With news of the legalization, Anheuser-Busch sends their iconic Clydesdale horses to the White House to deliver a case of Budweiser, a media stunt that gets the public laughing. Most Americans enthusiastically greet the news of the repeal.
- Latino unions in California lead the El Monte Strike, possibly the largest agricultural strike at that point in history, to protest the declining wage rate for strawberry pickers. By May 1933, wages dropped to nine cents an hour. In July, growers agreed to a settlement including a wage increase to 20 cents an hour, or \$1.50 for a nine-hour day of work.
- The World's Fair opens in Chicago. Commemorating an era of technological advancement, it celebrates "A Century of Progress," and includes items such as the German airship Graf Zeppelin, Cadillac's newest limousine, and futuristic model homes.
- Oklahoma engineer Karl Jansky publishes Electrical Disturbances Apparently of Extraterrestrial Origins after discovering radio waves emanating from the Milky Way that are causing mysterious radio interference and static. The article is highly publicized. Jansky would eventually be known as the "Father of Radio Astronomy."

1934-



- Tydings - McDuffie Act spells out procedure for eventual Philippine independence and reduces Filipino immigration to 50 persons a year. Filipino lettuce pickers in the Salinas Valley, California, go on strike.
- A dust storm ravages several Midwestern and Western states including Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, and Colorado, forcing hundreds of families to leave their farms. These storms will plague the nation for the next nine years, causing devastating agricultural damage to America's prairie lands and leaving thousands homeless. 13
- The first prisoners are delivered to Alcatraz Prison in San Francisco Bay, which houses mostly notorious bank robbers and murderers. The prison will become an iconic symbol of mystery, thrilling Americans with its stories of ghosts, murders and escapes.

1935-



- Asian-American veterans who served in WWI are granted citizenship.
- The first around-the-world telephone conversation spans from New York to San Francisco, Indonesia, Holland, England and back to New York. The call marks a new era in technological advancement.
- Flash Gordon, the popular science fiction radio show debuts, starring the fictional character Gale Gordon. The American public is immediately enthralled with the exciting story of the hero's adventures on the planet "Mongol." Similar adventure shows attract families to gather around the radio each night.
- Pianist Count Basie establishes the Count Basie Orchestra, which becomes one of the most popular bands of the Swing Era. Basie and his group come to define big band sound and popularize the jazz genre. He records with other prominent Black musicians including Dizzy Gillespie and Ella Fitzgerald
- The Nazis revoke German citizenship for all Jews. With the 1936 Olympic games scheduled in Berlin, the German government tones down public anti-Jewish rhetoric over worries that international criticism of Hitler's government could lead organizers to transfer the games to another country.

1936-



- As part of the job stimulus program of the Works Project Administration, Orson Welles directs an all-black cast of Macbeth for the Negro People's Theatre. Both the New York Times and the New York Daily News praise the production.
- African American athlete Jesse Owens wins four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics in front of Adolf Hitler, who has recently begun his campaign for the "dominance" of the Aryan race. News of Owens' accomplishment sparks public interest, however, Owens continues to face racial inequality at home.
- American Federation of Labor grants charter to a FilipinoMexican union of fieldworkers.
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/worlds-timeline-worlds/>

Timeline of 1929-1936

Depression-era New York

Americans all over the nation felt the effects of the Depression in varying degrees, but truly all men and women felt it nonetheless. For millions, life had changed drastically, as they found themselves financially exhausted, unemployed, and even homeless. When unemployment rates were at their peak, nearly one third of New York city's population was out of work, and those who kept their jobs often had to accept drastic pay cuts. The struggle with unemployment and deductions of pay forced Americans to adopt new ways of living. During the era, the city of New York was no exception in the struggle that the entire nation faced. In fact, New York became "the symbolic capital of the Depression, the financial capital where it had started, and the place where its effects were most keenly felt, and thanks to the media, readily visible". <https://blogs.shu.edu/nyc-history/depression-era-new-york/>



Hoovervilles in NYC

"One of the most pressing issues during the Depression was the thousands of people who faced the struggle of finding shelter after being evicted from their homes and being forced out onto the streets. Many New Yorkers took to living in make-shift huts and homes located in parks or in alleyways. Large settlements of these make-shift homes often became referred to as a "Hooverville," based on the idea that President Hoover's lack of action toward sheltering the people forced them to make up these little settlements on their own and therefore the fault for their existence was his. The largest Hooverville settlement was located in the heart of Central Park, near the Croton Reservoir..." <https://blogs.shu.edu/nyc-history/2016/12/12/hoovervilles-in-ny/>

Breadlines in NYC

"Whether it was suffering from unemployment, a wage cut, or from not having enough money left over after paying their bills, many New Yorkers found themselves so poor they could not afford to eat on their own expense, and often resulted to waiting on bread-lines for food. The term breadline refers to the lines that often formed outside of bakeries where men would wait in line for the bakers to give away old bread to the indigent so that they could eat. In an article from 1932, a man recalls looking back in line seeing "men in suits and hats, looking forward, and only forward, too proud to acknowledge the line they stood on, a line that stretched for blocks and blocks". The man went on to explain in his interview titled *Breadline? What Breadline?* that men who stood in breadlines often dressed nicely before departing from home for the breadline in order to fool their neighbors into believing they were heading to work, and not to stand in a breadline to feed their family..." <https://blogs.shu.edu/nyc-history/2016/12/13/breadlines-in-new-york-city/>

Clamour and Escapism of the 1930s

Dramaturg Note: In response to the crisis of the Great Depression, the entertainment of the 1930s (films, music, Broadway etc.) was a means of escape for people. Whether it was the screwball comedies (mentioned above) or the glamorous fashions of the rich. The Broadway world that Ruby wants to live in is one of romance and fantasy.

Elegance in an Age of Crisis

“From 1914 to 1945, the world was embroiled in two horrific world wars, with a soul searing, catastrophic economic depression separating them. Anyone who was born and raised during the first two decades of the twentieth century had a thorough understanding of what ‘crisis’ meant. The inter-war years, more specifically the years from the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929 to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, would seem to offer the most startling paradox in modern times. The crash of economic markets in the west created a staggering disruption to the post-World War 1 age of optimistic prosperity. The world of the Bright Young Things and Jazz Babies, the Harlem Renaissance and the Moveable Feast, the speakeasies of Mayfair, Montmartre, and Broadway, all came crashing down. Or at least they seemed to, for the 1930s was also the age of sleek and sumptuous ocean liners and even more sumptuous Riviera casinos, of Art Deco cinema sets and Noel Coward plays, and of Raymond Loewy’s designs for the Pennsylvania railroad experimental S1 locomotive and the Boulder Dam. The poet W.H. Auden called it “The Age of Anxiety” and the social historian Morris Dickstein succinctly says, “Paradoxically, the Depression also left us with the most buoyant, most effervescent popular culture of the twentieth century.” In times of crisis, various aspects of culture often come to assume a hyper-importance. Certainly in the 1930s, the cinema, jazz and the automobile played such a role. Clothing did too.”

(Source: Elegance in an Age of Crisis: Fashions of the 1930s. Edited by Patricia Mears and G Bruce Boyer.)

Clockwise from upper left-hand corner: The Nicholas Brothers, Bette Davis from *The Rich Are Always With Us*, Josephine Baker, Norma Shearer, Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire from *Swing Time*.



Prohibition in New York City

Concerns about alcohol consumption were becoming more prevalent throughout the 19th century in America, primarily fueled by religious groups that feared the results of drunkenness on the citizens of the United States. Eventually, Congress listened and responded with the ratification of the 18th Amendment in 1919, which prohibited manufacturing, transportation, and sales of alcohol as of January 16, 1920. Although passed with the best of intentions, Prohibition had a much different impact than what was expected. In response to this overreaching legislation, bootlegging of alcohol became a common practice, and organized crime rose significantly as syndicates controlled the illegal production and sale of alcohol. Physicians were able to prescribe alcohol for medicinal purposes during Prohibition, and prescriptions for medicinal alcohol rose sharply. A religious exemption was also in place for people to consume wine in places of worship. In December of 1933, the 21st Amendment was ratified, which was a repeal of Prohibition.

President Herbert Hoover called Prohibition "the noble experiment." Although the motive may have been noble, the impact socially and economically was far from positive. In New York City, about 75 percent of the revenue came in from liquor taxes. This revenue immediately disappeared with the ratification of the 18th Amendment, plunging the city into dire circumstances. As law-abiding bars and alcohol-selling retailers went out of business, illegal establishments such as the infamous speakeasy bar suddenly became thriving businesses.

New York City was a bustling mixture of immigrants of many different ethnicities. Although these people had striking differences, many shared a common love of alcohol. Shutting down alcohol consumption may have been a federal law, but many New Yorkers never really accepted or followed this legislation. It's even said that New York City was the booze capital of America during Prohibition, thanks not only to bootlegging and speakeasies, but also smuggling via the New York Harbor.

Speakeasies were establishments that secretly and illegally served alcohol during Prohibition. Generally, to conceal a speakeasy, an owner would hide it behind a legal business or it would be operated underground or in a hidden backroom. Organized crime syndicates were often the owners and operators of speakeasies. These illegal establishments received their supply of alcohol via bootlegging and illegal distilleries, usually managed by organized crime groups.

Prohibition had the opposite impact on the nation's drinking habits. Instead of eliminating consumption, Prohibition actually caused consumption rates to rise significantly. Anyone who was looking for a rousing good time wouldn't have much trouble finding a speakeasy in New York City. Two categories of speakeasies existed, one for working class drinkers and another for the upper echelon. "Blind pigs" were speakeasies designed for the lower class. Generally, an animal attraction would be offered to people to see for a price. With admission, patrons would be given complimentary drinks that contained alcohol. "Blind tigers" were the speakeasies for the higher class drinkers. These establishments were usually formal, serving fancy food and spiked beverages while offering live jazz music and dancing for entertainment.



Police task forces were formed as a means to enforce Prohibition. As such, speakeasies were often raided by the police. Thus, these establishments were hidden and they typically featured numerous escape routes for patrons. It wasn't unusual for police officers to accept bribes to ignore speakeasies. Often the speakeasy owners would receive tips about raids so they could be ready to avoid arrests and confiscation of alcohol.

Terms & Cultural References

Times Square Times Square Times Square began taking shape in the late 1800's and received its current name in 1904. It is a major commercial intersection, tourist destination, entertainment hub, and neighborhood in Midtown Manhattan, New York City. It is formed by the junction of Broadway, Seventh Avenue, and 42nd Street. Together with adjacent Duffy Square, Times Square is a bowtie-shaped space five blocks long between 42nd and 47th Streets. Times Square is sometimes referred to as "the Crossroads of the World", "the Center of the Universe", "the heart of the Great White Way", "the Center of the Entertainment Universe", and "the heart of the world". One of the world's busiest pedestrian areas, it is also the hub of the Broadway Theater District and a major center of the world's entertainment industry. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Times_Square



The British Embassy An Office of the Consular General of Great Britain did exist in NY City in 1930. Presumably, Mr. Galwey-Foley as Consular. However, Binkey is meant to be at the Embassy in Washington, D.C.

The British Government has had representation in Washington, DC, since 1791. The Embassy moved to its current location at 3100 Massachusetts Avenue, NW in 1930. This location gave them more space, prime location next to the Vice President, and a grand Residence and Embassy. The British Embassy was the first to build on what would later become Embassy Row.

Sir Esme Howard was the first Ambassador to live in the Residence. In 1939, the public park bordering the Embassy grounds on Massachusetts Ave was going to be turned into housing. Ambassador Lothian bought the public park and donated it to the British Embassy. Now, it is the current location of the Churchill statue and part of the gardens.



Terms & Cultural References cont.

La Boheme/Puccini *La Bohème*, an opera in four acts by Italian composer Giacomo Puccini (Italian libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa) premiered at the Teatro Regio in Turin, Italy, on February 1, 1896. The story, a sweetly tragic romance, was based on the episodic novel *Scènes de la vie de bohème* 1847–49 (*Scenes of Bohemian Life*) by French writer Henri Murger. A success from the beginning, it is one of the most frequently performed of all operas. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/La-Boheme-opera-by-Puccini>

"Rumpty-tiddley-umpty-ay" It does not appear to be an actual song, but rather a P.G. Wodehouse quote: "There are some things a chappie's mind absolutely refuses to picture, and Aunt Julia singing 'Rumpty-tiddley-umpty-ay' is one of them." — P.G. Wodehouse *The Man with Two Left Feet* (1917) <https://quotepark.com/quotes/1823916-pg-wodehouse-there-are-some-things-a-chappies-mind-absolutely/>

"Cup of Joe" The most persistent and widely accepted of the cup of joe's origin stories is that joe refers to Josephus "Joe" Daniels, Secretary of the Navy during WWI. In 1914, Secretary Daniels, striving to instill greater discipline aboard ship, issued Order 99 and banned all alcohol from US Navy ships. With alcohol no longer available, sailors aboard naval vessels turned to coffee as their main drink. As a mock insult to Secretary Daniels and constant reminder of what they were being denied, the sailors dubbed their cups of coffee 'cups of joe'. While widely accepted as the origin of cup of joe, there is one major logical flaw with this story and that is the timing. Secretary Daniels issued Order 99 in 1914 but the term cup of joe didn't appear in print until 1930, 16 years after the ban and many years after those soldiers returned home.

<https://thequeenbean.blog/2022/02/15/cup-of-joe-an-expression-of-love-laziness-or-derision>
<https://www.theidioms.com/cup-of-joe/>

"Bees Knees" Prohibition era slang(plural only) Something or someone excellent, surpassingly wonderful, or cool. Synonyms: cat's meow, cat's pajamas, dog's bollocks. https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/the_bee%27s_knees

"Cats Meow" An expression referring to something that is considered outstanding; coined by American cartoonist Thomas A. Dorgan (1877–1929) A highly sought-after and fancy example of something. Referred to as slang from the jazz era (1920's & 1930's) https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/cat%27s_meow

44th Street Garage In 1928 Milton A. Kent built a 24-story high-rise garage at 209 East 43rd Street, an automatic "Hotel for Automobiles" that could hold a thousand cars! Customers could park in a curbside elevator and the car would be transferred onto a network of rails that would find an open parking spot somewhere in the building <https://www.nycurbanism.com/blog/2020/3/11/skyscraper-for-cars> Additional info: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-09-17/new-york-s-old-kent-automatic-garages-were-marvels-of-sky-high-parking>.



C - R - A - S - H !

Another Street Parking Scar

Park your car indoors . . . at the Kent Automatic Garage. Then curbside dangers can't harm it . . . street dirt can't reach it . . . bad weather can't damage it. Location? Just a block from Grand Central. No hand touches your car . . . the motor isn't run. Everything is automatic. 24 floors of parking space . . . but all cars are received and delivered on ground floor. Try Kent parking service . . . you'll like it.

KENT
AUTOMATIC GARAGE

Rates: 50¢ first 2 hrs. (min. chg.) 5¢ each add'l hr. or fraction thereof for 24-hr. periods.
Entrance: 210 East 44th Street—Offices and Exit: 209 East 43rd Street

Terms & Cultural References cont.

Plaza Hotel The Plaza Hotel (also known as The Plaza) is a luxury hotel and condominium apartment building in Midtown Manhattan in New York City. Since its inception, the Plaza Hotel has become an icon of New York City, with numerous wealthy and famous guests and has appeared in numerous books and films.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plaza_Hotel



Gormorah Sodom and Gomorrah, notoriously sinful cities in the biblical book of Genesis, destroyed by “sulfur and fire” because of their wickedness (Genesis 19:24).

Ninevah & Babylon Biblical references: Nineveh, the oldest and most-populous city of the ancient Assyrian empire, situated on the east bank of the Tigris River.

Nineveh was a large pagan city that symbolized enmity with God. The prophets mention Babylon as both a warning of punishment for Israel and an example of what displeases God. The New Testament employs Babylon as a symbol of man's sinfulness and God's judgment. <https://www.learnreligions.com/history-of-babylon-3867031>

“Giggle Juice” A general use slang term for alcohol during Prohibition and into the 1930's. Also for a specific type of cocktail created by combining soda water with white wine and grape juice or sparkling alcohol such as champagne. The term “Giggle Water” was also used in the same way. Incidentally, the term “Giggle Water” made its way into the Harry Potter series and referenced to “chortle extract” which JK Rowling claimed was known to induce giggling.

“Mud in Your Eye” As it is used in a toast, it is also a way of wishing someone success or happiness to the person they are imbibing with. The toast appeared in US saloons around 1890, but was also popular with the British fox hunt and race horse crowd before then. Also very popular during WWI, relating to soldiers since they spent so much time slogging through the muddy trenches. www.Idiomation.wordpress.com It is a signal to drink your alcohol as the toast concludes.

“Banana Oil” A slang term meaning “Nonsense” The term is attributed to American cartoonist Milt Gross, who used the term in his comic strips in the 1920's.

Casanova Giacomo Girolamo Casanova (2 April 1725 – 4 June 1798) was an Italian adventurer and author from the Republic of Venice. His autobiography, *Histoire de ma vie* (Story of My Life), is regarded as one of the most authentic and provocative sources of information about the customs and norms of European social life during the 18th century. He has become famous for his often complicated and elaborate affairs with women that his name is now synonymous with "womanizer" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacomo_Casanova

“Mug” Slang term for Face. Also used to describe a fool or blockhead :a person easily deceived

“Buffalo me” American slang; Also to intimidate or frighten, as by a display of authority.



Terms & Cultural References cont.

Ibsen Henrik Johan Ibsen was a Norwegian playwright and theatre director. As one of the founders of modernism in theatre, Ibsen is often referred to as "the father of realism" and one of the most influential playwrights of his time. "Ibsen at the Grand Cafe" by Edvard Munch

"Hooch" Alcoholic liquor, especially when inferior or illicitly made or acquired

"Dumb Dora" American slang: Also; *Dumb Dora* is a comic strip published from 1924 to 1936 distributed by King Features Syndicate. The term "Dumb Dora" was a 1920s American slang term for a foolish woman; scatter-brained or stupid, the (comic) strip helped popularize the term. Flappers of the 1920s were also sometimes likened to dumb Doras. The epithet "Dumb Dora" became identified with the vaudeville act of George Burns and his wife, Gracie Allen, as did a similar slang expression for a female who was not very bright, but in a charming way: "dizzy dame." In the vaudeville era, as well as during the period from the Golden Age of Radio through the first several decades of television, female comedians were often expected to play a "Dumb Dora" or "Dizzy Dame" role, even if in real life, they were very intelligent. A good example of this dichotomy was Lucille Ball. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dumb_Dora



"Hotsy-Totsy" MEANING: adjective: 1. Just right; perfect. 2. Haughty; pretentious. ETYMOLOGY: Coined by the cartoonist Billy DeBeck (1892- 1942), famed for his comic strip Barney Google and Snuffy Smith. Earliest documented use: early 1920s. Another of his coinages that has found a place in English language dictionaries is heebie-jeebies.

"Glamour Puss" A highly stylish person who maintains a glamorous appearance or lifestyle. Glamour Puss: Primarily American slang, Also; "Puss," meaning "the face," first appeared as a slang term during the 1880s. It's derived from the Irish term "pus," meaning the lips and mouth.

"Bum Steer" A term denoting misdirection, is predominantly from Australia, New Zealand and North America. The idiom means to provide information, intentionally or unintentionally that is incorrect, was unhelpful, or caused one to be led astray. The idiom, as used in Australia and New Zealand, reached the United States in the 1920s probably after exposure to Australian troops on the Western Front during World War I, and is recorded in the UK since 1944. Its origin is possibly from 19th-century American maritime humour and the difficulty of trying to steer a vessel in reverse. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bum_steer

"Woozled" Definition: Having lost track of reality :unlikely to make any sense The "Woozle effect", also known as evidence by citation, occurs when a source is widely cited for a claim it does not adequately support, giving said claim undeserved credibility. If results are not replicated and no one notices that a key claim was never well-supported in its original publication, faulty assumptions may affect further research. The Woozle effect is somewhat similar to circular reporting in journalism, where someone makes a questionable claim, a journalist unthinkingly accepts it and republishes it not realizing its dubious and unreliable origins, and other journalists and the public continue to repeat and duplicate the unsupported claim. *A Woozle is an imaginary character in the A. A. Milne book Winnie-the-Pooh, published in 1926. In chapter three, in which Pooh and Piglet Go Hunting and Nearly Catch a Woozle, Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet start following tracks left in snow believing they are the tracks of an imaginary animal called a woozle. The tracks keep multiplying until Christopher Robin explains to them that they have been following their own tracks in circles around a spinney. Piglet and Pooh go in circles hunting a Woozle—but the tracks they follow are merely their own. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woozle_effect



Terms & Cultural References cont.

"Take a Powder" To run away or disappear. The term comes from the 1920's and refers to taking a headache powder. The compressed pill form of an aspirin came later. The idiom developed from suggesting that a person "take a powder" and go lie down morphed into "take a powder and go away", then to just "go away".

"That Flat Tire" From 1920-25, slang, a dull or socially inept person. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/flat-tire>

"Pecadilloes" A small, relatively unimportant sin. Pronunciation: peh-kuh-di-lowz Peccadillo: derived from the diminutive form of the Spanish language word "pecado" meaning sin. The term may refer to; an infraction of an ethical code; a small relatively unimportant sin; a petty offense. <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/pecadillo#Spanish>

"Get Spliced" Slang, old fashioned and primarily heard in the UK. A meaning To get married. www.idioms.thefreedictionary.com

"Son of a Sidewinder" Sidewinder: A person who is untrustworthy or dangerous "Sidewinder" referring to a rattlesnake characterized by its unique sideways movements." Heard primarily in the US; Western jargon. Phrase found in a dialog from the 1947 film *Ghost Town Renegades* Farlex Dictionary of Idioms

"Splifficated" A 1920's American slang term meaning drunk, extremely intoxicated, probably from being on a "toot" or a drinking binge. Also relates to the British school slang term: Splificate; to destroy, annihilate.

"Sacre Bleu" Sacrebleu is a very old fashioned French curse, which is rarely used by the French these days. An English equivalent would be "My Goodness" or "Golly Gosh" It was once considered very offensive. The reason the French say sacrebleu! Can be blamed on Agatha Christie's fictional Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, who was very fond of the phrase. (UK) <https://insidetime.org/do-the-french-really-say-that/>

The Broadway Mob



The Broadway Mob was a New York bootlegging gang during Prohibition. Although headed by Joe Adonis, the gangs day-to-day operations were handled by Charles "Lucky" Luciano and Frank Costello as well as financially backed by Arnold Rothstein. During Manhattan's bootleg wars, Rothstein would bring in the Bugs and Meyer Mob, led by Meyer Lansky and Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel, to protect alcohol shipments. As Luciano and Lansky had previously worked together prior to Prohibition, Meyer and Siegel were made partners in the Judeo-Italian criminal organization. By the late 1920s, the Broadway Mob supplied New York speakeasies with some of the highest quality whiskey including Sherman Billingsley's *Stork Club*, the *Silver Slipper*, *Jack White's*, *Jack and Charlie's 21 Club* among others. Even its lesser quality alcohol imported from Philadelphia mobster Waxey Gordon was considered far superior to the rotgut liquor supplied by the rest of New York's underworld. At the suggestion of Rothstein, the Broadway Mob bought interests in several popular speakeasies and nightclub which would lead to purchasing valuable real estate in Manhattan. Its operations were eventually absorbed into the criminal syndicate under Luciano and Lansky, following the repeal of Prohibition in 1933. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadway_Mob

More Information about the Broadway Mob <https://infamousnewyork.com/tag/broadway-mob/>

Broadway in the 1930s

Dramaturg Notes: Here are some of the well-known plays and Broadway stars from the 1930s. This is the world that Ruby and Knuckles are trying to break into.

Broadway Theatre in the mid-1930's was undergoing massive changes. The Great Depression had left many artists out of work due to a lack of demand. Many of Broadway's biggest names were leaving New York for the now booming business of Hollywood films. In 1930s, The Federal Theatre Project was created to help ease the problems being faced by the theatre community. The rise of government supported theatre coupled with the success of other theatre companies, lead to period of creativity. Many of the plays produced during this period often offer escape through comedy. There are also productions that provide snapshots of the changes that were occurring within the artistic community, as well as with the country as a whole.

1929

- Cole Porter, having returned from Paris the previous season, scores a hit with *Fifty Million Frenchmen*; songs include *You Do Something to Me*.
- Harlem jazz moves downtown, as Louis Armstrong plays *Ain't Misbehavin'* in the revue *Hot Chocolates*.

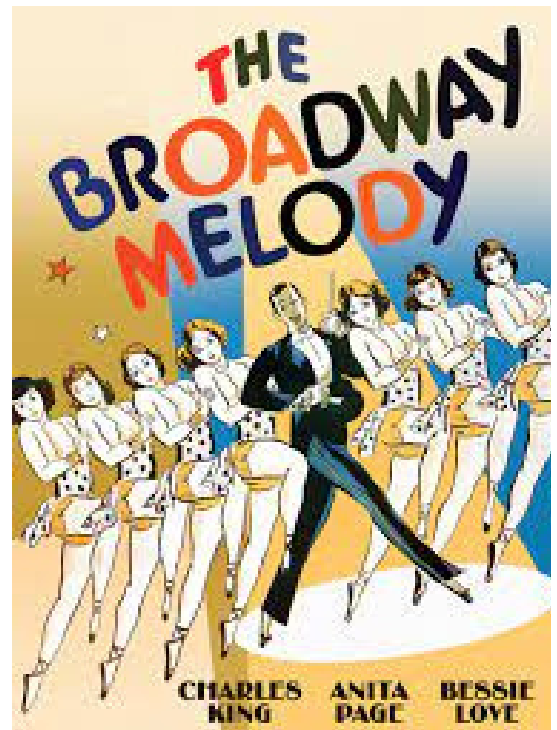
1930

- The Gershwins' *Strike up the Band* is the first musical to open the 1930s; a previous version closed in Philadelphia in 1927.
- Ethel Merman creates a sensation singing *I Got Rhythm* in her Broadway debut, *Girl Crazy*.
- The exodus of Broadway talent to Hollywood begins in earnest: Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, the Gershwins, and the Marx Brothers go to L.A.
- *BROADWAY MELODY* is the first musical to win an Academy Award. 28

1931

- Fred and Adele Astaire perform in their last musical together, the revue *The Band Wagon*, written by Dietz and Schwartz; songs include *Dancing in the Dark*.
- *Of Thee I Sing* opens. Written by the Gershwins, George S. Kaufman, and Morrie Ryskind, it is the first full-length musical to spoof the presidency and the first to win the Pulitzer Prize.
- Rodgers and Hart join their colleagues in Hollywood.
- Irving Berlin returns to Broadway to write *Face the Music*; the spoof contains the upbeat tune *Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee*.
- *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?* by E. Y. Harburg and Jay Gorney appears in a revue called *New Americana*; it becomes the anthem of the depression.
- Ziegfeld revives *Show Boat* on Broadway, featuring Paul Robeson as Joe; Ziegfeld dies in Hollywood later in the year, several million dollars in debt.

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/broadway/timelines/1920-1932/>



Activity Page

Yesterday vs. Today

The Great Depression and the COVID-19 Pandemic were both unanticipated, cataclysmic events that overwhelmed institutions and citizens around the world. Think about what you've learned about the Great Depression and compare it your experience of the COVID-19 Pandemic and our world today.

Compare and contrast:

1930s vs. 2020s

Breadlines vs. Grocery Store and Vaccines Lines

Hoovervilles vs. Homelessness

Glamour of 1930s Broadway and Hollywood vs. Modern Day Social Media/Entertainment

[illegible]

TAPROOT THEATRE

C O M P A N Y

Mission Statement:

Taproot Theatre Company tells stories of hope, serving the Pacific Northwest through live theatre and educational programs.



Taproot Theatre Company was founded in 1976 by six friends, five of them graduates from Seattle Pacific University. From its humble beginnings as a touring group, the company is now Seattle's largest mid-size theatre company. Today Taproot Theatre serves over 150,000 people annually throughout the Pacific Northwest with its Jewell Mainstage season, Isaac Studio Theatre season, Touring programs and Acting Studio.

Producing Artistic Director

Karen Lund

Associate Artistic Director

Bretteney Beverly

Director of Production

Mark Lund

Director of Finance

Dwight Hutton

Director of Marketing

Nikki Visel

Director of Education & Outreach

Lindsey Long

Director of Development

Gina Cavallo

In-school Residencies, Workshops and Tours

Lindsey Long, Director of Education and Outreach

206.329.3669

James Faley, Associate Director of Education and Outreach

206.529.3674

Midweek Matinees

Jenny Cross, Marketing Associate

206.529.3676

Box Office: 206.781.9707

Administrative Office: 206.781.9705

taproottheatre.org

Education Programs

In-School Residencies & Workshops

From drama games to acting classes to putting on a production, Taproot Theatre's residencies can range from several weeks to months, or an entire school year. Whether during the school day or after school as an enrichment program, let Taproot's trained teaching artists introduce a whole new world to your students.

Our theatre arts professional will visit your classroom for a workshop that will inspire and excite your students. They will develop basic acting skills and explore non-theatre curriculum using theater as a medium.



Camps & Classes

Taproot Theatre Company's Acting Studio is a year-round instructional program for theatre artists of all ages and experience levels. We are devoted to the wholeness of the artist with the goal of creating a nurturing environment to help each student develop his or her unique gifts.



Touring Productions

The Road Company-performing plays for elementary and secondary schools focusing on issues such as bullying prevention, substance abuse, and friendship skills. Family oriented productions and improv comedy for churches, clubs, office parties and other groups.

