



Frank Loesser's

WHERE'S CHARLEY?

Original London Cast 1958

Starring **Norman Wisdom**

Plus

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Songs from the 1952 Film featuring **Danny Kaye**

Where's Charley?

Original London Cast 1958 starring Norman Wisdom

Hans Christian Andersen

Songs from the 1952 Film

All Music and Lyrics by Frank Loesser

I often wonder if there are two Frank Loessers floating out there in musical comedy heaven and having a good chuckle over the fact that we think they're the same guy.

How could anyone believe that the sassy, classy dude who could bring us the world of Nathan Detroit and Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls* could also lead us through the childlike fantasies of Denmark's beloved Hans Christian Andersen?

And how dare you try to tell me that the same man who captured the essence of Mad Men's Manhattan on a laughing jag in *How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* could also take us inside the delicate world of Oxford University and a bunch of timid Victorian lovers.

Sure, it would be easier if we had two composers to discuss now (Loesser the Greater and Loesser the Loesser), but it just wouldn't be right.

Because although sometimes Frank Henry Loesser would lead with his chin and the rest of the time he'd lead with his heart, he was – sorry, guys! – the same fella.

Even the hard-boiled *Guys and Dolls* has Sky

admitting he loves it when 'the street lamp light fills the gutter with gold,' and *How To Succeed* has the hero conceding that his beloved has 'the slam, bang tang reminiscent of gin and vermouth.' (Okay, he's singing it to a mirror, but nobody's perfect.)

This time out, we're listening to Loesser the Lighter, a man who knew who to charm with the best of them and weave dreams we'd all be happy to follow forever.

The first show on display is the first one he ever brought to Broadway ... kind of.

You see, the musical is *Where's Charley?* and it's a song and dance version of the popular old farce, *Charley's Aunt*.

To Loesser, it was an excuse to fill a score full of undergraduate highjinx, lovely young ladies and ballads as fresh as England in the spring. Listen to the unabashed joy of **My Darling, My Darling** and you'll hear a man who truly believed in the power of love.

But that doesn't mean he couldn't peek inside a jealous lover's mind with a wonderful hypothetical number called **The Woman In His Room**.

Do you want a bit of collegiate razz-a-ma-

tazz? Nothing neater than **The New Ashmolean Marching Society And Student Conservatory Band.**

And if you want to settle down for a piece of pure, 100% traditional, musical comedy charm, then you better try **Once In Love With Amy.**

But here's the slight problem. All the vocalists you'll here on this recording are from a London original cast recording made in 1958.

Why? The recording industry in America was a contentious place in the 1940s, with everyone grappling for power.

And poor everyone, but the original *Charley's Aunt* opened on 11 October 1948, right in the middle of the so-called 'Petrillo Ban', in which the head of the musicians' union, James Petrillo battled with the record companies over a better deal for his players and no full original Broadway cast recording was ever made.

That was a particular shame for all involved. Because although *Where's Charley?* has entered into history as a hit, with 792 performances, it opened to appalling reviews.

Novice producers Feuer and Martin were about to fold the turkey when they noticed that the audience were responding to leading man Ray Bolger's inspired ad libbing and soft-shoeing to the charm song **Once In Love With Amy.**

'On opening night,' Feuer quipped, 'the song ran for four minutes. By closing night, it took a half an hour.'

One song, one performer, made all the difference. You can hear a solitary 1949 version

of Bolger singing that one song, but to sample the whole score in its delicious entirety, you have to join us for this 1958 British version, starring Cockney comic, Norman Wisdom (later to tackle Broadway in the 1966 flop, *Walking Happy*.)

Anyway, Loesser's next time at bat yielded the brash success, *Gypsy and Dolls* (1950), so afterwards, he was ready for a little quiet charm again.

But it came from a highly unlikely source. Not just Hollywood, but the Hollywood of Samuel Goldwyn, a coarse man with a gift for mangling the English language. ('A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's printed on.')

Still, somehow, he decided to put together a very erudite group of film-makers to tell the story of Hans Christian Andersen, the most beloved of all Scandinavian fabulists.

The fantastical Myles Connolly created the story, the erudite Moss Hart wrote the screenplay, the gentlemanly Charles Vidor was set to direct and Loesser came on to write the music and lyrics.

But then they ran into Danny Kaye, who Goldwyn wanted as the star. Kaye was best known as a madcap comic, slightly effete, who specialized in the rapid-fire patter songs his wife Sylvia Fine usually turned out for him.

Even when he appeared in Cole Porter musicals on Broadway, Porter would step aside and let Fine do her thing.

But Kaye was tired of being funny. He wanted to be a wistful zany, a misunderstood

clown, a tragic lover and so the authors had to bend their material backwards to make it work.

It's easy to see that Loesser was most comfortable in some of the heartier numbers like **I'm Hans Christian Andersen** and the sweeping **Wonderful Copenhagen**.

Loesser even provided a Fine-like patter song in **The King's New Clothes**, although Kaye never pronounced himself happy with it.

And even numbers of decent sentiment such as **Anywhere I Wander** and **Inchworm** were milked so heavily for pathos, they lose their true effect.

Listen to Loesser himself demonstrating three of his own numbers at the end of the

disc to hear more of what he had in mind.

But Hans Christian Andersen was a large hit, especially on the international market, and Kaye's persona must have had the effect he wanted, because in 1954, he was asked to join UNICEF as an ambassador, a role he cherished and kept until his death in 1987.

And Frank Loesser? He returned to Broadway where his next hit, *The Most Happy Fella*, was a masterpiece combining equal amounts of broad laughter and open heartache. It must have taken two guys to write it, don't you think?

Richard Ouzounian

Where's Charley? **Original London Cast 1958**

1. **Overture** 3:23
Michael Collins and His Orchestra
2. **Where's Charley?** 0:46
Norman Wisdom and Chorus
3. **Better Get Out Of Here** 2:48
Pip Hinton, Pamela Gale, Norman Wisdom,
Terence Cooper
4. **The New Ashmolean Marching Society
And Student Conservatory Band** 2:12
Terence Cooper, Pamela Gale, Pip Hinton
and Chorus
5. **My Darling, My Darling** 4:09
Terence Cooper, Pamela Gale
6. **Serenade With Asides** 2:12
Felix Felton, Norman Wisdom
7. **Make A Miracle** 3:22
Pip Hinton, Norman Wisdom
8. **Lovelier Than Ever** 3:34
Marion Grimaldi and Jerry Desmonde with
Chorus
9. **The Woman In His Room** 3:08
Pip Hinton
10. **Pernambuco** 2:37
Barry Kent with Chorus
11. **Once In Love Amy** 2:30
Norman Wisdom
12. **The Gossips** 3:52
Jill Martin, Helen Anderson, Sheila Francis
and Chorus

13. **At The Red Rose Cotillion** 2:13
Terence Cooper, Pamela Gale and Chorus
14. **My Darling, My Darling—Finale** 2:21
Norman Wisdom, Full Company
Orchestra conducted by Michael Collins
English Columbia 33SX 1085
Recorded 1958, London

Hans Christian Andersen Songs from the 1952 Film

15. **I'm Hans Christian Andersen** 2:36
Danny Kaye
16. **Anywhere I Wander** 3:14
Danny Kaye and Chorus
17. **The Ugly Duckling** 3:05
Danny Kaye
18. **Inchworm** 3:13
Danny Kaye and Female Chorus
19. **Thumbelina** 1:47
Danny Kaye and Chorus
20. **No Two People** 2:24
Danny Kaye and Jane Wyman
21. **The King's New Clothes** 3:33
Danny Kaye and Mixed Chorus
22. **Wonderful Copenhagen** 2:06
Danny Kaye and Chorus
Gordon Jenkins' Orchestra and Chorus
Decca DL 5433, Album A 919 (28379/82),
mx L 6855/62
Recorded 11–13 August 1952, Los Angeles

Hans Christian Andersen Sung by the Composer 1952

23. **The Ugly Duckling** 2:54

Frank Loesser and Chorus

24. **Inchworm** 2:52

Lynn and Frank Loesser

25. **The King's New Clothes** 5:05

Frank Loesser and Chorus

MGM S-30 and S-31, mx 52-S-381/4

Recorded September 1952, New York

Transfers and Production: David Lennick

Digital Restoration: Graham Newton

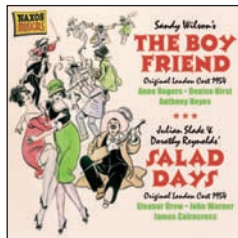
Special Thanks to Robert Hodge

Cover montage uses the following images: Oxford college buildings © Chris Lofty;
graduates silhouette © Karima Lakhdar; swan © Henri Faure; all from Dreamstime.com

Also available in the Naxos Musicals series ...



8.120786



8.120848



8.120889

These titles are not for retail sale in the USA

Where's Charley?

ADD

8.120890

All Music and Lyrics by Frank Loesser

ORIGINAL LONDON CAST 1958 • CONDUCTOR MICHAEL COLLINS

Norman Wisdom CHARLEY WYKEHAM • **Pip Hinton** AMY SPETTIGUE • **Terence Cooper** JACK CHESNEY
Pamela Gale KITTY VERDUN • **Jerry Desmonde** SIR FRANCIS CHESNEY • **Felix Felton** MR SPETTIGUE
Marion Grimaldi DONNA LUCIA D'ALVADOREZ • **Barry Kent** REGGIE • **Jill Martin, Sheila Francis,**
Helen Anderson GOSSIPS

1. **Overture** ORCHESTRA 3:23
2. **Where's Charley?** CHARLEY & CHORUS 0:46
3. **Better Get Out Of Here** AMY, KITTY, CHARLEY & JACK 2:48
4. **The New Ashmolean Marching Society And Student Conservatory Band** JACK, KITTY, AMY & CHORUS 2:12
5. **My Darling, My Darling** JACK & KITTY 4:09
6. **Serenade With Asides** MR SPETTIGUE & CHARLEY 2:12
7. **Make A Miracle** AMY & CHARLEY 3:22
8. **Lovelier Than Ever** DONNA LUCIA, SIR FRANCIS & CHORUS 3:34
9. **The Woman In His Room** AMY 3:08
10. **Pernambuco** REGGIE & CHORUS 2:37
11. **Once In Love With Amy** CHARLEY 2:30
12. **The Gossips** GOSSIPS & CHORUS 3:52
13. **At The Red Rose Cotillion** JACK, KITTY & CHORUS 2:13
14. **My Darling, My Darling—Finale** CHARLEY & FULL COMPANY 2:21

Hans Christian Andersen

SONGS FROM THE 1952 FILM
 CONDUCTOR GORDON JENKINS

Danny Kaye with Orchestra & Chorus

15. **I'm Hans Christian Andersen** 2:36
 16. **Anywhere I Wander** 3:14
 17. **The Ugly Duckling** 3:05
 18. **Inchworm** 3:13
 19. **Thumbelina** 1:47
 20. **No Two People (with Jane Wyman)** 2:24
 21. **The King's New Clothes** 3:33
 22. **Wonderful Copenhagen** 2:06
- BONUS: Frank Loesser with Chorus**
23. **The Ugly Duckling** 2:54
 24. **Inchworm (with Lynn Loesser)** 2:52
 25. **The King's New Clothes** 5:05

Transfers & Production: David Lennick • Digital Restoration: Graham Newton

NOTES AND FULL RECORDING DETAILS INCLUDED

www.naxos.com

© & © 2010 Naxos Rights International Ltd.
 Not for Sale in the United States

Total Time 72:43

Design: Ron Hoares
 Made in Germany

