



# Serious Fun!

Jody Karin Applebaum  
soprano

Marc-André Hamelin  
piano

**Albany**  
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## Serious Fun!

Jody Kerin Applebaum, soprano · marc-andré hamelin, piano

- 1 Come On Algernon [2:55] words: F.E.B. Clarke; music: Lord Berners
  - 2 Maternity [2:44] words: Robert Service; music: Jeremy Nicholas
  - 3 Someone Is Sending Me Flowers [2:56] words: Sheldon Harnick; music: David Baker
  - 4 Christian Dior [2:03] words & music: Bruce Montgomery
  - 5 small talk [1:10]
  - 6 Summer Is A-Comin' In [2:56] words: John LaFouche; music: Vernon Duke
  - 7 small talk [1:16]
  - 8 Madeira, M'Dear? [2:28] words: Michael Flanders; music: Donald Swann
  - 9 small talk [1:24]
  - 10 A Farmer's Boy [1:17] words: Anonymous; music: Marc-André Hamelin
  - 11 Ill Wind [3:30] words: Michael Flanders; music: Donald Swann (w. apologies to Mozart)
  - 12 (I'm Spending) Hanukkah In Santa Monica [2:20] words & music: Tom Lehrer,  
arr. Hamelin
  - 13 small talk [1:09]
  - 14 The Twelve Days After Christmas [3:35] words & music: Frederick Silver
  - 15 The Green-Eyed Dragon [3:07] words: Gretrex Newman; music: Wolsley Charles
  - 16 Usherette's Blues [2:21] words & music: Jeremy Nicholas
  - 17 small talk [2:48]
  - 18 Lime Jello Marshmallow Cottage Cheese Surprise [2:46] words & music: William Bolcom
  - 19 The Shape Of Things [3:25] words & music: Sheldon Harnick
  - 20 Musical Chairs [2:47] words & music: Jeremy Nicholas
  - 21 small talk [1:18]
  - 22 I Never Do Anything Twice [5:30] words & music: Stephen Sondheim
  - 23 The Masochism Tango [2:55] words & music: Tom Lehrer
  - 24 Pretty Plain [2:02] words & music: Jeremy Nicholas
  - 25 A Word On My Ear [5:54] words: Michael Flanders; music: Donald Swann
  - 26 Tamara, Queen Of The Nile [2:36] words: Muller, Block, Winkler; music: Peter Winkler
- Total Time = 69:46

unbidden into your head as you are writing the lyrics (as a private joke, I like to insert a phrase from a more-or-less well known classical work somewhere in the music). If you work with a composer, personally I would never show him/her my lyrics until the first draft was complete. That was how Gilbert and Sullivan worked and why their operas, operettas, musicals (call them what you will) survive today. I've never understood how Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice succeeded as extravagantly as they have. Lloyd Webber wrote the music first, then handed it to Rice to write his lyrics with a request not to change a note of the music. Which is why their musicals sound the way they do, and why, with the exception of *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, there are no comedy numbers in any of their joint work. Fitting comic lyrics to an already existing, well-known tune is a different exercise. This is the joyous art of parody. To me, the master of the genre was Allan Sherman whose *Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah*, using Ponchielli's "Dance of the Hours" from *La Gioconda*, is one of the most inspired of its kind.

The funny (peculiar) thing about funny (ha-ha) songs is that, though they have a huge audience, there is little commercial demand for them today. Everyone likes them when they hear them but there are fewer opportunities to do that. In the days of Variety (American = Vaudeville) there were any number of solo and double acts with a repertoire

of comic ditties. W.S. Gilbert (of Gilbert and Sullivan) I take to be the granddaddy of funny, literate lyrics that have stood the test of time. His influence on subsequent generations of lyricists was enormous, whether in the fields of musical comedy or music hall. In Britain, Gilbert began Harry Graham, Noël Coward, Vivian Ellis, Ronald Frankau and scores of others including P.G. Wodehouse who, if he had died in 1918 before world-wide fame as a novelist, would be remembered now as an important figure in the development of the American musical. Ira Gershwin, Lorenz Hart, Cole Porter and Alan Jay Lerner are just some of the major lyricists who acknowledged their debt to Wodehouse and his contribution to the Broadway musical. In the UK, such names as Alan Melville, Michael Flanders and Donald Swann, Ted Dicks and Myles Rudge, Lionel Bart, Ronnie Barker and Paddy Roberts represent the post-war years as leading purveyors of comic lyricists.

But today? On this side of The Pond, at least, there are only a few writer-performers who carry on the tradition: Richard Stilgoe and Peter Skellern, Kit and the Widow, Victoria Wood, Fascinating Aida and Instant Sunshine. I blame the whole navel-gazing Pop Industry. And Leonard Cohen. And Bob Dylan. And John Lennon. And Paul Simon. And anyone else like that whom I can think of without much justification: brilliant songwriters — poets, really — but not a laugh, not a titter, not a glimmer of a smile amongst the

straining to make out the lyrics, and are hence concentrating on your inability to hear them rather than enjoying them, the game is up. Articulation, enunciation and diction (not to mention intonation) are things you do not worry about when listening to Miss Applebaum sing.

The piano is the usual partner in this enterprise, infinitely more malleable and versatile than, say, a string quartet or piano accordion. The guitar is an acceptable second choice within its limited musical range. Just as few opera divas can handle Broadway hits and standard songs, few classical pianists know how to swing, let alone let their hair down. Tonal discrimination and a bravura technique are not pre-requisites for accompanying the comic song, but if these attributes are on hand, it would be churlish to turn them down. Mr Hamelin has both with spades but is also musician (and man) enough to be able to play this stuff — and on occasion to contribute vocally — with all the sassy conviction of a Broadway veteran, in my experience the only international virtuoso ever to do so.

There. I said it wasn't going to be a barrel of laughs. Listen to the disc for that — and have some serious fun. This is the best programme of its kind to appear for years.

Jeremy Nicholas

2001

*Jeremy Nicholas is a composer, actor, author, and award-*

## Serious Fun! Texts

Come On Algernon  
words: T.E.B. Clarke; music: Lord Berners

Did ever you hear of Daisy,  
the girl who asked for more?  
She drove her admirers crazy  
the way she cried "Encore!"  
No matter how much they hugged her,  
the same response it drew.  
She'd always be sighing, begging and crying,  
"Just another one, do!"  
"I only want one extra kiss,  
that's all I'm languishing for.  
And I'll stay content I swear to this,  
until I holler for more. Oh!  
Come on Algernon, that's not enough for me.  
Give me some more, the same as before,  
because I can't count under three.  
Look at the big, bright moon  
surely that should be the cue  
For a romantic one, gigantic one,  
Algie you're driving me frantic one.  
Give me just another one, do!"

And mad about sweets was Daisy,  
she'd pop 'em in all the time.  
On brandy balls she was crazy,  
she found stickjaw sublime.  
She'd suck at her toffee apple,  
then call for something new,  
Like Turkish delight on benches at Brighton —  
"Just another one, do!"  
"I want one extra lollipop,  
that's all I'm hollering for.  
And after that I swear I'll stop —

Christian Dior

words & music: Bruce Montgomery

Christian Dior is a mess,  
when he designs a new dress.  
His drawings are just fine 'til he hits the bustline,  
then what he'll do is anybody's guess.

Christian Dior is a louse,  
flattening everyone's spouse.  
The country's infested with women flat-chested.  
Say, is he a man or a mouse?

Some fifty million French are raising quite a stench  
And fifty million Frenchmen can't be wrong.  
The country would be merrier  
if he'd work on their derrier'  
And leave their busts the way their busts belong.

Christian Dior is a square; go to the Folies-Bergère.  
It's true any man can perform in a Can-Can,  
But that's not why the customers are there.  
They're looking for girls with a zest,  
so give a lady back her chest!

Christian Dior is a slob; ask any sea-faring gob.  
It's only on shore that it's toujours l'amour,  
and a dame without a frame can't do the job.  
She'd go through her life uncaressed.  
So give a lady back her chest!

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Summer Is A-Comin' In

words: John La Touche; music: Vernon Duke

Heigh-ho, summer comes along,  
it comes once a year but it's always gay,  
Heigh-ho, try to sing a song of how people feel  
when summer's on the way.

In the year of twelve-twenty-six.  
(Shoot the Saxon to me, Jackson)

Summer is a-comin' in, loud sing cuckoo  
Girlike strolleth in the park,  
Cupid striketh up a spark, sing cuckoo.  
Summer is a-comin' in, loud sing cuckoo.  
Lovers necketh on ye bus, birdie kicketh up a fuss,  
life is new.

Clubwoman planteth in a pot  
forsythia and hydrangea  
And my poor heart's in danger.  
Twit twit, twit, jug, jug, jug,  
Summer is a-comin' in, loud sing cuckoo.  
Balmy breezes smell like gin,  
why the heck don't thou give in,  
Sing cuckoo!

Summer is a-comin' in, loud sing cuckoo.  
Each Libido goeth pop!  
Marg'ret Sanger closeth shop, sing cuckoo.  
Summer is a-comin' in, sky turneth blue.  
Lovebirds snuggleth cosily, strippeth Gypsy Rosie  
Lee, why don't you?  
Even the noble working man  
gives up his mass production,  
Goes in for mass seduction.  
Twit, twit, twit, jug, jug, jug,  
Summer is a-comin' in, loud sing cuckoo,  
Ev'ry poet dreameth dream, salmon scammeth up  
the stream.  
Sing cuckoo!  
Twit, twit, twit, jug, jug, jug, a down, a down a  
derry, cuckoo.

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### III Wind

words: Michael Flanders, music: Donald Swann

I once had a whim and I had to obey it,  
to buy a French Horn in a second-hand shop;  
I polished it up and I started to play it  
in spite of the neighbors who begged me to stop.  
To sound my Horn I had to develop  
my embouchure,  
I found my Horn was a bit of a devil to play.  
So artfully wound to give you a sound,  
a beautiful sound so rich and round.  
Oh, the hours I had to spend  
before I mastered it in the end.  
But that was yesterday and just today  
I looked in the usual place —  
There was the case but the Horn itself was missing.  
Oh, where can it have gone?  
Haven't you, hasn't anyone seen my Horn?  
Oh, where can it have gone? What a blow!  
Now I know I'm unable to play my Allegro.  
Who swiped that Horn?  
I'll bet you a quid somebody did,  
Knowing I'd found a concerto and wanted to play it,  
afraid of my talent at playing the Horn.  
For early today to my utter dismay it had vanished  
away like the dew in the morn.  
I've lost that Horn, I know I was using it yesterday.  
I've lost that Horn, lost that Horn,  
found that Horn... 'gorn!  
There's not much hope of getting it back  
though I'd willingly pay a reward.  
I know some hearty folk whose party joke's  
pretending to hunt with the Quorn,  
Gone away! Gone away!  
Was it one of them took it away?  
Will you kindly return that Horn?  
Where is the devil who pinched my Horn?  
I shall tell the Police I want that French Horn back.

I found a concerto and wanted to play it  
displaying my talent at playing the Horn  
But early today to my utter dismay  
it had totally vanished away.  
I practiced the Horn and I wanted to play it  
but somebody took it away.  
I practiced the Horn and was longing to play it  
but somebody took it away.  
My neighbor's asleep in his bed.  
I'll soon make him wish he were dead.  
I'll take up the tuba instead! Wah! Wah!  
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(I'm Spending) Hanukkah in Santa Monica  
words & music: Tom Lehrer, arr. Hamelin

I'm spending Hanukkah in Santa Monica,  
wearing sandals, lighting candles by the sea.  
I spent Shevuos in East St. Louis, a charming spot  
but clearly not the spot for me.  
Those eastern winters, I can't endure 'em,  
So every year I pack my gear  
and come out here 'till Purim.  
Rosh Hashonah I spend in Arizonah,  
and Yom Kippuh way down in Mississippuh,  
But in December, there's just one place for me:  
Amid the California flora  
I'll be lighting my menorah,  
Like a baby in his cradle  
I'll be playing with my dreidel,  
Here's to Judas Maccabeus  
(Oy! If he could only see us!)  
Spending Hanukkah in Santa Monica by the sea.  
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Usherette's Blues  
words & music: Jeremy Nicholas

I work at the Palace Cinema as an usherette,  
you know,  
And I've been tearing tickets there for fifty years  
or so.  
Showing people to their seats  
and selling the ice creams —  
The Palace is a wonderland of fantasy and dreams.  
I get to see the films for free,  
but it drives me round the bend:  
Because I am an usherette, I never see the end.  
  
Did Gary Cooper get the girl, or what?  
Did Judy Garland find her dog?  
Were Robert Redford and Paul Newman shot?  
Did Snow White turn into a frog?  
I don't know if the phantom showed his face  
or if they captured Orson Welles.  
Did Charlton Heston win the chariot race?  
Did they let Charles Laughton keep his bells?  
  
I'd love to know what happened to King Kong,  
and whether Bonnie married Clyde.  
Did Julie Andrews sing another song?  
And was Kirk Douglas crucified?  
Did Indiana ever find the ark?  
Oh! How I love the silver screen!  
In Jaws, did anybody catch that shark?  
I've missed the end of ev'ry film I've seen.  
  
How Star Wars ends I haven't got a clue;  
I laughed through most of Spinal Tap.  
I saw two-thirds of Terminator 2,  
and lots of other total...masterpieces.  
Don't spoil the ending  
but I kind of feel that Kate and Leonardo drown.  
Now just today I've seen my final reel...  
next week they tear the Palace down.

Lime Jello Marshmallow Cottage Cheese Surprise  
words & music: William Bolcom

Ladies, the minutes will soon be read today.  
The Garden Club and the Weaving Class  
I'm sure have much to say.  
But next week is our Culture Night,  
our biggest, best event,  
And I've just made a dish for it  
you'll all find heaven-sent:  
  
It's my Lime Jello Marshmallow  
Cottage Cheese Surprise  
With slices of pimiento,  
(you won't believe your eyes!)  
All topped with a pineapple ring  
and a dash of mayonnaise.  
My vanilla wafers round the edge  
will win your highest praise!  
  
And Missus Jones is making scones  
that are filled with peanut mousse;  
To be followed by a chicken mold  
that's made in the shape of a goose.  
For ladies who must watch those pounds  
we've found a special dish:  
Strawberry ice enshrined in rice  
with bits of tuna fish.  
  
And my Lime Jello Marshmallow  
Cottage Cheese Surprise  
(Truly a creation that description defies)  
Will go so well with Missus Bell's  
creation of the week:  
Shrimp salad topped with chocolate sauce  
and garnished with a leek.  
  
And Missus Perkins' walnut loaf  
that's crowned with melted cheese  
Was such a hit last Culture Night we ask:  
no seconds, please!  
Nevertheless, must say has had a nice

*Musical Chairs*

words & music: *Jeremy Nichols*

Beverly's next to Joanie, and Jessy's on her right  
Then Montserrat can squeeze in,  
though it might be rather tight.  
Earl Wild and Van Cliburn  
have said they'll both be here,  
And Michael Tilson Thomas,  
which will make it rather queer.  
Sinopoli and Previn will turn up without a doubt,  
Leave a space each side so they  
can wave their arms about.  
Luciano's coming; let's hope when he arrives  
That he sits where he is told  
and that the scaffolding survives.

Yehudi's next to Itzhak, and Isaac's at the top  
But as Nigel isn't kosher  
he's a name we've had to drop.  
We've Mstislav and Yo-Yo  
(that's Slav and Yo for short)  
And there's Julian Lloyd Webber, too,  
but as a last resort.  
Gennadi Rozhdestvensky will join in all the games,  
So will Esa-Pekka Salonen,  
but how do you spell their names?  
James Levine's not coming,  
he's turned us down quite flat  
Which isn't so surprising  
with a sense of pitch like that.  
Zubin has accepted and Seiji's such a dear!  
Can you blame a girl for subtly  
advancing her career?

There are one or two producers  
I thought I ought to try —  
There's that so-and-so from Sony  
and that creep from EMI.  
Sir Michael and Sir Maxwell and  
Sir Malcolm say they might —  
I've seated Kathleen by herself,  
I'd like to avoid a fight.  
Placido says that he'll be here if he can fit it in;  
He's not sure if he's in Paris, Honolulu or Berlin.  
There'll be paper hats and crackers, and what else  
goodness knows!  
Maybe cabaret from Kiri, singing hits from all her  
shows.

I think that's everybody —  
there's you and me, my dear...  
But wait! We forgot David Helfgott...  
He'll have to come next year!

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*I Never Do Anything Twice*  
words & music: *Stephen Sondheim*

When I was young and simple  
(I don't recall the date)  
I met a handsome captain of the guard.  
He visited my chambers one evening very late,  
in tandem with a husky St. Bernard.  
At first I was astonished, and tears came to my eyes,  
but later when I asked him to resume  
He said, to my surprise, "My dear, it isn't wise.  
Where love is concerned, one must vary the bloom.  
Once, yes, once for a lark.



Pretty Plain

words & music: Jeremy Nicholas

Beauty's in the eye of the beholder;  
as we grow older, it's pretty plain.  
Ev'ry mirror now reflects so much less  
than one expects; it's pretty plain.  
La Gioconda has lost her charms.  
It's no use moaning, Lisa.  
Venus de Milo has lost an arm,  
and no one wants to squeeze her.  
And yet...and yet... when I'm dressed to the nines  
I am not finished yet...

My god, I look lovely tonight! What a sight!  
What a dazzling, resplendent delight! It's exquisite!  
My word! It's absurd!  
That this beautiful creature is me,  
I look lovely tonight!  
I've had just a nip and a tuck here,  
and you'll do the same if you're smart.  
When a girl perseveres she can take off ten years;  
my dentures are state of the art!  
My figure of breathtaking slimness  
is no longer so lissome or svelte;  
My umbilical knot is disguised by a pot,  
and my bustline has now met my belt.  
But my god, I look lovely tonight! Dynamite.  
And I think that I very well might give a cheer  
for despite all my faults,  
In my head I'm a Viennese waltz,  
I look lovely tonight!  
I don't see I really need glasses,  
but I bought a pair just for a lark.  
Marc sometimes complains of my varicose veins  
(but they cannot be seen in the dark!)  
My facial hair's waxed at the clinic,  
with some other cosmetic effects.

But my god, I look lovely tonight — well, quite.  
Though my girdle and bra are too tight, never mind!  
I look chic, and so sleek,  
With my tongue firmly tucked in my cheek,  
I look lovely tonight!  
I think Aphrodite and Helen of Troy  
would be jealous and fairly impressed;  
But please, on my knees,  
don't let them see me undressed!  
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A Word On My Ear

words: Michael Flanders, music: Donald Swann

A prisoner to rapture, by arduous duty pressed;  
a slave to a longing that lingers in my breast.  
Farewell, my friends, adieu; I cannot stay with you.  
Farewell!  
Before I deliver my seventh encore,  
there's something I'd like to make clear:  
They say I've brought pleasure to millions or more,  
They claim that my voice almost won the Gulf War  
when I sang (to the troops in the rear).  
I'm lauded, applauded, recorded, but Hist!  
I've a musical flaw that they seem to have missed:  
I'm tone deaf. Music means nothing to me.  
It's only the way my accompanists play  
that makes it appear I'm in key.  
Stone tone deaf. Can't tell a key from a clef.  
I stand by the pianist, watching his face,  
for he's told me to start when he comes to the place  
Where he'll give me a whacking great (wham!)  
in the bass, because I'm tone deaf.  
I'm tone deaf; never could understand pitch.  
Some people you know can sing so la ti do, and  
claim they can tell which is which!  
Stone tone deaf. Can't tell a B from an F.



The acclaimed partnership of soprano **Jody Karin Applebaum** and her husband, pianist **Marc-André Hamelin** has been hailed as "truly exceptional" (*Le Devoir*, Montréal), "captivating" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Munich), and "outstanding" (composer William Bolcom). Drawing on an extensive, often eclectic repertoire, their performances are known for their wit, sophistication, intimacy and impeccable musicianship. Their busy concert schedule has seen them in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Montréal, Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax, Winnipeg, London, Cork, Munich, Istanbul and the Middle East. In the United States their recitals have been heard on public radio; in Canada the CBC has recorded and broadcast many of their performances, including concerts from the Festival International de Lanaudière, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and a live broadcast from the Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto for the national program *OnStage!*; and Deutschland Radio Berlin broadcast a recital given at the summer 2000 Raritäten der Klaviermusik festival in Husum, Germany. Among their numerous other festival appearances together are the Newport Chamber Music Festival, Scotia Festival, Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, Pianoworks (London), Consonances (Nantes, France), Båstad Chamber Music Festival (Sweden) and the Jersey International Festival (Channel Islands).



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