



The Guide to Musical Theatre

CONVERSATION PIECE

A Romantic Comedy with Music in 3 Acts, 15 Scenes. Book, music and lyrics by Noel Coward.

His Majesty's Theatre, London - 16 February, 1934 (177 perfs)
44th Street Theatre, Broadway - 23rd October - 8th December, 1934 (55 perfs)

STORY

The play is set amidst the brittle sophistications of Regency Brighton, 1811.

Paul, Duc de Chaucigny-Varennes, has arrived in Brighton as a landless emigré from the terrors of the French Revolution. With him is Melanie, a beautiful young girl he passes off as his ward, and the daughter of a murdered friend, the Marquis de Tramont; although we learn early on that she is a dance hall singer.

Their purpose is to marry Melanie to a rich husband and she quickly attracts the attention of Edward, the young Marquis of Sheere, who asks for her hand.

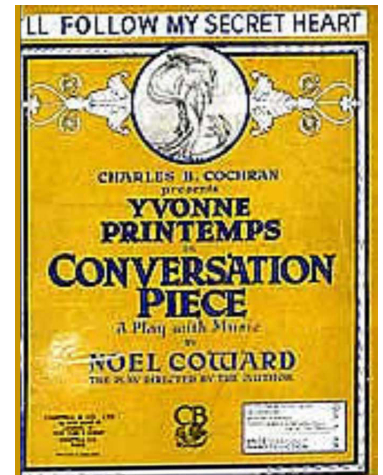
With the help of Lady Julia Charteris, who secretly loves Paul, Edward presses his claims, only to discover that Melanie herself has also all along secretly loved Paul. Lady Julia proposes marriage to Paul and with it the comforts of her fortune.

Melanie, desperate to win him for herself, declares her love but only succeeds in plunging him into consternation. In the hope that she can shock him into understanding how close they have become, Melanie feigns a departure for France, leaving no forwarding address. cp=p

The play works and they at last come together.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. The Parade
2. "I'll Follow My Secret Heart" - Melanie
3. "Regency Rakes" - Mr. Hailsham, Lord Doyning, Lord Braceworth
4. "Charming, Charming" - Melanie, Rose, Sophie, Martha
5. "Dear Little Soldiers" - Melanie, Rose, Sophie, Martha
6. "There's Always Something Fishy About the French" - Sophie, Martha
7. "Regency Rakes" (reprise) - Mr. Hailsham, Lord Doyning, Lord Braceworth
8. "English Lesson" - Melanie
9. "I'll Follow My Secret Heart" (reprise) - Melanie
10. "There Was Once a Little Village By the Sea" - Fishermen
11. Finale (Act 2) - Melanie, Ensemble
12. "Nevermore" - Melanie



CAST

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|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Sophie Otford | 14. A Tiger |
| 2. Martha James | 15. Miss Goslett |
| 3. Mrs. Dragon | 16. Miss Mention |
| 4. Paul, Duc de Chaucigny-Varences | 17. Lord Kenyon |
| 5. Melanie - his protégée | 18. Lord St. Malys |
| 6. Rose - Melanie's maid | 19. Countess Harringford |
| 7. Edward, The Marquis of Sheere - Melanie's suitor | 20. Lady Braceworth |
| 8. The Earl of Harringford | 21. Mrs. Hailsham |
| 9. Regency Rakes (3): Lord Braceworth: Lord Doyning: Mr. Hailsham: | 22. Hon. Julian Kane |
| 10. The Duchess of Beneden - Edward's mother | 23. Lord Mossrock |
| 11. The Duke of Beneden - Edward's father | 24. Mr. Amos |
| 12. Lady Julia Charteris - Paul's friend | 25. Butler |
| 13. Hannah, her maid | 26. Mr. Jones |
| | 27. Courtesan |
- Fishermen, Soldiers, Guests: Milliners, Ladies of the Town, Visitors:

SCENES AND SETTINGS

Acts 1

Scene 1: Prologue. Painted Curtains which depict Regency Brighton, England, 1811.

Scene 2: Part of the Parade. About 11:00 on a sunny spring morning.

Scene 3: The Living-room of Melanie's House.

Scene 4: Part of the Parade.

Scene 5: The Living-room of Melanie's House.

Scene 6: Painted Curtains which depict Regency Brighton.

Scene 7: The Public Gardens. Evening.

Act 2

Scene 1: Painted Curtains which depict Regency Brighton.

Scene 2: The Living-room of Melanie's House. Early afternoon.

Scene 3: Painted Curtains which depict Regency Brighton.

Scene 4: A Large Room on the Ground Floor of Melanie's House.

Act 3

Scene 1: The Steyne. About noon.

Scene 2: Melanie's Room.

Scene 3: The Public Gardens. Evening.

Scene 4: Melanie's Room. Night

