



A PLAY GUIDE FROM THE DESK OF
ASHLIE CORCORAN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The Matchmaker

By Thornton Wilder

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STANLEY INDUSTRIAL ALLIANCE STAGE



Notes from Ashlie Corcoran

Inside this Play Guide, you will learn about this play's fascinating history. *The Matchmaker* (1954) is actually based on an earlier version of his own play *The Merchant of Yonkers* (1938), which is in turn an adaptation of Johann Nestroy's 1842 play *Einen Jux will er sich machen* (and Nestroy himself borrowed from English playwright John Oxenford's 1835 comedy, *A Day Well Spent*). Additionally, Wilder heavily borrowed

Welcome to Thornton Wilder's *The Matchmaker*!

This is one of my favourite plays and I feel so lucky to be able to direct it here at the Arts Club. In it, a penny-pinching storeowner named Horace Vandergelder refuses to let his niece marry the poor artist that she loves, while he himself has plans to remarry. Meanwhile his matchmaker, Dolly Gallagher Levi, actually has intentions to marry him herself. Add in his overworked clerks, who long for excitement, a strong millineress, four equally fun locations, and a gaggle of other characters, and you've got a celebration of theatricality.

I love this farce because it is able to gently critique society while exploring the expansive nature of the human spirit. At its core, the play asserts that embracing adventure and taking imaginative chances are central to the meaning of life. Each of the characters in the play is in conflict—caught between the conflicting desires for calm self-preservation and the need for excitement and change. In the end, each of the characters recognizes that risk is worth it. For, as Wilder himself said, “What’s life if it isn’t risk, venture, taxes on the will-power, diversity, and fun?”



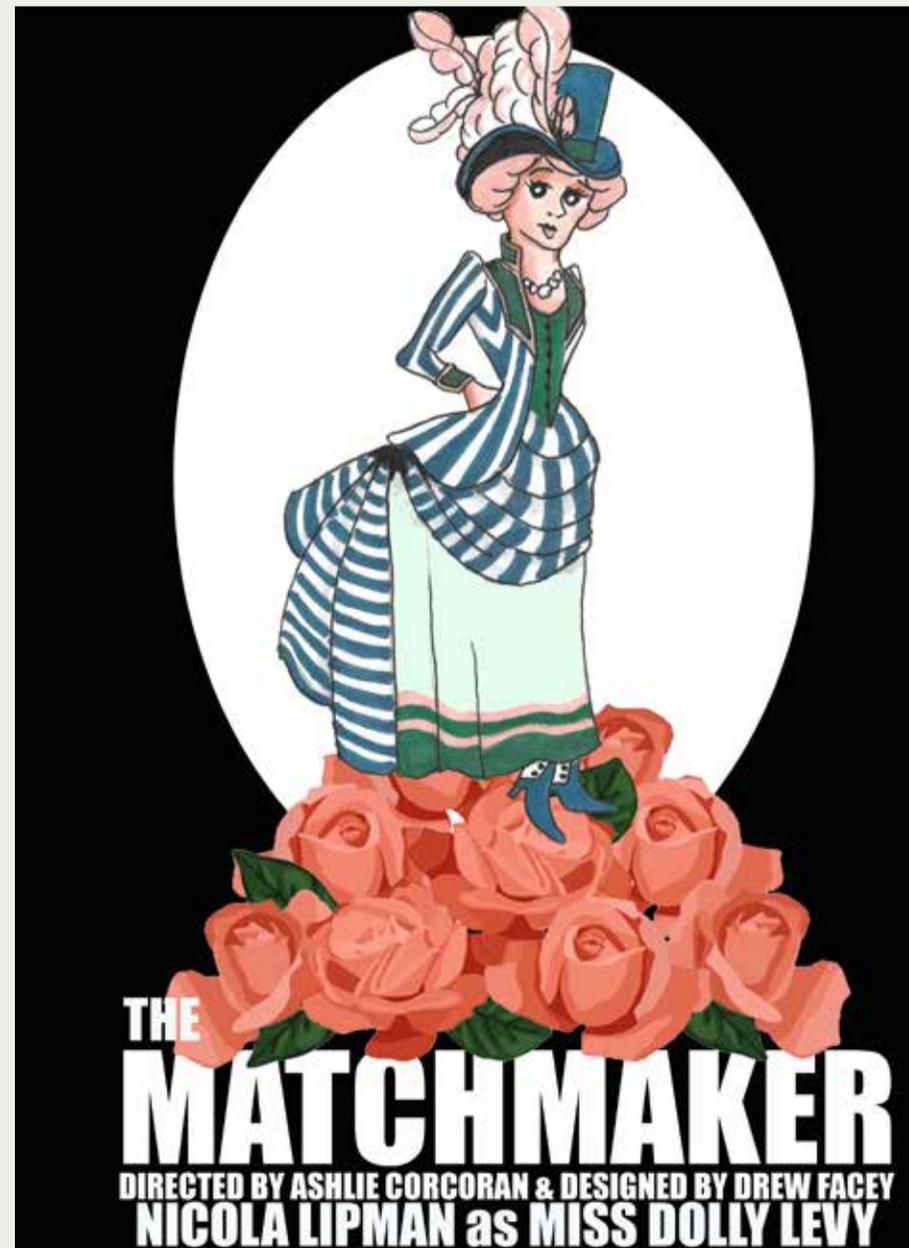
Ashlie Corcoran; photo by Mark Halliday

from a passage in Act 2, Scene 6, of Molière's *The Miser* and from Francis Bacon's idea on the psychology of money. As Wilder put it, "I'm like a woman I heard about who was arrested in Los Angeles for shoplifting. Her defense was 'I only steal from the best department stores, and they don't miss it.'"

All of these disparate elements came together in Wilder's imagination, leading him to invent Dolly Gallagher Levi, one of the smartest, strongest, and savviest characters I know. (She's also the namesake for the musical *Hello, Dolly!*)

I hope you enjoy our production of *The Matchmaker*. I think you can probably see that I'm pretty jazzed about this piece. While the play is firmly set in the Gilded Age of the 1880s, we've been taking Wilder's advice with adventurous and imaginative spins on design and aesthetics. And in doing so, we acknowledge that hopes, dreams, desires, and loves of these characters are not so far from the ones we ourselves hold today.

Ashlie



THE MATCHMAKER



Synopsis **(spoiler alert!)**

Act I

As the play opens, it is the early 1880s. The setting is Yonkers, New York, at the home of Horace Vandergelder, a wealthy storeowner and widower of advanced age. Vandergelder is getting a haircut from

Joe, the local barber, while speaking with Ambrose Kemper, a thirty-year-old artist who hopes to marry Vandergelder's niece, Ermengarde. The cranky, curmudgeonly Vandergelder firmly objects to this proposed marriage, though Ambrose insists that it is not ultimately Vandergelder's decision. Vandergelder claims that Ermengarde has already left town, but won't say where she's gone. Then, Vandergelder's elderly maid Gertrude immediately spoils this, by announcing the address in New York City where Ermengarde will be staying after she leaves on the train later that day; Vandergelder, who is also about to travel to New York,

is sending her to stay with Flora Van Huysen, a family friend, to keep her away from Ambrose, but now Ambrose knows this “secret,” much to Vandergelder’s irritation. Vandergelder is himself planning to propose to a woman in the city. He intends for his chief clerk, Cornelius Hackl, and assistant, Barnaby Tucker, to look after his store while he’s out of town.

Ermengarde enters and pleads with her uncle to let her marry Ambrose, insisting that she loves him. Vandergelder is unsympathetic and sends her on her way to New York. A man of fifty named Malachi enters next, and asks Vandergelder for a job as an apprentice. Malachi claims to have extensive experience in a wide variety of professions, though all only in short stints. He produces a rather tepid letter of reference from Vandergelder’s former business partner. Vandergelder reluctantly hires him, and tells him to leave right away for New York to book a room for him at the Central Hotel.

Ambrose and Ermengarde meet in secret. He tells her that they should get married without Vandergelder’s permission, but Ermengarde dislikes the thought of “eloping.” Just then, Mrs. Dolly Levi, a widow and family friend of the Vandergelders, arrives (by train from New York City), overhearing their conversation. She tells them that she will help them receive Vandergelder’s blessing to marry, but they will need to follow all of her instructions. She says that rather than taking Ermengarde to Miss Van Huysen’s home, she will instead take her to her own residence. She tells Ambrose to come by her house at 5:30, and from there they will go together to the Harmonia Gardens, a fine-dining restaurant. When Mrs. Levi enters to meet Vandergelder, he tells her right away that he has decided to marry Irene Molloy, a widow. Mrs. Levi expresses

some disappointment, claiming to have found “another girl” for him to consider: a young woman named Ernestina Simple, who is romantically smitten with elderly men, an excellent cook and housekeeper, and extremely frugal—all qualities that immensely appeal to the miserly Vandergelder. He agrees to have dinner with Miss Simple before proposing to Mrs. Molloy. The persuasive, fast-talking Mrs. Levi also convinces Vandergelder to lend her fifty dollars to (she claims) settle a lawsuit that will make her “a very rich woman,” owner of “half of Long Island.” They agree to meet for dinner at the Harmonia Gardens restaurant, after Vandergelder has paid another visit to Mrs. Molloy.

Barnaby and Cornelius complain that they never get any time off working for Vandergelder. Cornelius suggests that they create a minor disaster that would necessitate closing the store, and then go together to New York City to have a bit of fun while Vandergelder is away. Barnaby is very reluctant, but is persuaded by the older Cornelius. As Ermengarde and Mrs. Levi depart for New York, Mrs. Levi hints (to the audience) that she actually intends to marry Vandergelder. Cornelius and Barnaby detonate some rotten cans of tomatoes in the store—their excuse to temporarily close it—as the first act ends.

Act II

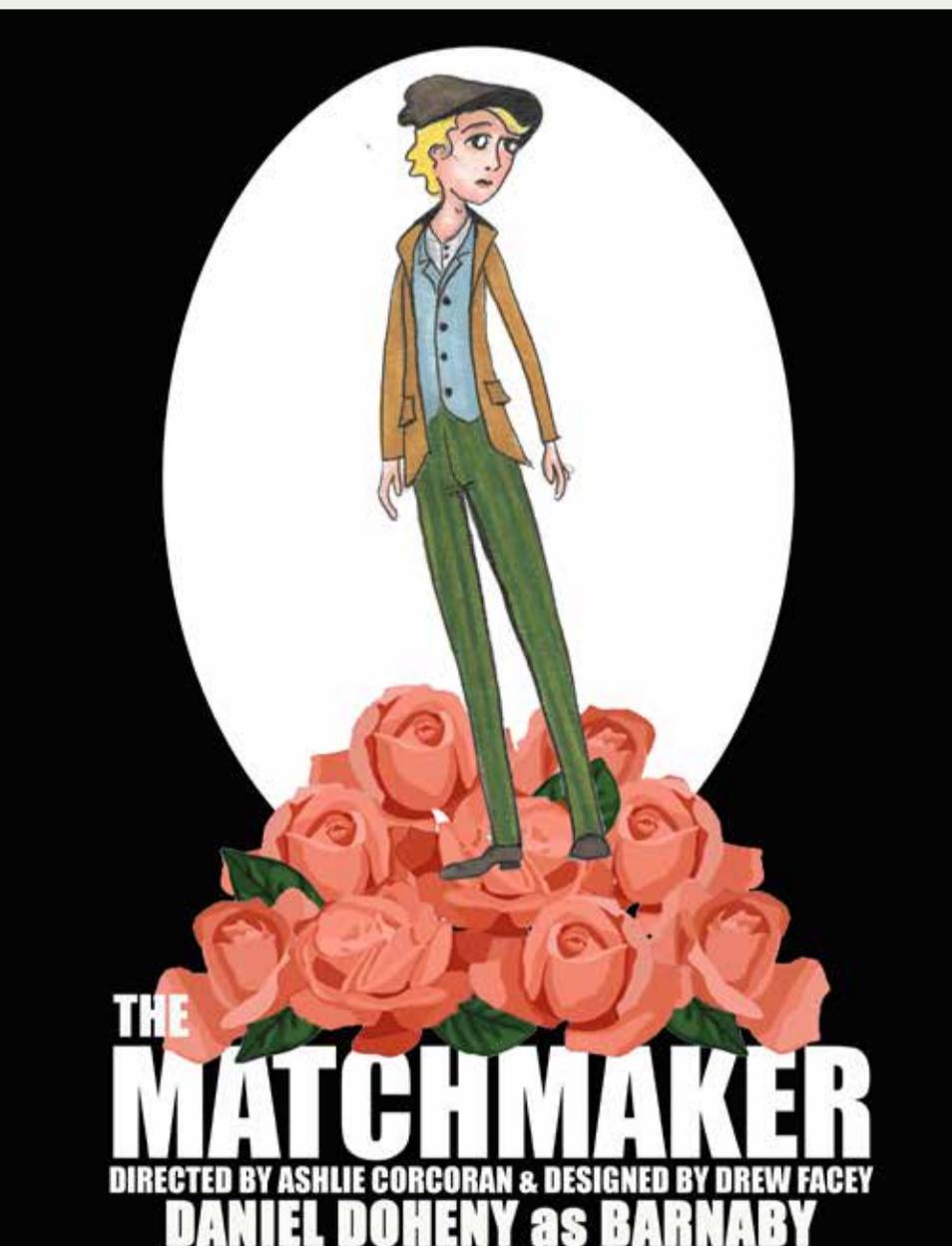
In Mrs. Molloy’s hat shop, in New York City, Mrs. Molloy is telling her assistant, Minnie Fay, that she plans to marry Vandergelder. She admits that she doesn’t love him, but marrying him would allow her to leave the millinery business, which she has come to dislike. As they chat, they notice two men standing outside, who appear as if they may come into the store. Soon, Cornelius and Barnaby enter in a panic, having spotted

Vandergelder with Mrs. Levi nearby outside. They decide that they'll pretend to be wealthy customers to impress the women working at the hat shop. They tell Mrs. Molloy that "money's no object...none at all," and that they're visiting from Yonkers. Cornelius is clearly attracted to her, and invites her to come to Yonkers sometime for him to show her around the town. She replies that she already has an acquaintance from Yonkers: Vandergelder. Cornelius and Barnaby are shocked, but pretend not to know Vandergelder.

When Vandergelder approaches the store, Cornelius and Barnaby frantically hide in the shop. Cornelius begs Mrs. Molloy to help them "just this once," promising that he'll explain later. Vandergelder and Mrs. Levi enter and greet Mrs. Molloy. Vandergelder mentions that he thought he'd seen two male customers enter before

them, but Mrs. Molloy insists that there were no men in the shop. She brings them into the workroom to allow Cornelius and Barnaby to leave unnoticed, but they don't and Cornelius admits that he "likes Mrs. Molloy a lot." As they talk, Mrs. Levi suddenly re-enters and spots them. They plead with her not to tell Vandergelder. Cornelius tells Mrs. Levi of his instant attraction to Mrs. Molloy.

They fall silent as Vandergelder re-enters with Mrs. Molloy. When Vandergelder says that he'd like for her to come to Yonkers, she mentions that she knows someone else "quite well-to-do" from Yonkers—Cornelius Hackl. Vandergelder is perplexed and demands to know how Mrs. Molloy knows his clerk. Mrs. Levi interjects, making up an elaborate story about how Cornelius is leading a double life, and is very well-known and popular in New York, how he comes often to the city: "by night...he's at the opera; at the great restaurants; in all the fashionable homes...The fact is, he's the wittiest, gayest, naughtiest, most delightful man in New York." Vandergelder is stunned but still denies this is possible. She also claims that he's secretly rich, through old family money. Minnie enters from the workroom and opens a cupboard; she screams that there's a man inside. Vandergelder insists that he'll get the man out, but Mrs. Molloy and Mrs. Levi try to convince Minnie and Vandergelder that it was nothing. Then, after they all hear a sneeze coming from the cupboard, Mrs. Molloy gives up and admits to Vandergelder, "Yes, there is a man in there. I'll explain it all to you another time." She says goodbye and tries to lead him out of her shop. Vandergelder is very upset and tells Mrs. Molloy that he "shan't trouble [her] again, and vice versa." After he leaves, Cornelius and Barnaby come out, and Mrs. Molloy insists that, after all the trouble they've caused, they should at least take her and Minnie out to dinner at a fine restaurant.



Act III

Vandergelder arrives with Malachi at the Harmonia Gardens restaurant. He tells Rudolph, a snobby waiter, that he needs a table for three and that he wants a chicken and a bottle of wine. Mrs. Levi arrives with Ermengarde and Ambrose, which makes Vandergelder furious. Ermengarde is worried that what she's doing is improper. Mrs. Levi tries to assure her that it's fine, and promises that she'll take her to Miss Van Huysen's house after dinner. Ambrose tries to convince Ermengarde that if she goes there, she'll be back under the control of her uncle, an "old man with one foot in the grave"; Vandergelder and Malachi, meanwhile, are eavesdropping on this conversation. Mrs. Levi notices, and begins to speak very positively of Vandergelder. She directs Ambrose and Ermengarde upstairs to a private room, "just meant for shy timid girls like Ermengarde." Vandergelder instructs Malachi and the cabman to deliver Ermengarde and Ambrose to Miss Van Huysen's house as soon as they return downstairs. He writes a note explaining the situation, to be delivered to Miss Van Huysen. After Malachi and the cabman exit, Mrs. Molloy, Minnie, Cornelius, and Barnaby enter. Mrs. Molloy and Cornelius order from Rudolph. They're brought a bottle of champagne and Barnaby raises a toast "to all the ladies in the world...may I get to know them better." Mrs. Molloy gives him a kiss. Rudolph begins setting the table beside them on the veranda. Mrs. Molloy tries to stop him, hoping to keep the veranda to themselves. Malachi enters and tells them that his employer already reserved this table. They begin arguing, but Rudolph tries to ease the tension by suggesting that he set up a screen between their tables. Mrs. Molloy protests this, but when Cornelius and Barnaby see that it's Vandergelder who is coming to the other table, they say

that they think the screen is a good idea after all. As Malachi helps Vandergelder remove his coat, his money purse falls out. When Malachi finds it, he thinks that it must've been dropped by Cornelius while they were bickering about the table and the screen. He gives it to Cornelius, who is amazed, as before this he was unsure how he would possibly pay the restaurant bill. When Cornelius returns to the table, he announces that he is going to tell the truth. He explains that almost none of what Mrs. Levi said about him was true. He also tells them that Vandergelder, his boss, is sitting on the other side of the screen. Mrs. Molloy refuses to let any of this ruin her evening out, and the group begins to sing merrily.

On the other side of the screen, Mrs. Levi joins Vandergelder. He asks where Miss Simple is, and Mrs. Levi explains that she ran off and got married just that afternoon. Mrs. Levi tells their waiter, August, that Vandergelder, being Yonkers' "most prominent citizen," deserves the very best in food and service. She then peeks on the other side of the curtain. Cornelius greets her. She tells Vandergelder that it's "just some city sparks entertaining their girls." He accuses her of "always putting [her] nose into other people's affairs," and they begin to quarrel. She announces that she has "no intention" of marrying him. He is shocked by this, as he'd never suggested as much, but she insists that he had been "hinting" "for some time." She explains that she would be just the right woman to set his affairs in order, given her great talent for management—but insists that someone else will have to do it. He vehemently denies that his affairs are out of order. She points to the fact that his niece is upstairs now with her would-be beau, rather than at the house where Vandergelder sent her, and that his clerks are "skipping around New York," rather than tending his store in

Yonkers. In fact, she tells him, they're just now on the other side of the screen. He doesn't believe her, and says he's leaving to go to Miss Van Huysen's house, then back to his hotel. As he tries to pay their bill, he realizes he's lost his purse. He is panicked. Cornelius overhears and realizes that it's Vandergelder's purse he's been given.

Mrs. Levi persuades Vandergelder to dance with her, but as they do they bump into Cornelius dancing with Mrs. Molloy. Vandergelder tells Cornelius that he's fired. He looks for Barnaby. He doesn't spot him—Barnaby, disguising himself, is wearing Minnie's hat, coat, and veil—but says that he is “discharged,” too. When he sees Ermengarde, he shouts that he'll lock her up for the rest of her life. She faints into Ambrose's arms. Mrs. Levi, laughing, tells Vandergelder that this is proof that his affairs are out of order and asks now whether he'll marry her, but he still refuses. Mrs. Levi, while still laughing, curses — “Damn!” — as the third act ends.

Act IV

At Miss Van Huysen's house, the wealthy spinster is waiting eagerly for her expected visitor, worried that Ermengarde hasn't yet arrived. She tells her cook that she'll help the young lady to marry whomever she wishes, rather than be controlled by “that cruel uncle of hers.” They hear a carriage arrive. But Malachi and the cabman have brought Cornelius and Barnaby (the latter still in women's clothing), mistaking them for Ermengarde and Ambrose. After reading Vandergelder's note, Miss Van Huysen makes the same mistake. She invites “Ermengarde” (Barnaby) to take a bath. Cornelius and Barnaby try to figure out how to escape—Malachi and the cabman are waiting guard until Vandergelder arrives—as the doorbell rings again.

This time it is Ermengarde and Ambrose, but the cook doesn't believe that they are who they claim to be. As they wait for Miss Van Huysen, Ermengarde suggests that Ambrose pretend he's Cornelius Hackl, her uncle's clerk sent by Vandergelder to escort his niece to New York. When Miss Van Huysen enters, she is perplexed that two different people are claiming to be Ermengarde. Because the other Ermengarde came with “the man she's in love with,” and this one is with “Cornelius Hackl,” Vandergelder's clerk, Miss Van Huysen says that she still believes the first Ermengarde (Barnaby) is the genuine one.

Another cab shows up with more guests. Mrs. Levi enters with Mrs. Molloy and Minnie. She explains that Vandergelder is still outside trying somehow to pay the cab that took them there. Mrs. Molloy, now holding Vandergelder's purse, offers to come down and pay the bill. Moments later, Vandergelder enters in a huff and becomes more upset at the mistaken identities of the people inside the house, calling them all “dogs and scoundrels.” Miss Van Huysen forces him to shake hands and get along for now, and reluctantly he does. He goes into the kitchen to have coffee with the others, while Mrs. Levi speaks aloud to her deceased husband, explaining in a long monologue that she's going to marry Vandergelder for his money. When Vandergelder returns with a cup of coffee for Mrs. Levi, he tells her that he's forgiven everyone and even made Cornelius his partner. He then asks her to marry him. She says that that she'll only consent to marrying him if he permits her to live, and spend, freely. He agrees. She returns his lost purse to him, but he tells her to keep it. She is taken aback and responds with real affection for him. Barnaby enters and announces that Cornelius is going to marry Mrs. Molloy. Vandergelder replies that he is going to marry Mrs. Levi, as the play concludes on a celebratory note.

Characters

Horace Vandergelder

A wealthy merchant residing in Yonkers, New York; a widower of advanced age.

Cornelius Hackl

The chief clerk at Vandergelder's store.

Barnaby Tucker

The assistant clerk at Vandergelder's store.

Malachi Stack

A middle-aged man, recently hired as an "apprentice" by Vandergelder.

Ambrose Kemper

An artist, hoping to marry Vandergelder's niece, Ermengarde.

Joe Scanlon

The local barber in Yonkers.

Rudolph & August

Waiters at the Harmonia Gardens restaurant in New York City.

Cabman

A carriage driver in New York City.

Mrs. Dolly Gallagher Levi

A widow, who dabbles in many trades, including matchmaking; a longtime friend of Vandergelder's late wife.

Miss Flora Van Huysen

A wealthy spinster living in New York City; a longtime friend of Vandergelder's late wife.

Mrs. Irene Molloy

A widow who runs a women's hat shop in New York City.

Minnie Fay

Mrs. Molloy's assistant at the hat shop.

Ermengarde

Vandergelder's niece; in love with Ambrose Kemper.

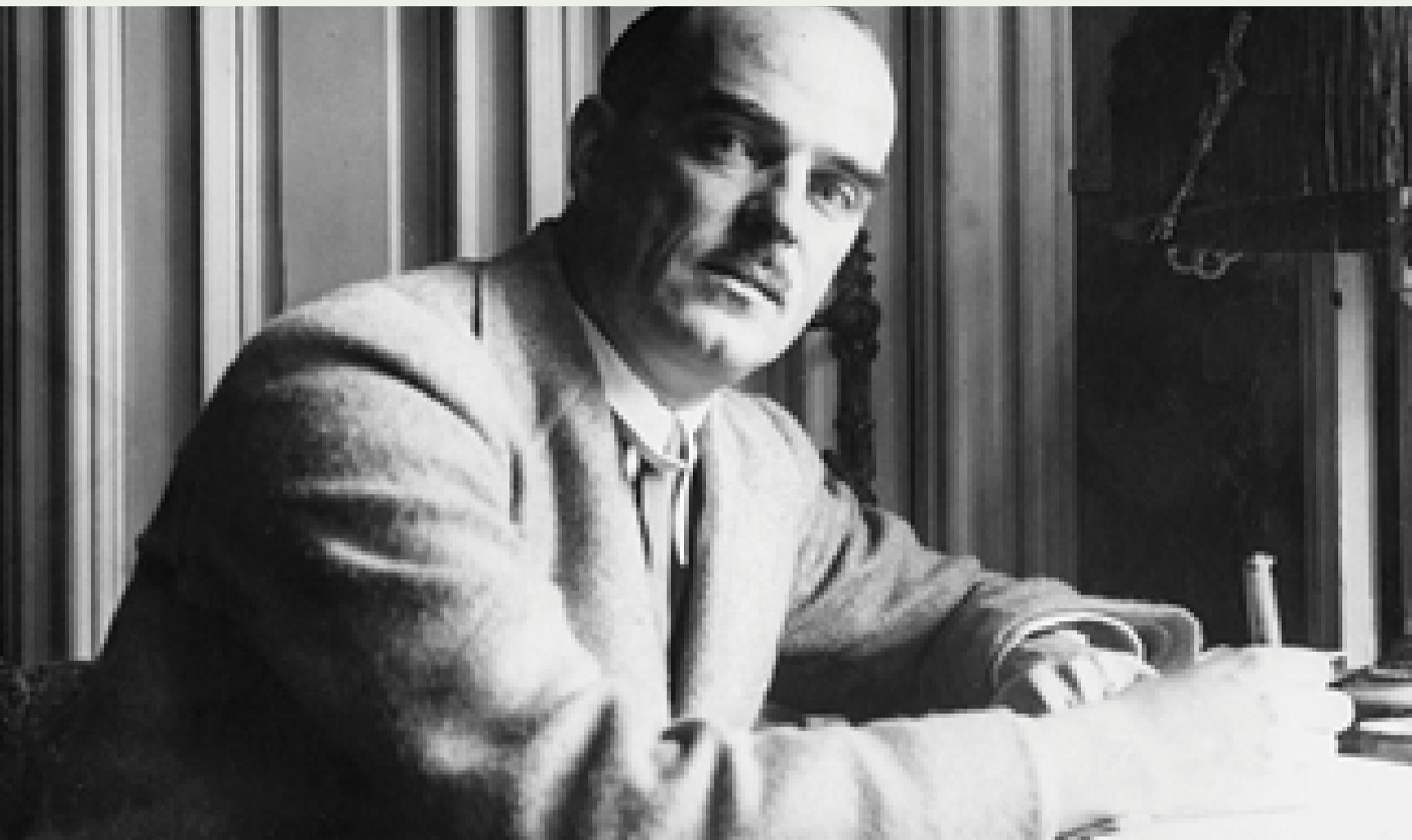
Gertrude

Vandergelder's elderly housekeeper.

Cook

The cook employed at Miss Van Huysen's residence.

About the Playwright



Thornton Wilder was a highly successful, award-winning playwright and novelist. Born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1897, Wilder began writing plays while attending the Thacher School, a prestigious boarding school in Ojai, California. He earned degrees from Yale University and Princeton University, then went abroad to study archaeology and Italian in Rome. His first novel, *The Cabala*, was published in 1926, followed in 1927 by *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, for which Wilder won his first Pulitzer Prize. He later won two more Pulitzer Prizes, both for Drama, for *Our Town* (1938) and *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1943). In 1954, Wilder wrote *The Matchmaker*, a reworking of his earlier play, *The Merchant of Yonkers* (1938). In addition to his novels and many plays, Wilder also co-wrote the screenplay (with Sally Benson and Alma Reville) for Alfred Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943). Wilder died in Hamden, Connecticut in 1975.

Before Dolly: The Evolution of a Classic Farce

Thornton Wilder's *The Matchmaker* is best-known today as the basis for the Broadway musical *Hello, Dolly!* What is likely less well-known is that Wilder's 1954 play was itself an adaptation of earlier plays, dating back more than a century. This essay will provide a summary of this famous story's long evolution.

The earliest antecedent for this story seems to be a one-act farce called *A Day Well Spent* by the nineteenth-century English playwright John Oxenford. Oxenford was a highly regarded translator, particularly of the great German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. He also wrote libretti for operas and served as a theatre critic for *The Times*. In 1835, Oxenford's *A Day Well Spent* premiered at the Theatre Royal English Opera House. Oxenford dedicated this short work to one of

“His most important addition to the story was the key part of a scheming, fast-talking matchmaker”

his leading actors, the accomplished thespian Benjamin Wrench, writing, “It is with the greatest pleasure, I dedicate to you a Farce, the success of which is so much to be attributed to your exertions. Accept my most hearty thanks for your inimitable performance of the principal character in this piece, as well as for the kind attention you have paid to my previous productions, and the pains you have taken to render them acceptable to the public.” The protagonist of Oxenford's farce was named Mr. Cotton, described as a “an eminent hosier, and old gentleman,” the early forerunner to Horace Vandergelder; Wrench played Bolt, “[Cotton]’s foreman, quite a gentleman,” roughly comparable to Wilder's Cornelius Hackl.

Oxenford's one-act play caught the attention of the esteemed Austrian playwright Johann Nestroy, who expanded Oxenford's premise into a full three-act play titled *Einen Jux will er sich Machen* (*He'll Have Himself a Good Time*). This “*Posse mit Gesang*” (farce with singing, or musical comedy), with music provided by Adolf Müller, premiered at Vienna's Theater an der Wien in 1842. In Nestroy's work, Mr. Cotton became Herr Zangler, “a spice trader in a small town”; Oxenford's Bolt appeared here under the name Weinberl, Zangler's “*Handlungsdienner*” (“shopkeeper's apprentice”).

Einen Jux will er sich machen became Nestroy's most well-known work outside German-speaking Europe, not least due to Thornton Wilder's subsequent English adaptations. It was also later—independently of Wilder's plays and *Hello, Dolly!*—the basis for Tom Stoppard's hit play *On the Razzle* (1981).

Wilder's first American rendering of Nestroy's (Oxenford-inspired) work was *The Merchant of Yonkers*, which premiered on Broadway at the Guild Theatre in late 1938, while Wilder's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Our Town* was still playing elsewhere on Broadway. Wilder retained his sources' nineteenth-century setting (though moving later in the century, to the 1880s), but he relocated the action from Europe to the United States. His most important addition to the story was the key part of a scheming, fast-talking matchmaker—Mrs. Dolly Gallagher Levi, a character lacking any direct equivalent in Oxenford or Nestroy's plays. Nevertheless, *The Merchant of Yonkers* was not an auspicious Broadway success, running for just 39 performances.

Sixteen years later, following the encouragement of actress Ruth Gordon and Tyrone Guthrie, director of the Edinburgh Festival, Wilder made (by his reckoning) “minor changes” to *The Merchant of Yonkers*, giving the reworked play the title *The Matchmaker*. As the new title suggests, this version of the story substantially emphasized the character of Mrs. Levi, in particular increasing the length of her famous monologue in Act IV. With Gordon (who later starred in such films as *Rosemary's Baby* and *Harold and Maude*) as Mrs. Levi, *The Matchmaker* was a hit, initially at the Edinburgh Festival, then on London's West End, and ultimately on Broadway, where it enjoyed a run of 486 performances. In 1958, this second version of Wilder's play was

adapted into a movie of the same name, directed by Joseph Anthony and starring Shirley Booth, Anthony Perkins, Shirley MacLaine, Paul Ford, and Robert Morse.

Following this string of success, *The Matchmaker* was adapted into a musical—a show that would, in turn, become one of the most popular Broadway musicals of all time. *Hello, Dolly!*, with music and lyrics by Jerry Herrman and book by Michael Stewart, opened at New York's St. James Theatre in 1964, where it ran for 2,844 performances, closing in 1970. This Tony Awards-sweeping production initially starred Carol Channing in the title role; after she left, major stars such as Ginger Rogers, Martha Raye, Betty Grable, Pearl Bailey, Phyllis Diller, and Ethel Murman each took turns as Dolly. In the decades since, there have been countless productions of *Hello, Dolly!*, including most recently a 2017 Broadway revival, featuring Bette Midler and David Hyde Pierce. Herman's hit musical also spawned a lavish 1969 film adaptation, starring Barbara Streisand and Walter Matthau.

While some fans of *Hello, Dolly!* may know that Wilder's *The Matchmaker* and *The Merchant of Yonkers* were its immediate source, far fewer of them are probably aware of Wilder's debts to Johann Nestroy and John Oxenford. Yet, without these key early sources there may have been no “Dolly” at all.

New York in the “Gilded Age”

While *The Matchmaker* was written in the 1950s, reworked by Thornton Wilder from an earlier play he had written in the late 1930s, the play’s story is set in the 1880s, during the so-called “Gilded Age.” This essay will aim to provide some context for this distinctive era in American history, focusing particularly on New York City and its environs during this period.

The term “Gilded Age” derives from Mark Twain’s 1873 novel *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*. Twain meant this term to suggest that a thin, golden outer-layer concealed many underlying social problems during this period, which historians have marked as roughly 1870–1900 (or sometimes as late as 1910). Indeed, this was a time of both extraordinary wealth, accumulated especially by the heads of the large industrial companies, and of widespread poverty and poor living conditions, especially in the rapidly growing cities of the northeastern United States, where many had moved to work in factories, mills, and other large industrial sites.

New York’s population grew from 813,669 in 1860 to 1,206,299 in 1880 and reached 3,437,202 by 1900, due to immigrants arriving from overseas, migration from within the United States, and expanding geographic boundaries of the city. Many of these recently arrived

workers lived in tightly packed tenement buildings in extremely dense neighbourhoods with high rates of disease and crime, such as the notorious “Five Points” and Hell’s Kitchen.

Yet, at the same time, the American middle class also grew substantially during this period, resulting in an increase in leisure time for some, and in activities on which to spend that time. In New York, Central Park (completed between 1860 and 1873) and major museums (the American Museum of Natural History opened in 1869, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1870) helped to meet this need. Middle-class married women often did their family’s shopping at department stores, especially along New York’s “Ladies’ Mile,” with blocks of large department stores from 15th to 24th Streets, including Lord & Taylor, Bergdorf Goodman, and Tiffany & Co. While relatively few married women worked in business in this period, the greater availability of the sewing machine did allow some women to operate their own dressmaking shops and millineries, such as Mrs. Molloy’s in *The Matchmaker*.

New Yorkers of means also enjoyed going to the theatre and to restaurants, such as *The Matchmaker*’s Harmonia Gardens. This fine-dining establishment was based directly on a restaurant called Lüchow’s, opened in 1882 by German immigrant August Lüchow, on Manhattan’s 14th Street. This area—the East Village neighbourhood near Union Square—was the centre of moneyed New York social life at this time. As the city expanded upward in the twentieth century, Lüchow’s finally moved to a midtown location in 1982—a hundred years after its opening—before closing in 1986. Its original downtown building was demolished in 1995; the site is now occupied by a New York University dorm.

While many well-off New Yorkers resided in the growing midtown and uptown neighbourhoods, improvements in mass transportation allowed people in outlying communities to visit and conduct business in the city with relative ease. In 1888, the New York City and Northern Railway Company began running trains from New York to Yonkers and points north. Earlier, in 1874, parts of Yonkers—Riverdale and Kingsbridge—were incorporated into New York as the Bronx. Throughout this period, the city expanded, resulting in the borough system in 1898, whereby Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island became part of New York City, coterminous with Kings, Queens, and Richmond Counties, respectively, where Manhattan was formally New York County. Yonkers, by contrast, voted against a referendum to amalgamate into the city, and it remains a part of the suburban Westchester County. However, due in part to its direct border with New York City and the rapid transportation links formed in the later nineteenth century, Yonkers nevertheless became more populous, dense, and urban than the rest of Westchester County. Its present population of 200,807 makes it by far the largest city in that county and the fourth-largest in New York state. Where Westchester County is still well-known as one of America’s most affluent suburban areas, Yonkers is sometimes unofficially referred to as the “sixth borough” of New York City.

Elsewhere in Westchester County, some of the period’s wealthiest men settled: oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller, for instance, created his sprawling home and luxurious private golf course in Pocantico Hills, while railroad developer Jay Gould built a forty-room mansion in Tarrytown. Such men valued the open space and privacy of the outlying county as well as its close proximity to New York.

Within the city itself during this period, transportation

still consisted principally of various types of horse-drawn vehicles. Horse-drawn omnibuses could move as many as 14 passengers. By the later nineteenth century, horse railways could carry even larger numbers of passengers along major arteries like 5th Avenue. Cabs—that is, cabriolet hackney carriages (from which the term “cab” derives)—provided a more exclusive means of transportation, utilized mainly by wealthy customers. These were small, two-wheeled private carriages, such as the “cab” taken by Horace Vandergelder and his companions from the Harmonia Gardens restaurant to Miss Van Huysen’s house. Where omnibus and horse railways fares ranged between three and ten cents, rides by cabriolet were one dollar or more; the average New York worker in this period earned between two and three dollars per day. At the peak of horse transportation, around 175,000 horses were in daily use in New York City, yet these overworked horses only lived an average of two and a half years, resulting in around 15,000 horse deaths per year. The elevated train lines that offered more limited services within the city starting in 1868 led eventually to New York’s famous subway system, which began operating in 1904.

The so-called “Gilded Age” represented an era of hardship for many (including horses!), of increased leisure and opportunity for some, and of great luxury for America’s leaders in business and industry. Nowhere were these social patterns more evident than in New York in the later nineteenth-century. In a light, comic manner, Wilder’s play allows us a look back at this world and how people moved around—and up—within it.

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<https://archive.org/details/OxenfordDayWellSpent>

The published script of John Oxenford’s *A Day Well Spent*.

<http://www.callondolly.com/>

A website dedicated to all things *Hello, Dolly!*

https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/data-maps/nyc-population/historical-population/1790-2000_nyc_total_foreign_birth.pdf

Data showing the growth of New York City’s population from 1790 to 2000.

<http://www.thorntonwilder.com/about-wilder/biography/>

A short biographical summary of Thornton Wilder’s life and career.

<http://www.twildersociety.org/works/the-matchmaker/>

Notes on *The Matchmaker* from the Thornton Wilder Society’s website.

<http://www.westchestermagazine.com/Westchester-Magazine/January-2013/At-the-Crossroads-of-Change-Westchester-in-the-Gilded-Age/>

An article on Westchester County in the Gilded Age, including colourful anecdotes about some of the industrial magnates who built extravagant properties there.

The Matchmaker was filmed on location in Massachusetts and Galway, Ireland. The Matchmaker Quotes. There are no approved quotes yet for this movie. News & Features. 150 Erotic Movies. Ranked worst to best! 2019's Most Anticipated. 63 movies coming up this year.