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Audio Link 8.1

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Video 8.1

A Closer Look at the Playbill for Yes! Mr. Barry, narrated by Sears Eldredge.

As you look at the playbill cartoons, you're aware that the setting for the musical was actually the 20th century not the 19th, as the cover image suggests. And the scenes depicted are not about innocent young women, or men for that matter, most, we will discover, have to do with sexual encounters of one sort or another. And this may make us reevaluate the cover image that the cover image does not show an innocent young woman at all, but with her beauty mark, bright red lipstick and heavily made up face she is perhaps instead a Victorian prostitute. We will really never know the answer.

The cartoon playbill is divided into four panels separated by a series of images down the middle. There are obviously no story lines or continuity figures among the panels, so the show may have been conceived of more as a review on a theme rather than a musical with a central plot. If this was so, then the theme seems to have been seduction.

We'll start our closer examination with the central figures. At the top on the left is the blonde woman in the bonnet, a figure who appears on the cover looking out on these scenes from the 20th century. Below her appear to be the main characters except for the man in the lower right holding a cane and wearing only a top hat, a monocle, scarf, gloves, and a black "Jap happy" g-string. This figure might be the show's compère or master of ceremonies. We'll assume that the other panels are meant to be read in the following order.

Panel 1; At top left, a maid has just caught two excited young men spying through a keyhole on two women in the adjoining room who are exercising to music in their underwear.

Panel 2; On bottom left, a young dark haired woman flower stand attendant rejects the advances of a drunken butcher, and in doing so pours water from a watering can on a black cat.

Panel 3: At top right a brunette makes advances to an unresponsive pudgy man crouched in a chair. In the background is a desk with two telephones and a signpost with options yes or no. A mouse crouches on the floor on the left side of the desk. On the wall is a large poster reading pale, palatable, pudgy, pap. You get the impression the guy in the chair must be saying "not tonight dear, I have a headache".

Panel 4: At bottom right, a very big baby dances with a very big black cat. It looks as if this is the same cat we see in the panel at bottom left. We can only guess at what the cat signifies.

And finally at bottom right center is the oddest Flip Ralph's honey bee logo.