DONALDSON AND KAHN

Another bride, another June
Another sunny honeymoon
Another season, another reason
For makin' whoopee!

Opening of film version of Whoopee *at the Rivoli Theater, at Broadway & 49th Street*

Walter Donaldson and Gus Kahn wrote their whimsical song about love and marriage for *Whoopee*, the 1928 musical smash that turned out to be the last great triumph for its producer, the legendary Florenz Ziegfeld. *Whoopee* is remembered today for the standout performances of two of its stars—the comedian Eddie Cantor and the singer Ruth Etting—and for three of its Donaldson-Kahn songs: "Makin' Whoopee," Cantor's signature number; "Love Me or Leave Me," introduced by Etting; and "My Baby Just Cares for Me," written for the 1930 film version, where it was sung by Cantor. (The movie, supervised by Ziegfeld himself, is one of the most faithful cinematic versions of a Broadway musical.) The score for *Whoopee* was the culmination of the collaboration between Kahn and Donaldson and a reflection of the exuberance of the Jazz Age.

Ruth Etting

Gus Kahn

Gus Kahn, a great, largely under-appreciated lyricist, was born in Koblenz, Germany in 1886 and moved with his family to Chicago when he was five. At the start of his career, while employed as a clerk in a mail order business, he fashioned specialty songs for vaudeville performers. Working productively with such composers as Raymond Egan, Ted Fiorito and Richard Whiting, father of Margaret, he also teamed memorably with the Ohio-born bandleader Isham Jones ("I'll See You in My Dreams," "It Had to Be You," "The One I Love [Belongs to Somebody Else] and "Swingin' Down the Lane"). But Kahn is best known for his partnership with Walter Donaldson.

Donaldson, a gifted, versatile song-writer, was born in Brooklyn in 1893. His father, a shoe cutter, was of Scottish-Dutch ancestry; his mother, the child of Irish immigrants, was a classically-trained pianist and music teacher. In his early years, he had a job on Wall Street while also working as a staff pianist for a music publisher. After World War I, he joined forces with Sam Lewis and Joe Young to write the comic classic "How 'Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm? (After They've Seen Paree)."

Walter Donaldson

Although Donaldson had many lyricist collaborators, his most lasting partnership was formed in 1922 with Gus Kahn. Together they wrote more than one hundred songs, including "My Buddy," "Carolina in the Morning," "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby" and the score for *Whoopee*. On occasion, Donaldson wrote his own lyrics; two of his best solo efforts were "Little White Lies" and "You're Driving Me Crazy."

Kahn spent most of his last years in Hollywood, where he co-wrote, with Edward Eliscu, the lyrics for the first Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers film, *Flying Down to Rio*. The songs, to music by Vincent Youmans, included the effervescent "Carioca," which garnered Kahn his first of two Oscar nominations. He also wrote lyrics for the film *San Francisco* and for the Marx Brothers comedy *A Day at the Races*. Kahn died in 1941. Ten years later he was portrayed by Danny Thomas in the screen biography *I'll See You in My Dreams*. (Doris Day played his wife.)

In the early 1930s, Donaldson served on the board of directors of ASCAP, and his music for the song "Did I Remember?," written for the 1936 movie *Suzy*, was nominated for an Academy Award. Near the end of his life, he worked with, among others, Johnny Mercer and John LaTouche. Donaldson died of pneumonia in 1947 (like his friend and partner Gus Kahn, at the age of 54). A comprehensive collection of his songs was compiled and edited by his daughter Ellen.

— *Robert Kimball*

MEET THE ARTISTS

Photo: Russ Weatherford

Robert Kimball is a historian of the American musical theater and artistic advisor to the Ira Gershwin and Cole Porter estates. He has been a member of the advisory committee of New York City Center's *Encores*! and a consultant to the Library of Congress, the Chicago Humanities Festival and the Packard Humanities Institute's musical theater recording project. He was the artistic director for 92nd Street Y's *Lyrics & Lyricists* Mack Gordon, Johnny Mercer, Irving Berlin, and DeSylva, Brown and Henderson programs.

Kimball edited or co-edited six volumes in Knopf's *Complete Lyrics* series: Cole Porter, Lorenz Hart, Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Frank Loesser and Johnny Mercer. He edited *Cole Porter: Selected Lyrics* and *Ira Gershwin: Selected Lyrics* for the Library of America's American Poets Project. His other books include *Reading Lyrics, Cole, The Gershwins* and *Reminiscing with Sissle and Blake.*

After graduation from Yale College and Yale Law School, Kimball pursued his longstanding interest in American musical theater as curator of Yale University's Collection of the Literature of the American Musical Theater from 1967 to 1971. He received a Drama Desk Award for his rediscovery of lost musical-theater manuscripts in a Secaucus, NJ, warehouse.

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Photo: Steve Friedman

Born in Brooklyn and raised on Long Island, bandleader **Vince Giordano's** passion for big-band music ignited when he discovered a slew of 78 rpm records in his grandmother's attic. Early appearances with Leon Redbone on "A Prairie Home Companion" led to work with Dick Hyman's Orchestra, including many Woody Allen film soundtracks. More than a performer, Mr. Giordano is a big-band historian and collector, with more than 60,000 scores in his collection; in 2011, he was featured on the PBS series, "Michael Feinstein's American Songbook."

In 1976, Mr. Giordano formed the band that is now known internationally through performances, recordings, film soundtracks and TV broadcasts as **Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks**. They have performed at the Smithsonian Institute, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, international jazz festivals and fundraising events for countless charitable organizations. Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks have been seen and heard in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Cotton Club*, Gus Van Sant's *Finding Forrester*, Martin Scorsese's *The Aviator* and Sam Mendes' *Revolutionary Road*. Other soundtracks include *Ghost World*, *The Savages*, *The Good Shepherd*, *Away We Go*, *Public Enemies*, and HBO's "Grey Gardens" and "Mildred Pierce."

Most recently, Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks have been nominated for a 2012 Grammy Award for their work on *Boardwalk Empire, Volume 1–Music from the HBO Original Series*. They have also been seen on "Boardwalk Empire" as well as the USA Network series "Royal Pains." They appeared at the 2011 Turner Classic Movie Film Festival in a night of vintage movie music and played an original score to Buster Keaton's silent film *The Cameraman* at the Egyptian Theater. This summer, they will appear at Music Mountain and both the Litchfield and Newport jazz festivals. Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks can be heard every Monday and Tuesday evening at Sofia's Restaurant, adjacent to the Edison Hotel in the heart of Times Square.

VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS

Vince Giordano, string bass/bass sax/tuba/vocals

Andy Stein, violin/baritone sax

Mike Ponella, trumpet

Jon-Erik Kellso, trumpet

Jim Fryer, trombone

Dan Block, alto sax/clarinet

Mark Lopeman, tenor sax/clarinet

Dan Levinson, alto sax/clarinet

Peter Yarin, piano

Ken Salvo, guitar/banjo

Arnie Kinsella, drums