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Alan Jay Lerner: A Lyricist's Letters

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The man behind "I Could Have Danced all Night" and "Almost Like Being in Love", lyricist Alan Jay Lerner (1918-1986) is widely regarded as one of the most important figures of the American musical stage. In penning the lyrics to some of the most well-known and beloved Broadway shows, including *Brigadoon*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *My Fair Lady*, and Camelot, Lerner worked and corresponded with some of the greatest luminaries of popular entertainment over a career which spanned four decades, from performers like Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews to composers like André Previn, Leonard Bernstein, Charles Strouse, Andrew Lloyd Webber, and especially Frederick Loewe.

In this rich collection of correspondence, most of it published for the first time, author Dominic McHugh sheds new light on Lerner's working relationships with these legendary figures. McHugh's extensive commentary reveals Lerner's turbulent partnerships with Loewe and Lane, his affection for Harrison, and his reverence for Burton. Particular emphasis is placed on Lerner's aborted projects with composers like Richard Rodgers and Arthur Schwartz. Especially valuable is the correspondence from his final years, in which he worked on a movie version of *The Merry Widow*, a BBC TV series about musicals, and a musical version of *My Man Godfrey*, none of which came to fruition. The collection ends with a poignant final exchange between Lerner and Andrew Lloyd Webber, with whom he was to have written *The Phantom of the Opera*. Overall, this important and lively book reveals the highs and lows of the career of one of America's wittiest and most romantic lyricists.

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