

NEW YORK



CONCERT REVIEW INC.



Peter Martin, Joseph Barry,
and Laurence Pierron present
White Christmas at the Triad:
A celebration of the life and
music of Irving Berlin

ADRIENNE HAAN, CHANTEUSE; BART SHATTO, VOCALIST

RICHARD DANLEY, MUSIC DIRECTOR/PIANO; MELANIE LAPATIN, CHOREOGRAPHER;
LAURENCE PIERRON, ORIGINAL IDEA

TRIAD THEATER, NEW YORK, NY

DECEMBER 5, 2019

I have reviewed Adrienne Haan several times in these pages- always with great pleasure. She is known as a performer with a flair for decadent Weimar-era cabaret and the like (Brecht/Weill), as well as many other eclectic international programs. On this occasion, she featured an entertaining and educational primer through a tiny fraction of the songs of a fellow adopted American: Irving Berlin. It takes a truly secure performer to share her stage with a partner, in this case the excellent Broadway and television star Bart Shatto.

Thirty-three songs and a built-in encore made for a generous evening, one that I feared would prove too long, however, the patter was engaging and concise, and some of the songs were given a mere “taste” and

joined *attacca* to the following song(s), which allowed the pace to move forward.

The ultimate immigrant success story, Berlin wrote over 1500 songs, 20 musicals, and 15 movie scores. He was also his own lyricist. He never learned to read music, and had a transposing piano to move his songs from the black keys to which he confined himself. A startling coincidence was made in juxtaposing Ms. Haan, a native of Luxembourg, with Berlin's long-time home on Manhattan's luxurious Beekman Place, which once belonged to Navy and Defense secretary James V. Forrestal, and today serves as the consulate of . . . Luxembourg.

The evening was divided into groups corresponding to Berlin's iconic work: immigration themes, military songs (both world wars), musicals, Hollywood, love songs, and holiday songs. Only one transition I found rather jarring: after Ms. Haan and Mr. Shatto explained that the Berlins' only son, Irving Jr., died at age three weeks on Christmas Day 1928, they segued right into *Happy Holidays* performed with absolutely no irony whatsoever. All this says, I suppose, is what the entire show tells us, that Berlin's music is truly optimistic at all times. There is no cynicism in it. He was genuinely patriotic, even to the point of writing "propaganda" songs for the Federal government about income tax and the armed forces.

Ms. Haan and Mr. Shatto showed charming chemistry with each other, and distributed quite evenly through the duos were solos for each of them. Ms. Haan's skills are well-known to New Yorkers by now, and she shimmied her way through standards and lesser-known material with consummate ease. To a great extent, Mr. Shatto showed a certain American "corn-fed" quality even better than she did.

Standouts from this crowded song list were: *Ofyn Pripetchik* (the only number not by Berlin), tenderly sung by Ms. Haan; *Oh How I Hate To*

Get Up In The Morning, I Paid My Income Tax Today, The Hostess With The Mostes' On The Ball, You're Just In Love, Mr. Shatto's brilliant voice in How Deep Is The Ocean, and Haan's comedic Falling Out Of Love Can Be Fun.

An all-Berlin evening could have easily become one-dimensional, but these talented folks ensured that that didn't happen. We could use another Berlin today, indeed "God Bless America."

by [Frank Daykin](#)

for New York Concert Review; New York, NY

ADRIENNE HAAN TOASTS IRVING BERLIN

POSTED ON DEC 12, 2019 IN MUSIC REVIEWS



By Marcina Zaccaria

Right on time for the holidays, Adrienne Haan brought sparkle to the stage in *White Christmas at the Triad*, and the music of Irving Berlin sounded grand. For those profoundly moved by the songs such as “I’ve Got My Love to Keep Me Warm,” “Happy Holiday,” and of course, “Blue Skies,” this selection of music from 1911 – 1954 was off-the-chart. Brilliantly accompanied by musical director Richard Danley, this 90 minute evening included a visit back to Russia, a spin through the military tunes of WWI and WWII, a journey to Old Hollywood, and finally, a glimpse at some of the favorite love songs and holiday songs that have kept Irving Berlin’s music on people’s piano stands throughout the years. For this journey, Haan chose, as a song partner, Bart Shatto. Shatto (*War Paint, Les Misérables*) has a soothing open tone and a reassuring way of taking in the room. While The Triad is a compact space on the second floor, Shatto fills the stage, giving a lasting sense to each phrase. With a bit of soft shoe, choreographed by Melanie LaPatin, *Steppin’ Out*

with My Baby provides a fine stride forward, setting the stage for comedic potential and duets to remember.

Tall, glamorous Adrienne Haan is a skilled storyteller, tying together this courageous musical journey with an address to keep in mind – 17 Beekman Place. This residence was treasured not only by composer Irving Berlin, but also, the current owner, the Government of Luxembourg. Luxembourg, the tiny country situated between Belgium, France, and Germany, becomes a centering point of the discussion led by Haan. A stately, muscular woman, with a self-conscious, faint European accent, Haan looks like the right person to fill us in on all the details.

In a long red dress, and short, shiny black jacket, Haan calls upon the work of Laurence Pierron; the stories of diplomacy cut through the visual reminders of war. Finding moments of humor, looking everything like a USO entertainer dressed in a short military suit, Haan asks Shatto to wind us through patriotic songs like “Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning” and “How About a Cheer For The Navy.” Highlighting the severity of war, before clearing the way for the 50’s musicals and holiday songs, Haan and Shatto prove to be one smart team.

Next up was “The Hostess with the Mostess’ On the Ball” from *Call Me Madam*. It’s a bright, bubbly tune before “Lichtenburg” and Hollywood classics like “Cheek to Cheek.” Hearing the songs from Berlin’s Hollywood period re-affirmed my belief that popular music matters. Our consciousness is shaped by the melodies that can change the world, and with his songs on Broadway, in the movies and, of course, on the radio, Irving Berlin was a master at keeping the music flowing.

The evening ended with love songs and holiday tunes, combining humor with bliss. “They Say That Falling in Love is Wonderful” was performed before “Snow” and, of course, the most popular, “White Christmas.” What a conclusion to a splendid evening at the cabaret!

ADRIENNE HAAN AND BART SHATTO TEAM IN HOLIDAY TRIBUTE TO IRVING BERLIN AT THE TRIAD [Send This Review to a Friend](#)

Adrienne Haan consistently displays a sense of fun and high spirits in her cabaret shows, and Bart Shatto is a good match for her, as evidenced in their “White Christmas” show at the Triad Theater (Dec. 5 and Dec. 10), a celebration of the life and music of Irving Berlin. Shatto, a Broadway veteran, not only has a strong voice but exhibits the kind of show-biz playfulness that makes for enjoyable Haan-Shatto teamwork.

Unlike in some of her other shows, which also feature a male performer, in this one Haan made Shatto a thorough partner in which they generally sang together as well as soloed. The result was a lively production, enhanced by the piano accompaniment by Haan’s long-time musical director Richard Danley, who also got his chances to piano solo.

As I looked over the huge song list of Berlin numbers to be performed, I thought it impossible to cover so many songs without spending the night. But lo and behold, through slick pacing and medleys, the territory was entertainingly covered in a way that reflected Berlin’s remarkable output and range. (During his 60-year career, Berlin, who lived until the age of 101, composed some 1500 songs.)

Haan first appeared in a black fringed skirt with a white furry wrap, then turned up in military uniform for Berlin’s military songs, and later in a red gown with a black furry wrap, looking great in all three get-ups. When Shatto emerged in a tux, Haan sexily quipped: “I like men in tuxedos; I like them even more without them.” Shatto got in a remark of his own, saying he had performed on Broadway with divas whom he named. “But this is the first time I’ve performed with a chanteuse.” Haan customarily peppered her commentary with references to Luxembourg, of which she is a citizen.

The Berlin tone was launched at the start with “There’s No Business Like Show Business,” “Alexander’s Ragtime Band,” and “Let Me Sing and I’m Happy.” Throughout Haan interjected information about Berlin’s life, tracing his Russian roots to his immigration here as a youngster, emphasizing his origins with a number Berlin did not write. She poignantly sang the Yiddish “Ofyn Pripetchik” (music and lyrics by Mark Warshawsky). Haan and Shatto stressed Berlin’s life-long appreciation for America with their joint rendition of Berlin’s “Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor.”

Berlin’s military songs were highlighted, including his “Oh How I Hate To Get Up In the Morning” and “This is the Army, Mr. Jones,” with Haan tenderly singing the lesser-known 1943 “Take Me With You, Soldier Boy.”

There was a section of Hollywood songs, including “Puttin’ On the Ritz,” “Blue Skies,” “Cheek to Cheek,” “I’ve Got the Sun In the Morning” and “Counting Your Blessings Instead of Sheep.” Another section featured love songs, including the enormously popular “Always,” which Berlin gifted to his wife on their wedding day, and an enticing medley of famous Berlin romantic tunes. had covered, by my count, some 37 numbers,

At the Triad Theater, 158 West 72nd Street. Phone: 212-279-4200. Reviewed December 11, 2019. By William Wolf

