

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

ZIEGFELD GIRLS

BEAUTY VERSUS TALENT

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts

in Theatre Arts

By

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May 2012

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Jeremiah Ahern and my mother, Mary Hanlon for their endless support and encouragement.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis chair and graduate advisor Dr. Ah-Jeong Kim. Her patience, kindness, support and encouragement guided me to completing my degree and thesis with an improved understanding of who I am and what I can accomplish.

This thesis would not have been possible without Professor Christine Menzies and Dr. Leigh Kennicott who guided me within the graduate program and served on my thesis committee with enthusiasm and care. Professor Menzies, I would like to thank for her genuine interest in my topic and her insight. Dr. Kennicott, I would like to thank for her expertise in my area of study and for her vigilant revisions.

I am indebted to Oakwood Secondary School, particularly Dr. James Astman and Susan Schechtman. Without their support, encouragement and faith I would not have been able to accomplish this degree while maintaining and benefiting from my employment at Oakwood.

I would like to thank my family for their continued support in all of my goals. My parents have supported me in ways in which I am grateful beyond words and indebted for life. I owe my gratitude to my soon-to-be-husband Jerry for supporting and encouraging me to pursue this degree. Without Jerry's as my champion I would not have accomplished so much.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis investigates the progression of female images on the stage with specific reference to the women fostered by Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. It posits that Ziegfeld was responsible for a patriarchal construction of ideal female as commodity for male fantasy and consumption and exploited this idea to market his Broadway revue, *Ziegfeld Follies*. This notion is examined through a liberal and material feminist framework supported by the theories of Sue-Ellen Case and Naomi Wolf.

Ziegfeld's progression from manager to selling ideal women rather than talented actresses, singers or dancers is investigated. The careers of Anna Held, Lillian Lorraine, Bessie McCoy, Vera Maxwell, Dolores, Paulette Goddard, Marilyn Miller and Fanny Brice are analyzed. These women's skills as actresses are addressed with consideration

for their beauty used as a means to make them famous by Ziegfeld. Lastly the audience is appraised as white, middle to upper class patrons who were mostly anti-suffrage. This thesis puts forward that Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. kept women in a place of little power by promoting their beauty and never their talent, grouping the chorus girls as one entity rather than individuals and satirizing the suffragettes in many editions of *Follies*.

Introduction

Dirt roads, horses toting people to where they need to go and construction as far as the eye can see. When we think of the bustling city of New York it is often without thought into the beginning of what we now know as the brightly lit American theatre Mecca. During the nineteenth century New York City saw floods of immigrants come through Ellis Island from all over the world. Between 1880 and 1919 five and a half million immigrants came to call New York home, most of them were Irish, German, Eastern European Jews and Italians (Kantor and Maslon 4).

As different ethnic groups began to settle in the city they began to claim separate areas within the island of Manhattan. New York City had become the center of theatrical activity after the civil war and each ethnic group started putting on their own variety shows. The Irish had the popular farces of Edward “Ned” Harrigan and Tony Hart about the Mulligan Guards, a fabricated Hibernian people trying to make it in a multi-ethnic city, parallel to a group of Irish immigrants trying to make it in New York City. On Second Avenue the Yiddish Theatre was created by Jewish immigrants, perhaps the most popular being Weber and Fields, while the German performers such as the Marx Family made their mark on the Upper East Side (Kantor and Maslon 5-6). With the addition of a subway rail¹ in 1904 the culturally separated sections of the city were suddenly connected and theatre-goers from diverse groups were able to attend shows from anywhere in the city with ease. With the effortlessness it took city dwellers to get to any theatre in New York the number of patrons who could attend the theatre grew. With the possible

¹ The elevated rail was built in the late nineteenth century and the underground subway was completed shortly after the turn-of-the-century.

audience increasing came the real beginnings of competition between theatres and theatre managers.

Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. was one of those managers. He had sided, early on, with the very powerful Syndicate of managers who practically controlled theatre in New York City in the early 1900s. Ziegfeld produced several musical comedies before finding his zeal for perfecting the musical revue with his yearly installation of *Ziegfeld Follies*. The most expensive sets, luxurious costumes and the country's most beautiful women were the tools Ziegfeld used to sell tickets and it worked remarkably well. *Ziegfeld Follies* ran every summer with great success from 1907 to 1931.

New Yorkers had leisure time for the first time and could travel easily around the city on the subway system; accordingly Ziegfeld provided them with a “glamorous playground,” as Michael Kantor and Laurence Maslon stated in their book *Broadway the American Musical*. Ziegfeld was not the only revue in town and with the popularity of *Follies* came many copycat shows such as *The Passing Show*, *Scandals*, *The Greenwich Village Follies*, and *Vanities*, but with all of the variety and revue style productions it was *Ziegfeld Follies* that outshined them all and made a mark on American theatre history. What set Ziegfeld's show apart from the rest was the talent of the people he surrounded himself with, the amount of money, which gradually increased yearly, spent on each addition of *Follies* and most importantly, the way in which he marketed himself, the show and above all else, the girls.

Ziegfeld was not the first manager/producer to use attractive women to sell tickets. That type of marketing was seen as far back at 1886 with producer George Lederer who started his female performers' careers based on their beauty rather than their

talent (Glenn 156). David Belasco was a manager/producer who was just as famous if not more so than his star players. Starting as a stage manager in the early 1880s David Belasco was producing his own productions and opening his own theatres by the 1890s (Mordden 2). Belasco promoted his productions with the same kind of sensationalism as Florenz Ziegfeld and almost two decades earlier.

However it is the Ziegfeld Girl who has become a part of American popular culture because Ziegfeld perfected the practice of promoting beauty and turned it into an entertainment industry standard for women. At a time when women were fighting for the right to vote and joining the workforce this thesis argues that Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. was using female beauty, not simply to promote his Broadway show but to keep women politically benign, generic and objectified.

This thesis will investigate the process Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. used to market his productions, particularly *Ziegfeld Follies*, analyze the dynamics of specific female performers and examine the typical audience within this process. The changing image of an ideal woman will be reviewed and this thesis claims that Ziegfeld provided for the public what the patriarchal American society, whom he was marketing towards, demanded in his showgirls. This thesis maintains that in Ziegfeld's desire to provide a high and consistent standard of product, beauty was prioritized while singing, dancing and acting ability were overlooked. Although other texts have been written about *Ziegfeld Follies* and the women in the cast of the famous revue this thesis has a unique focus.

Marion E. Wilson's dissertation titled, "Such Fantasy, such Harlequinade: Ziegfeld, Class and the Cultural Hierarchy" argues that social and economic forces were

as much, if not more so, the reason for the success of *Ziegfeld Follies* and the Ziegfeld Girls. The relationship between the economic factors and the cultural status of *Follies* is examined as well as the position of Ziegfeld in theatre history and his ties to the rise of a professional managerial class. Wilson's dissertation dissects the ground that led to the success of *Ziegfeld Follies* and ties the success to social and economic factors occurring at the turn of the twentieth century. This dissertation also investigates American economic and cultural influences on *Ziegfeld Follies*. My research turns that perspective around and addresses the cultural effects Ziegfeld's casting and promotional methods had on the actresses who performed in his productions. During a time when women were becoming more independent socially through dress, make-up and social activities, Ziegfeld capitalized on this new image of women by presenting his ideal woman on the stage and promoting her as the standard of American beauty.

"The Ziegfeld Follies: Form, Content, and Significance of an American Revue," by Geraldine Ann Maschio is a dissertation that analyzes the specific components of Ziegfeld's revue in order to offer insight into the nature of society from 1907-1931. This dissertation argues that *Ziegfeld Follies* was a theatrical representation of The American Dream. Although I agree with Maschio that Ziegfeld was trying to represent The American Dream my position differs in that I intend to prove that Ziegfeld is representing a patriarchal, white, middle/upper class ideal. Ziegfeld fails to represent women as unique individuals and he certainly did not feel that non-whites, eastern Europeans or people of Jewish faith were able to represent the ideal women in his American Dream. To Ziegfeld, he was not alone in this belief; there were two categories of women, the white woman and the other (Mizejewski 116). He represented his ideal, the white woman.

In Rosaline Biason Stone's "The Ziegfeld Follies: A Study of Theatrical Opulence from 1907 to 1931 (Revue, Musical, Scenery)," she performs a detailed study on four editions of *Follies* (1907, 1915, 1921 and 1931) in her dissertation. Through those specific analyses Stone draws major conclusions including: The show was escapist entertainment; Ziegfeld was the prime decision maker on all aspects of the production; Ziegfeld's partnership with Joseph Urban changed the revue from satire to spectacle; the comedians Ziegfeld hired were some of the most talented in the business; the scenery changed from realistic to spectacular as the years progressed; and lastly, the costumes started out as typical vaudeville costumes and gradually became more spectacular. Dr. Stone determines the artists responsible for each decision made in each separate production. Stone's research was valuable in my analysis of Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. himself and exactly how much power and control he had in casting his "girls" and marketing their beauty; however, her concentration is on the spectacle of the sets and costumes and how they adapted throughout the tenure of *Follies*. Conversely I will be focusing on how the spectacle of the sets and costumes in numbers featuring the chorus and showgirls overshadowed their talents as performers and turned them into cookie cutter beauties based on Ziegfeld's ideals.

"What Becomes of Chorus Girls? A National Fascination with Subversive Heroines, 1902-1933" is a MA thesis by Erica Millete. Millete's thesis looks at the outcome the media had on specific women who worked as chorus girls at the turn of the twentieth century. Like Millete, I intend to analyze the careers of specific chorus girls, but I will be focusing exclusively on *Ziegfeld Follies* and how Ziegfeld clearly

manipulated the media and prioritized a woman's outward appearance over her skills or talent.

Lastly, Linda Mizejewski's book *Ziegfeld Girl* looks at the changing gender identities, immigration and the booming American Film industry as the cause of the Ziegfeld Girl surviving in popular American culture to be well-known still today. Mizejewski's book, like my own research, looks at *Ziegfeld Follies* through a feminist methodology. Our perspectives differ in that Mizejewski's research focuses on how immigration influxes and new female independence made the portrayal of the American Girl critical on the Broadway stage and kept alive in American films. My research focuses on the importance placed by Ziegfeld on beauty and diet while examining the lack of focus on the talent of the girls as actresses, singers and dancers.

To validate my perspective on Ziegfeld and his effect on women in the chorus of his Broadway productions I analyze Ziegfeld's life and career, a few specific women who were Ziegfeld Girls or performed in *Ziegfeld Follies* and the audience who attended his revue, as well as those who did not, through a feminist lens. The most influential works in my investigation are the liberal feminist view in Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women* and the material feminist view in Sue-Ellen Case's *Feminism and Theatre*. Wolf's book maintains that "beauty" is a concept that the patriarchal society constructs in order to keep women beneath men with the power structure of cultural society. Wolf's theory directly correlates with Ziegfeld's need to sell the women in his productions using their looks rather than talent and a publicized standard of beauty for the chorus girls' looks and behavior. Sue-Ellen Case's book serves as a feminist study on theatre from various points of view including material feminism in

which race and social class are taken into consideration when looking at the patriarchal controlling of women who are being placed on stage to serve as a symbol for an ideal woman. Ziegfeld's control over the casting and presentation of the women in his revue is a classic example of the patriarchal control Case discusses.

The following chapters will take a closer look at the manner in which Ziegfeld portrayed the chorus girls in his show both on and off the stage and its significance for both men and women's perception of beauty.

Chapter one will look thoroughly into the life and career of Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. His past gives insight into why and how he became a master at marketing his show by exploiting the actresses in them. Sue-Ellen Case states in her book *Feminism and Theatre* that a woman standing on stage represents to the audience a fictional symbol for 'woman' rather than an individual with unique characteristics (118). Arguments will be made that Ziegfeld counted on this notion being true and worked to make the Ziegfeld Girls walk and talk in the same manner. There were no individuals in the chorus; just the image of a woman that Ziegfeld wanted the audience to see and believe was the ideal woman.

According to Naomi Wolf, when women show character they become less desirable which is why the *ingénue* actress is the most desirable (59). Chapter two will go into more depth on the lives of specific Ziegfeld Girls and how they either went along with Ziegfeld's image of them, or defied his standards and chose an alternate path. Many of the actresses appearing in *Follies* wanted to be the featured *ingénue* and had to give up their individuality to obtain that goal. Alternatively some chose a different path; the career of Fanny Brice will also be examined in this chapter as the anti-Ziegfeld Girl.

Given few role models in the world women seek them on the stage, screen and in newspapers and magazines (Wolf 58). Chapter three will further explore the public relations team at *Ziegfeld Follies*, the press releases, and the type of audience they were hoping to appeal to. The audience make-up was important to Ziegfeld for he did not want an audience of rowdy, lower-class men. He marketed his show in such a way that it appealed to women and men from middle and upper class families. *Theatre Magazine* featured an article in 1921 titled, “Is the Lady of the Ensemble a ‘Gold Digger’ or is she an Actress?” (Mizejewski 74). The juxtaposed ideas of the chorus girl as a safe alternative to a suffragette and, at the same time, a materialistic gold digger will also be considered in this chapter.

Ziegfeld Follies was popular at a time when the world was changing. Automobiles, airplanes and trains were becoming trendy forms of transportation, the Harlem Renaissance began, and silent films and later talking pictures were taking the world by storm. What Ziegfeld attempted, and this thesis argues succeeded, was institutionalizing a standard of beauty for American girls, especially actresses, which dictated specific measurements of their bodies, dimensions of their features, skin color and even religious beliefs and ancestry. He did not mention any level of talent when describing his casting techniques or methods. The pages that follow will look at how Ziegfeld used Broadway to define beauty standards and suppress women by emphasizing physical looks rather than talent in the casting of women on stage.

Chapter One: The Master Marketer

The early life experiences of Ziegfeld led him to a career in which he was a producer/manager who used sensationalist claims to sell tickets to his shows. The elaborate sets and lavish costumes that boasted high costs never before seen on a Broadway stage was just one sensational way in which Ziegfeld marketed *Follies*. The beauty, allure and all-American nature of his cast of chorus girls was his most effective marketing tool.

This chapter looks at the events in Ziegfeld's life that led him to use beauty as a promotional tool in the casting and advertising of his productions. The manner in which he spoke to the press about the women who performed as dancers, singers and showgirls in *Follies* shows Ziegfeld's priority, when it comes to the women in his revue, to be looks far above talent.

Chicago Upbringing

The life of our Master Marketer begins in the growing metropolitan Chicago, Illinois just a few years after the last shot of the civil war was fired. Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. was born to Dr. and Mrs. Ziegfeld on March 21, 1867. Dr. Florenz Ziegfeld Sr., a music impresario, immigrated to the United States from Germany and founded the Chicago Music College (Mordden 7). As a young man Florenz was expected to follow in his father's footsteps and work at the Chicago Music College, which he did for a short time as the assistant treasurer. It wasn't long before Ziegfeld's desire to make something more of himself led him to leave home.

According to numerous accounts by Ziegfeld himself, and a number of texts written about the producer's life, Ziegfeld first got bit by the show biz bug when he was sixteen years old and Buffalo Bill's Wild West show came to town (Mordden 14). It is said that the young Ziegfeld volunteered to work for the show during the two-weeks they were in town; when it came time for the show to move on Buffalo Bill himself offered Ziegfeld a job as a six-shooter. Unable to refuse the famous showman, Ziegfeld left Chicago with the Wild West show only to have his parents show up less than a month later dragging Ziegfeld back home to Chicago and his job at the Music College².

"Bigger is better" was how Ziegfeld viewed the world of entertainment from the time he was quite young. In 1893 the World's Fair was to be held in Chicago and Florenz Ziegfeld Sr. was approached by the Fair's committee to hire some of the musical entertainment for the fair. Having faith in his son, Sr. sent Ziegfeld to Europe to find unique musicians and bring them back to Chicago. When Ziegfeld returned he did so with the Hamburg Bülow Orchestra and a collection of popular French and Russian performers (Farnsworth 14). The Ziegfeld's musical variety show was a disappointment at first due to the expansiveness of the Fairgrounds and the distance of the Trocadero³ theatre, the venue in which they performed, from the main events. Young Ziegfeld had an idea, to find a headliner that would draw the people to their corner of the Fair. With the blessing of his father he travelled to New York City to find a headliner that would save his father's show.

² There is no record in print or photography that supports Ziegfeld's claim that he joined up with Buffalo Bill as a six-shooter. It is more plausible that this story is the first of Ziegfeld's ideas to market people, in this case himself, in a way that would make the public want to purchase the product he was selling. (Mordden10)

³ Ziegfeld Sr., found an old armory far off of the fairgrounds on Michigan Ave, renovated it and called it the International Temple of Music. He quickly renamed the theatre the Trocadero. There is a rumor that this space burned down and Ziegfeld Sr. found another space also on Michigan Ave. which is the Trocadero that opened with the 1893 World Fair (Mordden 19).

It was July of 1893 when Ziegfeld found himself at the Casino Theatre in New York City watching a strongman act that left quite an impression (Carter 11). After the show he approached Eugen Sandow and by the end of the night he was the strongman's new manager. The following day the two were headed back to Chicago and the World's Fair. The Great Sandow performed for the first time at the World's Fair on August 1. Sandow was a hit and the Ziegfeld's show at the Trocadero was saved.

It was during that summer in 1893 when Ziegfeld first learned how to market and sell sensuality. It was not simply the talent of The Great Sandow in his feats of strength, but it was Sandow plus the variety and music acts that made the Trocadero a must-see for fairgoers that year. Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. saw Sandow's muscles as a product he could market. Ziegfeld began approaching wealthy, middle-aged women to sell them special tickets to feel Sandow's muscles after the show. Women at the fair jumped at the chance and for the first time, albeit with a male performer, Ziegfeld saw the value of selling sexual fantasy. Sandow's take increased from one-thousand dollars a week to upwards of three-thousand dollars a week (Mordden 77).

As the summer of 1893 and the World's Fair came to a close Ziegfeld left Chicago to tour the country with The Great Sandow's strongman show. After months of sold out shows and special ticket sales for women looking to feel Sandow's muscles Ziegfeld and Sandow arrived in California. While performing in San Francisco Ziegfeld had an idea: he would have Sandow fight a lion. Ziegfeld began promoting his idea immediately in newspapers and by hanging posters and flyers around the city (Mordden 29). Unfortunately the plan backfired as a packed audience watched as The Great Sandow poke and prod an obviously sedated lion in hopes to get some kind of reaction from the

animal. The lion continued to sleep and the audience left demanding refunds for the full ticket price (Farnsworth 16). The team toured contentiously together for two more seasons after the lion incident, but ultimately went their separate ways.

New Start, New York

The theatre scene at the turn-of-the-century in New York City was complex for an artist to break into but not for the same reasons that it may be difficult today. In the 1890s and into the 20th century, theatres in New York were run by a group called the Syndicate. The Syndicate was made-up of 3 pairs of manager teams that together held the monopoly on all of the important theatres in the city. The members of the Syndicate were Charles Frohman and Al Hayman, Samuel F. Nixon and J. Fred Zimmerman, and Abraham Lincoln Erlanger and Marc Klaw (Mordden 33). The latter pair would become quite important in the life and career of Ziegfeld but for newcomers to the city it was important to ally with the Syndicate's desires or they may never get a break in New York.

Upon his arrival Ziegfeld immediately looked for ways to get on the favorable side of the Syndicate and met up with Joe Weber, of Weber and Hall fame. Weber had recently broken up with his comic partner, Lew Fields, and Ziegfeld approached the star to form a partnership. The two produced a show at Weber's Music Hall that bombed. Ziegfeld felt that the show would have been a success if it had the same kind of star power that he had with Eugen Sandow. He needed a star that would draw the crowds to the theatre, so Ziegfeld packed up his things and left for Europe where he would look for a star performer, someone unknown in the United States.

It did not take long before Ziegfeld found the petite singer who would change his life. It was in a small music hall in Paris that Ziegfeld first saw Anna Held perform her seductive song “Won’t You Come and Play With Me?” Unfortunately for Ziegfeld, Held was contracted to appear at the *Folies Bergère* in Paris. Never one to concern himself with money Ziegfeld bought out Held’s contract and offered her fifteen hundred dollars a week to come to New York and appear in his next production, *A Parlor Match*. In 1896 that sum of money was reserved for only the most famous and well-known stars who were sure to bring in the ticket sales (Mordden 41). Nevertheless Ziegfeld believed that money was no object when he wanted the very best and he was confident in having found a star in Held and subsequently, Held found the offer and the man too good to resist.

What Ziegfeld did better than any other manager of his time was to use promotional techniques like press releases and sensational stories to make the public feel as though they were missing something special or even missing the social event of the year if they missed one of his performances, and he started that type of promotion with Held (Mordden 40). Weeks before their arrival in New York, Ziegfeld started publishing headlines about his newfound talent in the city newspapers; “Anna Held. A Well Known Actress and Famous Beauty Who is Coming to This Country” read the headline in the *Idaho Statesman* on August 19, 1896, and “Anna Held, Singer, Visits Our Shores” appeared in the *Dallas Morning News* on September 26, 1896. By the time Ziegfeld arrived with Held in New York the public felt as if they knew everything about her and had been waiting at length for her coming to the States.

Just a few days after her arrival from Paris, Held made her first appearance in *A Parlor Match* at the Herald Square Theatre. The cast had been rehearsing and had even

had a few preview performances in Boston but Ziegfeld did not let Held step into the role until they opened in New York City, in order to keep the public's anticipation for Held growing. The production was a hit and Held was the talk of the town.

The relationship between Anna and Florenz was often displayed for the public. Stories would appear in the papers about Held. Tales of her fainting after winning a kissing contest or bathing in milk to keep her skin looking young and healthy appeared in newspapers and magazines throughout her career. Perhaps the most intimate of Ziegfeld's public showing of Held occurred at a dinner party in 1897. While dining with friends Ziegfeld took Held's hand and began reciting wedding vows. Held did the same and once their display of affection was complete Ziegfeld announced to the party that he and Mlle. Held were married and would be honeymooning for the summer (Farnsworth 28).

It was while honeymooning in Europe that Ziegfeld discovered a secret⁴ of Held's. She had a daughter from a previous marriage to Maximo Carrera, who was now deceased (Mordden 46). Liane Carrera was just three years old at the time and Held was too focused on her career to care for her. When the Ziegfeld's left Europe at the end of the summer they left Liane there as well.

Upon returning to the states Ziegfeld obtained a contract for Held with a vaudeville company that was touring the United States. In another publicity stunt Ziegfeld released the information that he had purchased his leading lady her own deluxe railway car for the tour. At the same time Ziegfeld was setting Held up to tour he was in talks with another young manager William Anthony Brady, to purchase their own theatre together. The pair purchased the Manhattan Theatre located on the west side of

⁴ It is unknown whether Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. was truly unaware of the existence of little Liane or if, from a manager's point-of-view, he felt he could not sell Anna as a sex symbol if the public knew she was a mother.

Broadway. Their first production was a melodrama called *Way Down East*. The production did not make a great deal of money so Ziegfeld opted out with the sale of the show to a touring company. After one semi-successful production, *The Turtle*, the duo's next two shows at the Manhattan flopped and they were forced to sell the theatre and part ways.

While Ziegfeld was working on his own career at the Manhattan Theatre Held's career was stalling without her husband's guidance. Ziegfeld loved the word 'pulchritude.' With his next production, which he produced to revitalize Held's career, he began to promote himself as a connoisseur of 'pulchritude'.

Papa's Wife opened November 13, 1899, at the Manhattan Theatre. In the production Held's costumes were divine, made of the highest quality fabrics from the best clothing designers in the city (Mordden 60). Ziegfeld insisted on surrounding his diminutive wife with tall, beautifully costumed, chorus girls, a scheme Ziegfeld would use in Held's shows from then on. But the *pièce de résistance* in *Papa's Wife* was the end of act I, when Held's character drove off and into the wings in an actual automobile that Ziegfeld had brought onto the stage. *Papa's Wife* was a hit playing 147 performances at the Manhattan Theatre and touring the United States in 1900. The success of the show more firmly established, in Ziegfeld's mind, it was beauty and spectacle before talent that sold tickets to his productions.

The Little Duchess was the next production in which Ziegfeld positioned his wife and star product. *The Little Duchess* had a similar plot and song format to *Papa's Wife* and many of the same cast members. Again Ziegfeld surrounded Held with tall, slim women. This time the show-stealing number featured the chorus girls in an elaborately

staged, all-girl fencing scene. It was not the fencing talent of the girls that caused the public to scramble to tickets, but the beauty and sensuality of the all-girl physical number that had people talking (Mordden 63). The production cost Ziegfeld fifty thousand dollars⁵ and opened at the Casino Theatre in October of 1901. Ziegfeld and Held had another huge success on their hands. *The Little Duchess* ran for 136 performances and toured from October 1902 until May of 1903.

The turn-of-the-century saw many changes in New York and the theatre world. Although the Syndicate was still controlling the scene, a fire at Klaw and Erlanger's theatre in Chicago, the Iroquois, killed over six hundred people and made the management team seem even more iniquitous to the general public⁶. As the members of the Syndicate were getting older The Shuberts, a young team of ambitious brothers, edged their way into the theatre scene and gave the Syndicate much needed competition. In addition to the competition among managers, the subway system opened its first stops in New York in 1904 making it easier for theatre goers to travel to theatres that may have seemed too far a distance before. Broadway's first electric sign lit up the famous street at the Red Mill theatre in 1906 making the famous street's theatre scene firmly established in American culture (Mordden 80).

Ziegfeld has been called many things including "The Great Glorifier" and "The Man Who Invented Show Business" but a theater artist he was not (Mordden 2-4). To Ziegfeld theatre was a business for making money. One way in which he showed his industry ruthlessness was in his treatment of the Shubert brothers. Ziegfeld was a gambler, and on one particular trip to Paris with his wife he lost the couples' fare to

⁵ \$50,000 was double the cost of a typical Broadway musical at the time. *The Little Duchess* would have cost any other Broadway producer half that (Mordden 63).

⁶ On perhaps the only positive note, the fire did make for much stricter fire codes in all theatres across the country.

return back to the States. Ziegfeld was in talks with the Shuberts to have Held star in their next musical. When he agreed to the deal the Shuberts advanced Ziegfeld one thousand dollars. Ziegfeld used the Shuberts' advance to travel back to New York with Held in first class style. Upon returning to the states Ziegfeld broke his contract with the Shuberts, refused to pay them back the money they had advanced him, and signed a deal with Erlanger, the Shuberts' rival, to have Held star in his next production, *The Parisian Model*. The Shuberts despised Ziegfeld from that day forth and vowed to never have a Ziegfeld production performed at one of their theatres (Mordden 82).

It is with the production of *The Parisian Model* that we really see the kind of theatrical style that Ziegfeld is known for. For in this musical comedy it was not about the story or the talent of the actors; Ziegfeld's focus was shocking the audience with bawdiness and/or opulence. Ziegfeld made sure newspapers, magazines and, in turn, the whole city were all talking about it.

Naomi Wolf states in her book, *The Beauty Myth*, "...beauty – women want to embody it and men want to possess women who embody it (12)." Ziegfeld is evidence of Wolf's theory being true as he made sure the girls in his show were desirable for both male and female audience members. For this production of *The Parisian Model*, Ziegfeld hired Landolff of Paris to design the dresses for Held and her stately chorus girls. One infamous scene in the production took place in an art studio during which the chorus girls came out in robes and stand behind easels with canvases. They drop their robes and appear to be nude as the audience can only see their shoulders and up over the top of the easel and their bare legs below the easel. As the song continues the girls walk around the easels to reveal that they are wearing strapless, short gowns. Another moment of

sexualized spectacle occurred during one of Held's numbers she dances a sensual tango with a woman in drag, and also in her big number "A Gown for Each Hour of the Day" in which Held had six costume changes that all took place, carefully, onstage. *The Parisian Model* was a huge success running 179 performances in the city and then touring through 1907 (Mordden 89).

While Ziegfeld and Held were rehearsing and opening *The Parisian Model* Klaw and Erlanger had purchased Oscar Hammerstein's⁷ theatre, The Olympia, which had a large capacity indoors and a rooftop complex for outdoor performances. Klaw and Erlanger wanted a show to play the rooftop during the summer of 1907 and with the success of Ziegfeld's latest production they turned to him.

Ziegfeld Follies

Held was the person who convinced Ziegfeld to put up a production on the rooftop of the Olympia and to have it resemble the Parisian musical revues that the two loved to attend while visiting her hometown. It was also Held who knew how much Ziegfeld enjoyed the newspaper column "Follies of the Day" and suggested that he call his revue *Follies of 1907*, and it was Held again whose life would change forever because of Ziegfeld's soon-to-be-famous revue (Carter 27).

Once *The Parisian Model* was open and running smoothly Ziegfeld focused his attention on his next project and, incidentally, one of his first major productions without his star vehicle, Anna Held. Ziegfeld attended as many revue, vaudeville and burlesque shows as were being performed in New York and decided that he was going to change the

⁷ Not to be confused with the composer Oscar Hammerstein II, Oscar Hammerstein was the grandfather of the famous composer. The Olympia theatre was built on Longacre Square, which would become Times Square.

standard. His new show, *Follies of 1907*, was not going to attempt to have any kind of plot or through line; he was going to overwhelm the audience with beauty and magnificence. In order to do so was going to have at least twice as many tall, stately, youthful girls with provocative figures and faces as any other production in the city.

The high heat and humidity of the summer forced most theatres to close their doors for the hot months of the year and doing so allowed for their stars to take their annual vacations. Occasionally rooftop theatre was performed in the evening when the sun had set and the audience could feel a cool breeze, being a few stories above the bustling city. Rooftop theatres in New York City were more casual than indoor theatre as most productions on rooftops were held after the main stage production and were more of an after-hours dinner and drink affair. Ziegfeld wanted to bring European flair to his rooftop productions, which began with changing the name of the rooftop theatre to Jardin de Paris. Ziegfeld hired Harry B. Smith to write the script and Julian Mitchell to stage the production. The songs were written by a variety of up and coming as well as established songwriters from Tin Pan Alley⁸. The show consisted of a variety of comedy styles from low to highbrow and zany to ironic.

Follies of 1907 opened at the Jardin de Paris on July 8 and ran for 70 performances. The production was then moved into the Liberty Theatre for a two week stint before touring to Washington D.C. and Baltimore. The show itself poked fun at the 300th anniversary of John Smith and Pocahontas, and Salome's Dance of the Seven Veils (Mordden 93). For publicity purposes Ziegfeld called the chorus, "The Anna Held Girls," even though Held would never appear in any edition of *Follies*. The show was a hit and

⁸ Tin Pan Alley refers to an area on West 28th St. where most of the song publishing businesses were located. It is said to be called Tin Pan Alley because as people walked down the street the sounds of all of the composers plunking out tunes on their pianos sounded like someone banging tin pans (Kantor and Maslon 10).

Erlanger wanted more. He asked Ziegfeld to produce a show just like this one for the following summer, and he did.

Follies of 1908 was again written by Harry B. Smith and directed by Julian Mitchell and featured many of the same comedians and “Anna Held Girls” from the previous year’s edition. The 1908 show produced a hit song that would become a theme song for the *Follies* for a number of years. Nora Bayes and her husband Jack Norworth wrote and performed “Shine on, Harvest Moon” which became a pop standard that is still performed today. *Follies of 1908* saw the addition of comedian Bert Williams to the show. Williams was a black comedian who sometimes performed in black face. Ziegfeld was careful to follow the rules of casting a black male actor in this production: during this edition of the *Follies* Williams did not appear onstage with any white women (Mizejewski 133).

At the time the second edition of *Follies* premiered Held was in rehearsal for a new Erlanger show, *Miss Innocence*. Held’s show opened November 30, 1908, at the New York Theatre, toured and closed in May of 1909. While Ziegfeld was preparing for *Follies of 1909* he was also falling for an eighteen year old chorus girl in *Miss Innocence* and arranging to make her a star in the third edition of his revue. After all, “aging in women is considered unbeautiful for with age and beauty comes power.” Held had all three while Ziegfeld’s newest flame was still in high school (Wolf 14).

Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. was a master at taking performers and marketing them in a way that caused public reaction as if they were social outcasts if they did not attend Ziegfeld's productions. The Great Sandow was strong and muscular and Ziegfeld turned him into a product that women had to pay extra to touch. Held was a talented singer and

actress that Ziegfeld turned into a sex symbol whom men wanted to be with and women needed to be like. Conversely, it was at this point with the young beauty, Lillian Lorraine, that Ziegfeld changed his method. When compared with most other Broadway stars at the time Lillian Lorraine had very little talent as an actress, singer or dancer. It was with Lorraine that Ziegfeld began to “glorify” chorus girls and turn them into stars. Chapter two will contend that Ziegfeld took pretty girls and turned them into a product he could sell. In this case, since Lorraine was a beautiful girl, talent was irrelevant.

It can be argued that audiences were not going to sit and watch a musical-comedy revue for hours with talentless girls walking about the stage and Ziegfeld knew that. Ziegfeld began hiring the best comedy as well as song and dance acts that he could find to fill in the spaces between the chorus girls’ time onstage. He already had Bert Williams and Bayes and Norworth and for *Follies of 1909* he also hired Sophie Tucker and Eva Tanguay. No matter how much talent he had on the stage the “Anna Held Girls” were the product he was selling and the topic of his press releases in newspapers and magazines each summer. For this third edition Ziegfeld’s spectacle included Lillian Lorraine perform the song “Up, Up in my Aeroplane” while sitting in a built airplane “flying” over the heads of the audience.

The “Anna Held Girls” big number saw them parading across the stage during the song “The Greatest Navy in the World.” In this piece each girl was dressed as a different famous navy warship with practical lights that flashed as if the ship was firing torpedoes as the girls walked past center stage. They did not dance or sing they simply walked across the stage or flew above the audience and yet they were the buzz of the town during the summer of 1909. It was in this edition that Ziegfeld started merging the

female form with material objects. In later editions Ziegfeld costumed the girls as taxis with “for hire” signs, cars, airplanes, kitchen utensils, salad ingredients, a deck of cards and more (Glenn 167). One of the headlines in the New York Times on June 15, 1909 read, “Craft Moves over the Heads of the Audience Atop the New York Theatre”. It was Lillian Lorraine and the “Anna Held Girls” who made headlines solidifying that it was the chorus girls who were going to be the main focus of Ziegfeld’s promotion and marketing as his revue progressed.

Fanny Brice joined the cast of the *Follies of 1910* as the first Jewish female comedienne to perform in the revue. Leon Errol joined in the 1911 edition with Jerome Kern doing some of the staging and Irving Berlin writing a number of songs⁹. Ziegfeld was now famous in his own right for his management and his productions and as the year 1912 approached his fame and the fame of his girls would skyrocket.

Glorifying the American Girl

Lillian Lorraine was a beautiful girl that Ziegfeld wanted to make a star. He was more so, perhaps, in lust with her as he moved her into the same apartment building he shared with Held, just a floor below. By April of 1912 Held had enough of her husband’s infidelity and she served him with divorce papers citing Lorraine as co-respondent (Mordden 124). Ziegfeld and Held’s divorce took some time, most likely because they were married by common law; they were legally divorced on January 9, 1913 (Carter 31). Ziegfeld rarely mentioned the divorce or even Held again after 1912. When divorce papers were served Ziegfeld was busy producing two musical comedies *Over the River*

⁹ Irving Berlin mainly wrote songs for Fanny Brice and Bert Williams in the *Follies of 1911* because their energy and charisma boosted the show to a new level.

starring Eddie Foy and Lillian Lorraine as well as *A Winsome Widow* starring Leon Errol and Mae West.

The revue of that year was to be moved into a proscenium stage for the first time with the title officially changed to *Ziegfeld Follies of 1912*. Moving inside the theatre was a step-up for Ziegfeld as his show now was associated with more legitimate theatre rather than the after-hours dinner theatre on the rooftop. The chorus girls would forevermore be referred to as Ziegfeld Girls starting with this 1912 edition. Dave Stamper and Gene Buck were hired to write the music and would stay on until the final season of *Follies* in 1931. 1912 would also mark the end of Harry B. Smith writing the show as well as the end of Lillian Lorraine as a regular performer. She would return to the *Follies* in future shows but officially left the company in 1912 to unexpectedly marry a man whom she'd met on a beach (Farnsworth 44).

The New Amsterdam Theatre was the most prestigious American theatre to play in during the early twentieth century and the success of *Follies* found Erlanger offering the esteemed theatre to Ziegfeld for *Ziegfeld Follies of 1913*. Vera Maxwell was the new girl for Ziegfeld to sell to the public and, unlike Lorraine, she could dance quite well. Maxwell could dance so well that Ziegfeld paired her with Leon Errol to introduce new dances to the public in his show. Some of the dances Maxwell and Errol introduced included "The Seasick Dip" and "The Fox Trot" (Farnsworth 54).

New Years Eve 1913 was the night Ziegfeld met his future wife Billie Burke. The two were separately attending a party at the Sixty Club in the Hotel Astor. Ziegfeld could not take his eyes off the beautiful actress and the two danced the night away. Billie Burke's manager was Charles Frohman who despised Ziegfeld. Frohman knew

Ziegfeld's reputation and would not have him take one of his most lucrative stars away. Frohman threatened to drop Burke from his roster if she ever saw Ziegfeld again, but Ziegfeld was a man who saw women as items to attain and Frohman's disapproval made him want Billie Burke even more (Mordden 134). Ziegfeld not only sent candy, flowers and telegrams to Billie but also to her mother Blanche Burke. Ziegfeld knew of the close bond between Billie and her mother and assumed that if he got Blanche on his side Billie would follow. He was right.

Ziegfeld's plan worked and one evening in April of 1914 Blanche, Billie and Florenz travelled to Hoboken, NJ, behind Frohman's back, and the lovebirds eloped. Furious when he heard the news Frohman signed Burke to a touring show and the newly weds spent the first few months of their marriage apart.

A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody

Nineteen fifteen saw *Ziegfeld Follies* become even more opulent with the hiring of Joseph Urban and Lady Duff Gordon. Joseph Urban was a scenic designer and painter with outstanding imagination and extravagant ideas. Lady Duff Gordon was a women's high-end clothing designer whom Ziegfeld brought in to design the costumes for the Ziegfeld Girls while at the same time snatching a few of her models away for the Broadway stage.

This same year Ziegfeld created a dinner-theatre version of his show on the rooftop of the New Amsterdam Theatre and he called it *Midnight Frolics*. Ziegfeld's after-hours shows can be considered one of the first night clubs in New York as it was specifically designed for guests wishing to continue the fun after the Broadway

production they had seen earlier in the evening. The rooftop was laid out like a restaurant and dinner was served during the show (Mordden 144).

The *Midnight Frolics* became the place for Ziegfeld to “try out” new girls and comedians before moving them to the main stage. Ziegfeld needed his chorus girls to fit a specific mold, one that made patrons come back for more but that also fit what he felt was the ideal American girl. This mold will be further explored in chapter three; however, the *Frolics* was used to test the chorus girls with a smaller audience. *Midnight Frolics* was an enormous success until prohibition laws were passed forcing Ziegfeld to shut down his after-hours club in 1922.

Ziegfeld Follies of 1915 in addition to the hiring of Lady Duff Gordon for costumes and Joseph Urban for sets saw the rise of Ann Pennington from chorus girl to headliner most likely because of her dance skills, but that is not how the memoirs and history texts record it. Ziegfeld advertised her stardom as being attributed to her “dimpled knees,” rather than her talent, which is how Pennington is still remembered today (Farnsworth 64). Linda Mizejewski calls Pennington one of the few “genuinely talented Follies girls...who were performers rather than fashion mannequins (141). Randolph Carter states in his book *The World of Flo Ziegfeld* that Ann Pennington had to deal with publicity stunts such as a cow-milking contest between Pennington and Mae Dow and press releases about her dimpled knees (120). Kay Laurell also appeared as the first nude girl in *Follies* costumed as September Morn. This costume was not completely nude as Laurell was draped in a sheer fabric, chiffon, with large faux leaves sewn on it that were strategically placed over specific parts of Miss Laurell’s body. On the appearance of nudity by way of chiffon fabrics Mizejewski states, “As a ‘special effect,’ this

exemplifies the Ziegfeld enterprise in its split between the racy and the respectable, its conflation of costume and chorus girl, its identification of the body as high-priced commodity, and its management of sexuality through the value of consumer culture” (93).

By 1915 *Ziegfeld Follies* was a well-oiled machine. The *Follies* would play New York for five summer months and tour out the rest of the season. Ziegfeld was promoting his girls in newspapers across the country, discussing what they ate, which designer clothing and jewels they were wearing and with whom they were socializing. Outside of the theatre Ziegfeld required his girls to purchase at least one expensive suit and one expensive dress to wear out in public. The average Ziegfeld Girl made seventy-five dollars a week and “The Great Glorifier” contracted them to spend some of their pay on clothing, demanding that they wear gloves, hats, high heels and stockings at all times and to refrain from wearing too much rouge or mascara, in or outside the theatre (Mizejewski 99). In controlling the image of his chorus girls at all times Ziegfeld constructed an ideal female image through the clothing and make-up requirements. Ziegfeld set these aesthetic standards according to male fantasy and required the girls to portray this ideal image at all times.

Syndicate managers Klaw and Erlanger dissolved their union in 1916, which allowed Ziegfeld to create a new relationship with manager/producer Charles Dillingham without upsetting the Syndicate. The two producers partnered together and decided to produce an autumn version of a revue very similar to *Follies* at the Century Theatre on Central Park West. The show was called *The Century Girl*. It had elaborate production numbers directed by Edward Royce, sketches directed by Leon Errol, choreography by

Ned Wayburn, set design by Joseph Urban, costumes by Lady Duff Gordon, music by Irving Berlin and Victor Herbert and starred Vera Maxwell of *Follies* fame. The show was a smash hit. The heavy costs demanded that they run the performances at house capacity every night which they did. Opening on November 6, 1916, *The Century Girl* ran for two hundred performances.

The following year the team decided to produce another extravagant revue at the Century Theatre this time costing nearly three hundred thousand dollars, the most expensive revue of its time. *Miss 1917* was the title and its opening was postponed twice. The running time of the show, when it did eventually open, was over four hours. The show bombed, opening November 5, 1917, and running just forty-eight performances before the Century Amusement Company was forced to file for bankruptcy.

By the 1918 James Ben Ali Haggin Jr., who was known as Ben Ali Haggin, joined the *Follies* as the stager of tableaux. Haggin would create tableaux based on historical events or famous paintings and sculptures. The tableaux would feature some nude women, which would normally be illegal but Ziegfeld and Haggin were able to do so as long as the nude women did not move. Nudity was considered vulgar and in some places illegal but only if the women were moving around on stage (Glenn 163).

Ziegfeld Follies of 1919 was considered by some to be the best *Follies*, past or future. Ziegfeld opened the show with a parade of girls dressed as various ingredients for a salad. The comedians focused on prohibition in most of their sketches. The theme of the revue was “A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody” based on a song by the same title written for that edition of *Follies* by Irving Berlin.

A pretty girl is like a melody
That haunts you night and day
Just like the strain of a haunting refrain
She'll start upon a marathon
And run around your brain
You can't escape, she's in your memory
By morning, night and noon
She will leave you and then come back again
A pretty girl is just like a pretty tune. (Berlin)

Ziegfeld “glorified” Marilyn Miller in the 1919 edition of the show, meaning that he trained her and made her into a star. It was Miller who would break the mold of the Ziegfeld Girl for it was her talent, along with her beauty, that would make Ziegfeld mad with his need for her presence and his lack of control over her.

Marilyn Miller was a talented singer, dancer and actress who had charisma and beauty. The details of her career and relationship with Ziegfeld will be examined in more depth in chapter two. It was she who inspired Ziegfeld to produce a new musical comedy, *Sally*. The show starred the ingénue and was a huge success. It opened on December 21, 1920, in the New Amsterdam Theatre and was still running when it was time to open *Ziegfeld Follies of 1921*. The Follies moved to the Globe Theatre for that summer while *Sally* became the biggest hit Broadway had ever seen. The production was not extravagant as one would expect from Ziegfeld at this time in his career. It was Miller’s talent and the storyline that kept the houses packed to capacity.

Sally was about a girl who worked a regular day job when she was discovered by a great producer, put in one of his shows and then she married a millionaire. It appears as though the story was everything Ziegfeld had marketed his chorus girls to be, plucked out of ordinary lives and made extraordinary by his hand.

On January 9, 1925, Ziegfeld announced that he would be teaming with newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst to break ground on a new theatre on 6th Avenue. The theatre was designed by Joseph Urban and, due to the construction as well as an unfortunate lawsuit, Ziegfeld was unable to produce a 1926 edition of *Follies* in New York. Instead Ziegfeld took his team to Palm Beach and opened a revue titled *Palm Beach Nights* in the spring of 1926. The revue was as big a hit as the *Follies*. Due to the show's success they moved the revue to the Globe Theatre in New York under the new title *Ziegfeld American Revue of 1926*. By December 9, 1926, the Ziegfeld Theatre was completed and the final stone and dedication took place.

Rio Rita opened in February of 1927 and was the first show performed at the Ziegfeld Theatre. The first talking picture also opened in 1927 so, to compete, Ziegfeld hit New York with the best he had. *Ziegfeld Follies of 1927* had a score almost entirely composed by Irving Berlin with sketches written and performed by Eddie Cantor. The theme of the revue was "He Who Glorifies Beauty, Glorifies Truth." In making this statement Ziegfeld wanted the public to believe that his ideal of beauty is the true definition of beauty (Mizejewski 93). Unfortunately Cantor fell ill and the show had to be cancelled after only one hundred and sixty-seven performances but Ziegfeld continued to use that theme to market his ideals to the public who demanded just that kind of model.

That same year Ziegfeld opened *Showboat* on December 27, 1927, the only musical show of Ziegfeld's that is still being performed today. *Showboat*, with music and lyrics by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, opened as the first book musical on Broadway. Ironically this successful show marked the beginning of the end for *Ziegfeld Follies*. Times were hard-hitting following the stock market crash; they were especially tough for Ziegfeld who lost upwards of one million dollars in 1929 (Carter 149). With the advent of the book musical and the inability of the public to pay for tickets to go to the theater regularly *Follies* quickly became a frivolous expenditure that seemed like an ancient form of entertainment so soon after its inception.

In 1931 Ziegfeld tried one last attempt at a *Follies* revue. He brought back as many songwriters, actors and comedians as he could for this edition but it wasn't enough. *Follies of 1931* met with terrible reviews and lukewarm ticket sales. After the close of the show it became apparent to his wife, who was in California filming a motion picture, that Ziegfeld was quite ill. Burke went to visit her husband and, upon seeing his pale color and drastic weight loss, brought him back to California with her in hopes that the warm weather and company of his wife and daughter would help his recovery. Unfortunately, pneumonia had completely infected his body and after a short time in California Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. passed away.

Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. was a master at marketing his actresses. A master he may have been but, unfortunately for women, the following chapter will demonstrate that Ziegfeld did not view the actresses in his show as talent or even individuals, but as products to sell to the masses. Next, we will take a look at the "merchandise" he was so innovatively able to sell for more than twenty years.

Chapter Two: The Perfect Product

Ziegfeld's life that led him to the market *Follies* through sensational press releases about the chorus girls. There were a variety of women in the cast of *Follies* with unique, individual strengths and personalities whom Ziegfeld marketed as ideal female beauties without mention of their uniqueness. This chapter will look at some of the Ziegfeld Girls' distinct skills and how they were marketed to the public through beauty, weight-loss and sensational articles that focused on appearance rather than ability.

Ziegfeld Girl: An Item for Consumption

In 1922 Ziegfeld adopted the phrase "The Glorified American Girl" in reference to the chorus girls in his show. He also coined the phrase "Glorifying the American Girl" referring to what he felt the *Follies* did best (Carter 145). For example, when discussing the Ziegfeld Girls, the *Follies* staff would refer to the year she joined the show by saying, "Marilyn Miller was glorified in 1918." For Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. these phrases were a perfect marketing tool. By categorizing all of the chorus girls as "glorified" he kept the girls lumped together as one entity, not discussing them as individuals, therefore making it easier to sell his product year after year as there were different casts in his shows each season. The modern New Woman represented an evolving, unique woman, while the Ziegfeld Girl seemed in comparison lifeless, motionless and generic, but generic is what Ziegfeld wanted in *Follies* (Wolf 17). Proclaiming that he was "Glorifying the American Girl" also made Ziegfeld out to be the creator, not the actress's talent in singing or dancing, and the reason they were on the stage and in the news. That statement is true to a

certain extent; if Ziegfeld had not cast them they would not be in *Follies*. However “Glorifying the American Girl” meant more. This statement implied that talent was irrelevant because whether the actresses could sing, dance, act or even model was beside the point, if Ziegfeld saw something in a girl to “glorify”, she would become one of his stars.

Being American was an important criterion for a Ziegfeld Girl. In various interviews Ziegfeld explained that all of his chorus girls were “native American,” meaning that their grandparents and great-grandparents were born in the United States. It was also implied that they were of neither Eastern European decent or Jewish (Mizejewski 8). Ziegfeld also instituted a suntan prohibition in which the girls were contracted to avoid getting a suntan some years they were even given cash bonuses if they went the entire summer without getting tan (131).

“I invented the showgirl, and therefore like any other inventor, am qualified to discuss and analyze the child of my brain” Ziegfeld boasted in an interview promoting *Ziegfeld Follies of 1915* (qtd. in Ashby 115). Ziegfeld packaged his showgirls as pricey and unobtainable to most men in order to make them more appealing to the male audience members and to make women want to be more like the Ziegfeld Girls. By 1915 Ziegfeld had his staff referring to the girls as showgirls rather than chorus girls, further separating them from any type of talent or artist. He released countless newspaper articles across the country concerning how he chose his girls, and what make a woman beautiful. Ziegfeld also had his most popular girls promote products, beauty methods, dance crazes and more.

In this chapter individual Ziegfeld Girl's careers will be analyzed. Ziegfeld's control over these women, their newfound financial independence, and the New Women that emerged at the turn-of-the-century will be considered. Fanny Brice, the anti-Ziegfeld Girl will also be evaluated.

Anna Held

Anna Held was Ziegfeld's greatest "discovery" since Eugen Sandow and, although the two claimed to be married, he was first and foremost her manager, and making her into a celebrity and money-maker was his number one priority (Mordden 65). Ziegfeld had arranged it so that Held's first appearance would be in a revival of the wildly popular musical comedy *A Parlor Match*. The first run of the production starred Charles Evan Evans and William F. Hoey whose chemistry as a comic team, onstage was palpable. Ziegfeld was able to secure both actors to return in his revival of their hit, so publicizing the production and getting the public to buy tickets was not difficult (32). Ziegfeld used the newspapers to his advantage.

The Hoey and Evans reunion was exciting for the public and was already being discussed in newspapers across the country. Ziegfeld began introducing Held in the newspapers while he was still in Paris. Once Ziegfeld had a contract with her the press releases became focused on the Parisian singer and her arrival in America for the first time. Ziegfeld knew how to work the public. He would release a statement that she was coming to play in *A Parlor Match*. A few days later, the news was released that Held would not be coming because of her contract with the *Folies Bergère*. A week later Ziegfeld hit the public with a press release that she was coming to the States but that she

was in trouble over a “naughty bicycle dress” which she may, or may not show to New Yorkers (Mordden 41). Ziegfeld used the press throughout the end of his stay in Paris, up until their arrival in New York City, in order to get the audience excited for the arrival of this new star when, in point of fact, they knew very little to nothing about her or her talent.

Ziegfeld’s relationship with his wife, Held, was saturated with publicity stunts such as the abovementioned. Held’s talent as a music hall singer was irrelevant to Ziegfeld; her petite but curvy and corseted frame as well as her exotic accent was what Ziegfeld needed in order to sell her to potential ticket buyers. It was with Held that Ziegfeld truly began to recognize the power of publicity. The most famous Held marketing ploy occurred when Ziegfeld ordered many gallons of milk to be delivered to their home, declaring that they were for Held’s daily bath. The newspapers carried the story but it did not generate interest. Not one to give up easily, Ziegfeld contacted the newspapers and told the press that the milk baths that Held takes kept her body beautiful and her complexion perfect. When Ziegfeld stated the purpose of the baths the sale of milk and tickets sales for Held’s show increased, but when Ziegfeld had the milkmen of New York sue him the news resulted in women around the country becoming curious about the purpose of the lawsuit and milk sales skyrocketed along with Held’s fame (Farnsworth 22).

Perhaps the most scandalous Ziegfeld-influenced press release about Held occurred in November of 1897 when Ziegfeld hired an unknown actor to participate in a kissing contest with his leading lady. Articles were written at length about the event. The Hartford Republican began its article “Anna Held has been kissed to a standstill!” The

commentary gave precise details about the first, fifteenth, one-hundredth, one-hundred and twenty-fifth and one-hundred and fiftieth kiss in the contest. Held lost the contest at the one-hundred and fifty-sixth kiss and is quoted in the article as saying, “At the one-hundred and fiftieth kiss I was muscularly exhausted, overwhelmed with such inertia that I could not stir. My mouth positively seized with an indescribable pain that can only be described by the word fatigue” (“Anna Held Kissing” ReadEx).

Soon after the milk craze and kissing contest hype died down stories of Held’s bravery started to appear in the New York newspapers. There were stories of her racing automobiles or saving a well-known city magistrate from a runaway horse (Carter 20). Held also became famous for her designer clothing and corsets that were set with jewels, her cinched waist was an attraction in and of itself. Women around New York were trying to copy her clothing style, jewelry and make-up. There were Anna Held corsets, powders, cigars and more. Held also published articles herself on Parisian fashion and beauty tips (Farnsworth 22).

The Anna Held craze went on for many years; Ziegfeld made Held more famous for what she was doing offstage as she was for her performances onstage (Farnsworth 21). The constant press releases about how Held maintained her beauty and spent her leisure time sold newspapers and, to Ziegfeld’s delight, tickets to her musicals.

Held was able to have a career as an actress and singer but at the expense of her reputation as a skilled singer rather than a stage beauty. The public knew her as a beauty that stories often happened to, bought products that she endorsed and women mimicked her clothing style and make-up, but sadly, little is written of her abilities as a performer.

Lillian Lorraine

Ziegfeld discovered Lillian Lorraine, his first *Follies* star, at the Majestic Theatre in 1908. The tall, leggy brunette was in the chorus of *The Tourist*; her beauty immediately caught the attention of “The Great Glorifier.” Ziegfeld approached Lillian Lorraine after the show and suggested that she audition for his next production, Held’s *Miss Innocence*. Ziegfeld not only cast the beauty in *Miss Innocence* he also gave her two stand-out parts from the chorus; a song to herself with “My Post Card” as well as a solo in front of the chorus in the song “Three Weeks with You” (Mordden 106). When it came time for the show to tour Ziegfeld plucked Lorraine out of the chorus and she and Ziegfeld stayed behind to prepare for *Ziegfeld’s Follies of 1909* while Held and the rest of the cast toured until spring of 1909. Ziegfeld’s attraction toward Lorraine was no secret; however he used her need to rehearse for her feature in *Follies* as the purpose of her leaving the *Miss Innocence* tour.

Lillian Lorraine (real name Mary Ann Brennan) was just eighteen years old in 1909 but her carefree lifestyle and her beauty, which was quite different from Held’s, won over Ziegfeld’s heart. Ziegfeld’s second wife Billie Burke once wrote, “Of all the girls in Flo’s life I think I was most jealous of Lillian. I think he really loved her” (Carter 30). The two began a not-so-secret affair. It is said that it was Lillian Lorraine who inspired Ziegfeld to hire tall, curvy, leggy girls for *Follies* (Mizejewski 60).

By the time Held had returned to New York in May of 1909 Ziegfeld had set-up Lorraine in the apartment one floor below the apartment he shared with Held in The Ansonia. To outsiders it appeared that Lorraine was proud to be Ziegfeld’s mistress and

cared not about Miss Held's feelings, but the relationship would end Florenz and Anna's marriage within the year and Lorraine would also move on.

As the summer of 1909 approached Ziegfeld began selling his new star in the same manner in which he advanced that of his wife. Press releases about Lillian Lorraine, having nothing to do with her talent, were released in the months leading up to the opening of *Ziegfeld Follies of 1909*. In one article Lorraine was interviewed concerning how low-cut a respectable woman's gown should be. The article read, "I wear a very low gown with only one strap over the shoulder in the second act of 'Miss Innocence' and I had intended having one made like it to wear off the stage. I don't see that it matters how low a dress is cut in the back, or whether there are straps over the shoulder, so long as it is decently high in front" ("Lillian" ReadEx).

Just a few days before the *Follies* opened and Lillian Lorraine made her debut in a Ziegfeld production an article appeared in newspapers across the country declaring that Lillian Lorraine was conned into pawning her ten-thousand dollar diamond necklace ("Necklace" ReadEx 7). Although it cannot be proven, this press release seems like something Ziegfeld would release to stir up a buzz among potential ticket buyers. The talk in town can be imagined as, "Who is this girl that Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. has discovered?" or "What kind of chorus girl can afford an apartment at The Ansonia and a ten-thousand dollar diamond necklace?" Ziegfeld knew from his promotional techniques with Held that publicity hype was important in show business (Mizejewski 13).

After her unveiling in *Follies* high above the audience, singing "Up, Up in My Aeroplane" Lillian Lorraine was every bit as much the success that Ziegfeld expected her to be. Although her talent as a performer was rarely discussed, and when it was, it was

never very kind, her beauty and her personality on and off the stage won over her audiences. Ziegfeld dubbed her “The Most Beautiful Woman in the World,” and soon after newspapers, magazines and *Follies* patrons were doing the same (Carter 29).

The summer before *Follies of 1911* premiered an article appeared in newspapers about Lillian Lorraine, attributing her beauty to, specifically, not wearing corsets. This article would have been a unique way for Ziegfeld’s to let the public know that he was moving away from “old fashioned” beauties like Held and moving toward the New Woman¹⁰ in casting *Follies*. The article quoted Lorraine as attributing her beauty to her health, and her good health to never having worn a corset. The article references doctors who agreed that years of wearing corsets can lead to all kinds of health problems in women. The conclusion of the article states, “Miss Lorraine will be a living example of the figure of the corset-less woman” (“Fair” ReadEx 10).

Lillian Lorraine was seen around the city wearing floor-length ermine evening wraps and is credited as being the first star seen wearing an ankle bracelet (Farnsworth 44). Lorraine regularly wrote articles with beauty tips for newspapers and magazines so women around to country could try to emulate the Broadway star. One example was an article published in 1912 titled “Lillian Lorraine’s Beauty Secrets for Girls: Why Care of the Teeth is Essential to Good Looks¹¹.” The article states that a pretty smile is a necessary business asset and explains the proper way to brush your teeth in order to achieve a beautiful smile. At the end of the article Lorraine said, “Smile as much and as often as you can, is my motto – smile when you are gay and when you wish you were gay but aren’t. A smile is infectious” (*Idaho Statesman* ReadEx).

¹⁰ New Women emerged in the 1910-1920’s and represented to other women and to society a usefulness and personal autonomy, basically an independent womanhood.

¹¹ When discussing beauty Ziegfeld himself, his staff and stars referred to females as girls, as seen here in the title of this article.

In 1912 Lillian Lorraine left the Ziegfeld musical comedy *Over the River* to elope with Frederick Gresheimer, whom she had met at a beach one day when he taught her how to swim. Although Lorraine would return to the *Follies* sporadically her personal relationship with Ziegfeld was over.

Although Ziegfeld used some of the same marketing tools in his promotion of Lorraine as he did with Held, Lorraine was different because she was the first Ziegfeld Girl and represented a new turn-of-the-century women. She became the ideal woman that all off the future girls would be modeled after: young, tall, beautiful, care free, pursued by wealthy men, and adorned with jewels and furs. Although her personal life was full of drunkenness, promiscuity and wastefully spending all she had, Lillian Lorraine was sold by Ziegfeld to the public. Lillian Lorraine had beauty and, unlike the next actress, Bessie McCoy, very little talent, yet she was still a star on a Broadway stage.

Bessie McCoy

Where many of the Ziegfeld Girls were “glorified” by Ziegfeld and made stars on his stage, Bessie McCoy was different. A talented dancer, Bessie was already a star on the stage when Ziegfeld came knocking at her dressing room door. McCoy had a lead role in the musical comedy, *The Three Twins*, in which she had a solo song and dance number called “The Yama-Yama Man.” McCoy dressed in a white pom-pommed black velvet trouser suit made of billowing clownish fabric, she also wore a cone shaped hat on her head as she danced an elaborate dance that left the audience on their feet. When Ziegfeld wanted something he got it, no matter the price. He offered McCoy double her

salary to bring her Yama-Yama dance over to the *Follies* and in 1911; she did (Farnsworth 60).

Prior to the opening of *Follies*, Ziegfeld issued a press release assuring her fans that Miss Bessie McCoy “is to have several dancing specialties...which will surpass...her Yama-Yama number in *The Three Twins*” (“Some People” ReadEx 10). *Ziegfeld Follies of 1911* had Bessie McCoy introduce the new dance “The Texas Tommy Swing.” A reviewer in the Philadelphia Inquirer on June 25 said, “Bessie McCoy, of course, is a big improvement over Lillian Lorraine, who is fair to look upon, but whose talents are decidedly limited” (10).

It was Ziegfeld who, as many former cast members will attest, favored the showgirls over the chorus girls¹² (Mizejewski 95). To the producer beauty and stage presence sold more tickets than talent, but the reviews for McCoy showed otherwise. At the end of the year Bessie McCoy released an article in the newspapers titled “Public Makes Stars.” In the article McCoy says, “The public’s no fool. It’s not impressed by the signs outside, but what’s done inside the theatre” (13). This statement shows McCoy went against Ziegfeld’s sensationalist marketing strategy that talent does matter to the audience. Ticket sales for each edition of *Follies* proved otherwise for Ziegfeld and his public relations team.

Bessie McCoy only appeared in two editions of *Follies* before she left the show. For the two seasons that the Yama-Yama Girl performed for Ziegfeld she had an admirer. Writer Richard Harding Davis would come and watch her from the same seat for,

¹² Showgirls and chorus girls were terms defined by Florenz Ziegfeld Jr. and his choreographer Ned Wayburn. To the pair showgirls were the ones who would appear in Ben Ali Haggin’s tableaux or parade in glamorous costumes walking the Ziegfeld Walk. Chorus girls were ranked below showgirls and they were the shorter girls who could dance. Within the chorus girls was an additional ranking based on height and dance ability (Mizejewski 94).

reportedly, every performance. The two quickly fell in love; however Davis was married to well-known painter Cecil Clark. It was not until after *Ziegfeld Follies of 1912* that Davis was able to obtain a divorce in order to marry McCoy. The marriage was widely publicized for a few reasons but none more popular than the fact that it propagated the myth of the chorus girl marrying the distinguished and wealthy patron who sat in the front row (Mizejewski 81).

Once married, Bessie McCoy left the theatre to be a full-time wife and mother to the daughter that was born to the couple shortly after their marriage. McCoy went from being a New Woman to a female stereotype practically overnight. Once married McCoy stopped working; housewife was a traditional and socially accepted direction for women's lives to follow (Wolf 66). Sadly, just four years into her marriage, Davis died of a heart attack so McCoy decided to go back to the theatre. Ziegfeld welcomed her back with open arms, reproducing her famous song "The Yama-Yama Man" faithfully in his Central Park revue *Miss 1917*. At the end of the number the audience rose to its feet giving her a standing ovation, an uncommon event in the theatre at the turn-of-the-century (Mordden 158).

At the same time McCoy returned to the stage Ziegfeld was already releasing sensational pieces about the star. As *Miss 1917* opened the *Wilkes Barre Times* published a picture of her wearing a trench hat. "The trench hat, latest war style, made its first appearance on Fifth Avenue on the fair head of Mrs. Bessie McCoy Davis who returned to the stage after the death of her husband, Richard Harding Davis" ("Bessie McCoy Davis" ReadEx 17). In April of 1918 an article titled "How I lost 20 pounds in one month" by Bessie McCoy Davis appeared in newspapers across the country

(*Philadelphia Inquirer* ReadEx). In it McCoy Davis divulged her secret weight loss method was back bending. The article featured pictures of her doing the various stretches one would have to emulate to lose weight.

Bessie McCoy was a Ziegfeld Girl who found fame without being “glorified” and who found happiness on and off the stage. Yet she was still influenced into writing articles and sending out press releases sensationalizing her body and clothing rather than her talent. McCoy was known, from her pre-Ziegfeld performances, for her talent as a dancer, but yet she was still reduced to stories in newspapers and magazines about fashion and weight loss. The sensationalism in those types of stories were of higher value to Ziegfeld than promoting the talent of Bessie McCoy as a dancer.

Vera Maxwell, Dolores, and Paulette Goddard

Vera Maxwell, like Bessie McCoy was a dancer who first appeared in *Ziegfeld Follies of 1911*. Vera was born in New York City to a successful attorney who wanted his daughter to go to a prestigious college and therefore he did not pay for her to take dance lessons as McCoy’s parents had done. Maxwell had to teach herself how to dance and when she was just eighteen years old she found herself being chosen by Ziegfeld to appear in his next revue. In *Ziegfeld Follies of 1912* Vera Maxwell and Leon Errol introduced a new dance called “The Seasick Dip.” For such an unappealing name the dance craze caught on and remained popular for a few years until, in *The Century Girl*, Maxwell and her new dance partner, Wallace McCutcheon, introduced a new dance that is still taught today, “The Fox Trot” (Farnsworth 53).

For all the dance crazes and genuine talent Vera Maxwell brought to the stage she could not escape Ziegfeld's extreme publicity stunts that arguably turned her into an attraction rather than a talent. In 1914, in newspapers across the country, articles were being published about Vera Maxwell's insurance policy that the starlet had taken out on her feet. The article boasts, "No real estate transaction figures are those, although it is a story of insurance at \$10,000 a foot. The two slim, pretty little feet, belonging to Vera Maxwell...have been insured for \$10,000 each" ("Footlight Flashed" ReadEx 10). The article goes on to explain that each toe is insured separately and for different sums depending on the usefulness of that toe when dancing.

Dolores was born Kathleen Mary Rose to farmers in England. She moved to the United States and worked as one of many assistants to fashion designer Lady Duff Gordon at Lucile, Ltd. Dolores was one of the few Ziegfeld Girls who did not need much polishing from "The Great Glorifier." It was Lady Duff Gordon who discovered the nearly six foot tall beauty and trained her to walk and speak "correctly." For one year of daily training Dolores walked with books on her head and barrels under her arms, and perfected the perfect pitch in which to speak. Lady Duff Gordon and Florenz Ziegfeld suggested that Kathleen change her name to Dolores in order to make her seem more exotic (Farnsworth 97). If she was a product to sell her beauty and exoticism was her "talent."

Ziegfeld's second wife, Billie Burke was a famous actress who was known for her great sense of fashion. One morning Billie Burke convinced her husband to go shopping for new dresses¹³ with her and, reluctantly, Ziegfeld attended a session with designer

¹³ Although there were some mass-produced, if somewhat ill-fitting, clothing options custom-made clothing was still the standard well into the 1920s.

Lady Duff Gordon. One of the many women modeling dresses for Ms. Burke was Dolores; Ziegfeld could not take his eyes off of her. By the end of the day Ziegfeld had contracted Dolores to appear in *Midnight Frolics* and Lady Duff Gordon to be his new costume designer (Mordden143).

Possibly the most famous of Ziegfeld's extravagant costumes was Dolores as a peacock which many confuse as being from *Follies* when, in fact, it was Dolores's debut in *Midnight Frolics* in 1915. In his book *The Ziegfeld Touch* Richard Ziegfeld describes the peacock costume as, "created by Pascaud of Paris, [it] had a ten-foot long train consisting of sheer white embroidery with blue, green and pink paillettes and bugle beads. When Dolores pulled the attached sequin ropes, the train was raised via pulleys to become a beautiful tail"(83). It was not until two years later that Dolores made her first appearance on the main stage in *Ziegfeld Follies of 1917*. To mark the occasion Ziegfeld decided that her first appearance would be in a number inspired by her previous profession called "Ladies of Fashion". In this scene Ziegfeld Girls paraded across the stage in clothing by various designers, Dolores wore Lucile Ltd.

Dolores appeared in *Ziegfeld Follies* as well at *The Century Girl* and *Miss 1917* until her marriage to art collector Tudor Wilkinson in 1923. During her time with the *Follies* Dolores and other Ziegfeld Girls spoke out in newspapers and magazines against prohibition. "It is for the sake of the poor working man deprived of his beer that I resent this law" and "I would return to free England, if I did not have to earn money for my family in the prohibition country" she was quoted as saying (Lowry). In a series of articles by Antoinette Donnelly, a beauty expert, one article was about Dolores, titled

“Dolores Makes Other Women Look like Vegetables” (7). This article discusses Dolores’s unique beauty as a sight in itself to see.

When Dolores left the stage to marry Wilkinson she never returned to the public life again. Dolores was the most famous of the Ziegfeld Girls who had little other talent than modeling clothes. Considered by some to be akin to a mannequin Ziegfeld made the beauty famous for her modeling ability rather than singing, dancing or acting. Like most other Ziegfeld Girls, once married Dolores resorted to a lifestyle that society seemingly thrust upon women. Regardless of her success on stage and at the bank, Dolores married and became a housewife, never to work again.

Marian Levee had barely begun high school when she contacted her uncle, Charles Goddard, to ask him to introduce her to his good friend Ziegfeld. Upon meeting, Ziegfeld hired her immediately as a Ziegfeld Girl in *Palm Beach Nights*. Marian would change her name to Paulette Goddard, she claimed it was to pay tribute to her uncle who arranged her new career, but Ziegfeld’s motto was “Glorifying the American Girl” and to Ziegfeld, the term American did not include eastern Europeans or Jews. The ethnic name Levee had to go. Paulette Goddard was just fifteen years old when she performed in *Palm Beach Nights* (Mizejewski 117). While in Palm Beach Goddard became engaged to a millionaire, but upon discovering her true age he ended the relationship (Farnsworth 134). The stereotype at the time was that chorus girls were in the business of finding a millionaire patron from the first few rows of the theatre to woo for gifts or even to marry. Like Bessie McCoy, there were Ziegfeld Girls who married fans and/or millionaires; however, of the hundred of girls Ziegfeld employed the number of girls who played into that stereotype was very low (Mizejewski 68-70). This myth of the chorus girl as

someone trying to find a wealthy partner will be explored more in chapter three but it is important to note here that while the myth was untrue it made these working actresses seem as though they were only working as chorus girls in order to find the most suitable mate with whom to marry, but that the goal, it appears, was to marry and become housewives per the status quo. This stereotype made the chorus girl safe for patrons. It helped the audience see that these girls were not looking for independence, but a wealthy husband with whom to settle down (71).

Upon the return of the show to New York, and the change of its title from *Palm Beach Night* to *Ziegfeld American Revue of 1926* Ziegfeld released a statement saying, “Blondes are useful for purpose of contrast, but dark and Titian-haired types are more beautiful and more popular” (R. Ziegfeld 133). Goddard led a committee of girls who were ready to strike unless Ziegfeld retracted the statement. He did, the girls stayed, and the show received publicity and increased ticket sales on top of it all (134). In 1927 with the opening of the Ziegfeld Theatre, Goddard was cast in the production of *Rio Rita*. Not long after *Rio Rita* closed she married Edward James, the president of Southern Lakes Lumber Company and gave up the theatre to move to North Carolina with her husband. She was still just a teenager. When interviewed about her time with the *Follies* Goddard admitted, “I could tap but I was never given the chance. Ziegfeld used to say I was a great sitter. I sat and I walked. I didn’t mind. I was young and I was able to pay for my own lessons at Ned Wayburn’s” (Farnsworth 134). This statement is further evidence that Ziegfeld did not concern himself with ability when it came to the women in the chorus and showgirls. It can be argued that Ziegfeld did not want actresses in the chorus of

Follies, just women with whom he could exploit their beauty. But the life of a housewife whose husband would not allow her to work did not suit the former Ziegfeld Girl.

Goddard and James divorced and she moved to Hollywood where she filmed a few movie roles before being cast in Charlie Chaplin's newest picture. Goddard and Chaplin fell in love and were married while traveling the world promoting their film. They never publically acknowledged their relationship; in fact their marriage was not confirmed until Goddard filed for divorce six years later (Farnsworth 136). Goddard's film career was quite successful and soon she married her third husband, Burgess Meredith, in an intimate ceremony at the home of David O. Selznick. The marriage lasted only five years but her career in film and later television lasted into the 1970s. Paulette Goddard was one of many Ziegfeld Girls who went on to a career in Hollywood at the beginning of talking pictures. The Ziegfeld girls in film can be seen as support that Ziegfeld influenced the beauty standard in Hollywood through his former chorus girls having careers in the film industry.

Marilyn Miller

Marilyn Miller was born Marilynn Reynolds in 1898. She was born into a vaudeville family act that consisted of her two older sisters and her older brother. The act was managed by the siblings' step-father Caro Miller and at the young age of five Marilyn was thrust into the act. Marilyn's talent was immense as she could sing, dance, act and had great comedic timing and stage presence (Mordden 173). It was not long

before the talented young woman was spotted by the Shubert's and contracted, at the age of fifteen, to appear in *The Passing Show*¹⁴ of 1914.

Eventually word got around of the Shubert's newest talent and Ziegfeld felt compelled to see her for himself. Upon laying eyes on the beauty with a natural and very experienced talent, Ziegfeld had to have her for himself. He approached Marilyn Miller after one of her performances and offered her a contract with the *Follies*. Miller, always putting her career first, knew how vital the move from a copycat revue to the real deal was. She desperately wanted to go with Ziegfeld, but was contracted to the Shubert's. Never one to be told "no," Ziegfeld had his best lawyers look into Miller's contract and eventually they found a loophole. It was Caro Miller, Marilyn's stepfather, who signed her contract with the Shubert's, due to Marilyn being under age, but Caro Miller never officially adopted Marilyn and therefore was not her legal guardian when he signed the contract. The contract became void and Miller left *The Passing Show* for *Ziegfeld Follies of 1918* (Mordden 174).

The *Ziegfeld Follies of 1918* was another big hit, Miller made quite a sensation in her first appearance, performing an impersonation of Billie Burke in a number called, "Mine was a Marriage of Convenience." The piece poked fun at Burke's latest Broadway play *A Marriage of Convenience* by Sydney Grundy. Throughout the run of the show Miller found herself falling in love with Frank Carter, one of Ziegfeld's song-and-dance men. The two kept their romance a secret from the strict producer who had big plans for Marilyn and did not want to see a marriage end her career as tradition dictated. By the time *Ziegfeld Follies of 1919* was in rehearsal Carter and Miller had decided to marry.

¹⁴ *The Passing Show* was one of the many musical-comedy revues that copied *Ziegfeld's Follies*. When Ziegfeld changed the format of revues nearly every revue in New York followed suit. *The Passing Show* was possibly the most popular revue next to *Follies* but it could not hold a candle to Ziegfeld's show because no other manager was willing to spend the kind of money Ziegfeld spent.

Ziegfeld demanded that they end their engagement and threatened to fire both stars if they went through with it. Marilyn Miller was not the kind of girl that Ziegfeld could control; she had been in the business for her entire life and knew what she wanted. Miller and Carter married in May of 1919 and Ziegfeld promptly fired Frank Carter from the show. Miller stayed on. She knew she needed to appear in *Follies* if she was going to have the kind of career she always dreamed of. She thought that it would just be a short time before she saw her husband again (Mordden 184).

Frank Carter accepted a part in another musical comedy and patiently waited to see his wife again. When his show came to a close Marilyn Miller was touring with *Ziegfeld Follies of 1919*. She was in Philadelphia at the time. Carter surprised his wife with the purchase of a new car monogrammed with their initials. Tragedy struck when Frank Carter and his three passengers crashed the vehicle on the way to see Miller. When Miller heard of the accident she rushed to the hospital but it was too late. Frank Carter had died as a result of the crash and Marilyn Miller could only think of one man to blame, Ziegfeld (Mordden 186).

Ziegfeld had already begun production on his latest musical comedy, *Sally*, which he had put together specifically as a star vehicle for Marilyn Miller. Ziegfeld was giving *Sally* the best production team he could put together including direction by Jerome Kern, costumes by Lucile Ltd., or Lady Duff Gordon, and set by Joseph Urban. Miller was too savvy a show business woman to pass on this production and so she went into rehearsals with grudge against her producer/manager (Farnsworth 7).

Sally was a musical about a girl, who worked as a dishwasher, was discovered by a Ziegfeld-type character, became “glorified,” met and married a millionaire and then

disappeared happily with her husband to become a housewife and mother. Sound familiar? *Sally* was a smash hit opening on December 21, 1920, and running 570 performances at the New Amsterdam in New York and then touring for an additional 600 performance, which equates to about three years (Mordden 191). Ziegfeld appreciated his new star and showed it by giving Marilyn a percentage of the receipts from *Sally*, a practice that had been done for certain male stars but never for a woman. Unfortunately for Ziegfeld, Miller was too angry with him to continue, especially after Miller met and fell in love with Jack Pickford and Ziegfeld publically opposed their union as he did her first love.

Marilyn Miller dropped the second 'n' from her name, married Jack Pickford and left Ziegfeld for manager Charles Dillingham. She had some success with Dillingham and continued working in New York and Hollywood, eventually making *Sally* into a film in which she starred. Sadly, Miller passed away when she was just 37 years old after complications from nasal surgery which were believed to be the result of an increased dependency on alcohol.

Marilyn Miller was not immune to the marketing schemes of Ziegfeld, even though she had a grudge against him she chose to stay with him for his ability to make the women in *Follies* into household names (Mordden 187). Miller released a series of advice articles, during her time with Ziegfeld, titled, "My Secrets of Charm." In one such article she gave advice on the summer months: "During the warmer days strive to get out in the open as much as possible" and "Fresh airs renews the body and brings back youth." "Sea Bathing has a tonic effect." and "Sunburns are dangerous", as well as the addition of detailed instructions on how to powder your face: "apply buttermilk to the face to reduce

appearance of freckles” (“My Secrets” ReadEx 5). Although Miller was arguably one of the most talented women to ever walk the *Follies* stage, Ziegfeld still reduced her talents publically to that of beauty and charm school secrets released regularly in the weekly newspapers. It seems as though Ziegfeld knew he had an actress with great singing, dancing and acting ability yet he did not support her through publicity as more than a product to sell to the consumers. It can be argued that he was unable to trust that her talent was enough to sell tickets.

Fanny Brice

Fanny Brice was neither a showgirl nor a chorus girl in the *Follies* but it is important to look at her career as the anti-Ziegfeld Girl. Brice was everything Ziegfeld did not want in his “girls” and yet was one of the most successful and well-known women to appear in a Ziegfeld show.

Fanny Brice was born on October 29, 1891, in New York City, on the lower east side. Brice came from an immigrant family who did not have a lot but Brice was happiest singing popular songs with her friends, who formed a band and began playing for pennies. Her talent was obvious and a friend urged her to sing at an amateur night at Keeney’s Fulton Street Theatre, in Brooklyn, where the cash prize was twenty dollars. After waiting her turn nervously backstage Brice claims that someone pushed her on and she began to sing a heartbreaking ballad. The audience was moved and began throwing money at her to show appreciation. Brice was fifteen at the time. She won the contest that night at Keeney’s (Grossman 3).

Brice spent the next year entering as many amateur contests as she could and winning a great number of them. After a few ups and downs Brice turned to burlesque and spent three years performing and honing her craft. It was while performing at Seamon's Transatlantic Burlesque that Fanny Brice and Irving Berlin partnered on a Salome spoof with a Yiddish twist called "Sadie Salome, Go Home!" The number was such a hit that Florenz Ziegfeld came to the Burlesque show so that he could see for himself the comedienne everyone was talking about. Ziegfeld didn't have much of a sense of humor but he could read an audience, and the audience loved Fanny Brice. Ziegfeld offered her a contract to appear in *Ziegfeld Follies of 1910* as one of the comedians (Mordden 113).

Fanny Brice was a success in *Follies* appearing in seven editions (1910, 1911, 1916, 1917, 1921, 1922 and 1923) as well as many of the *Midnight Frolics* (R. Ziegfeld 287). She had huge hit numbers including "Second Hand Rose," "My Man," and "Lovely Joe." Brice appeared in two movies about Ziegfeld's life, *The Great Ziegfeld* and *Ziegfeld Follies*, both films made after Ziegfeld's death (Mizejewski 171). Fanny Brice's fame is ranked just as high if not higher than any other Ziegfeld Girl, but Fanny was not cut out of the same Ziegfeld mold as the other women in the cast.

Ziegfeld did not market his comedians as he did his chorus and showgirls. Fanny Brice did not release beauty tips in the newspaper or dieting trends, she was not seen around town in expensive cars and trendy clothing; although she did own them it was not newsworthy (Grossman 36). Brice was not an "American" girl as Ziegfeld would define it. As Linda Mizejewski put it in her book *Ziegfeld Girl*, "Brice's comic genius was her embodiment of everything the Ziegfeld Girl was forbidden to be: spontaneous, loud,

clumsy, ethnic, Jewish” (6). It seems that Ziegfeld had more at stake in the apparent reputations and class of the chorus and show girls. Of the comedians Ziegfeld hired, Brice was one of many ethnic performers from immigrant parents. Eddie Cantor was also Jewish, Bert William was Black, and Will Rogers was part Cherokee. Ziegfeld himself was also born to immigrant parents so it is possible that Ziegfeld hired these comedians because he felt connected to them. More likely, the comedians themselves were tremendously popular because of the number of immigrants living in New York City at the turn-of-the-century resulting in the “American” patrons to enjoy seeing these ethnic comedians make-fun of themselves.

Fanny Brice was a talented singer, comedian and actress who was not sold to the masses as a product to buy or a beauty to copy. Her Jewish background and ethnic features was cause for Ziegfeld to keep her billed in his shows as one of the comedians, rather than a Ziegfeld Girl. Fanny Brice may be considered to some to be the most successful woman to come out of a Ziegfeld show; she had talent, was viewed as a performer first and foremost and did not have to sell herself as a product to get there.

The Product is Consumed

Although these specific *Follies* cast members varied in performance skills and even range on the Ziegfeld beauty scale they, with the exception of Brice, who was not a chorus girl, they all were marketed for their beauty and allure rather than their ability. This type of marketing strategy left these women in an interesting place in theatre and for Goddard, film history. They are known still today as beauties who stole the hearts of men either in life as Paulette Goddard did or from the stage as Lillian Lorraine. Sadly they

were not known for their talent or what they brought to the Broadway stage at its early beginnings. The lack of a lasting reputation of these women shows that it may have been to their benefit to follow Fanny Brice's way and not allow Ziegfeld to publish such sensational pieces about them. Brice is remembered for her comedic and later dramatic talent while, as the song says, the pretty girl is like a pretty tune, that eventually fades away.

Ziegfeld took the credit for glorifying the girls in *Follies* but the spectators were more than willing to buy. Newspapers that published the fashion and beauty articles that were written by the Ziegfeld Girls were selling in high volume because the consumer bought what Ziegfeld was selling. The following chapter will take an in-depth look at the public relations team at *Follies*, the consumer who was willing to buy and the backlash of the suffragettes and gold diggers.

Chapter Three: The Credulous and Cynical Consumers

As the nineteenth century became the twentieth century the fashion and beauty ideals for women changed quickly and drastically, as seen with the popularity of Anna Held versus Lillian Lorraine. Not more than ten years after the Held craze women were rejecting corsetry and shortening the lengths of their skirts. A tall, thin, sporty woman replaced pristine, corseted housewives as the image of women in advertising campaigns and on magazine covers (Wolf 11). This evolving image of women that occurred while *Follies* was popular provided a new and fresh image of the ideal woman. It can be viewed that Ziegfeld was able to see this changing image and use them in marketing the women in his show as fitting this new mold.

The male and female consumers were trying to keep up with the changing times. Ziegfeld did his part to sell his ideals to the public especially when it came to women, in the form of tickets to his musical revue. He targeted middle and upper-class couples and they in turn bought into the diet and fashion fads of each Ziegfeld Girl. As feminist writer Naomi Wolf stated, “Somehow, somewhere, someone must have figured out that they [women] will buy more things if they are kept in the self-hating, ever-failing, hungry, and sexually insecure state of being aspiring ‘beauties’” (66). Ziegfeld and his staff found that advice from the beauties in *Follies* was way to sell the show to a female audience. Ethan Mordden states in his book *Ziegfeld: The Man Who Invented Show Business*, “...the very makeup of the audience was undergoing refinement, from sporting males...to married couples, families and matinée matrons” (4). *Follies* had to be marketed toward this new group of theatre patrons to survive the changing audience makeup in New York.

Ziegfeld's public relations strategy will be reviewed first, as a manner in which he promoted the show with sensational stories about the chorus girl. Not everyone bought in to the myth of the chorus girl. Suffragettes were busy fighting for women's rights and being ridiculed on the *Follies* stage. There were those who felt that chorus and showgirls were immoral gold diggers who weren't interested in theatre as an art, but rather in meeting a millionaire who could give them the lifestyle they desired. Linda Mizejewski states in her book *Ziegfeld Girl*, "The chorus girl also represents a fantasy solution to the real problems of working-woman life in that her narrative supposedly end safely in marriage to an [upper-class] member of the audience" (74). These various points-of-view will be discussed in this chapter.

Ziegfeld's Public Relations Strategy

It was not until the 1910s that the industrialization of actors and actresses was at a point in which there were positions like press agent and publicist whose job it was to make sure their clients appear in newspapers and magazines. As evident from his early years as a talent manager Ziegfeld understood the importance of public relations as far back as the 1890s when he pushed Eugen Sandow through spectacle and gossip stories. For Ziegfeld image was everything; he wanted the potential consumer to feel that they needed to see his show in order to survive socially.

Although Held was a talented singer, Ziegfeld saw her success as having come from his ability to publicize her directly. He marketed his starlet and wife as the Parisian instructor to American women on fashion and beauty. From her milk baths to racecars,

and corsets to make-up, the Held craze went on for many years and was supported by both men and women.

When Ziegfeld decided to make *Follies* a yearly institution he knew of no other way to promote the show than with spectacle, scandal and sensational stories. Ziegfeld gave interviews throughout the run of *Follies* explaining to the public how he chose his girls. The “how to” become a Ziegfeld Girl turned out to be as successful a marketing ploy for the show as the girls themselves. Ziegfeld gave interviews regularly on how he selected beautiful girls and what specifically he looked for when auditioning potential stars. The examples that follow show the high value that Ziegfeld placed on beauty and are vital to the argument that he was using beauty standards to define an ideal woman. Through these interviews Ziegfeld marketed himself as an expert on the ideal image of female beauty and was selling his image and the female image to consumers. Of the girls he chose to glorify he said:

They must attract men. You cannot define the quality. In one word, I would say it was promise; a promise of romance and excitement – all the things a man dreams about when he thinks the word ‘girl.’ A pretty girl is like a melody that haunts you night and day; that’s it, the haunting quality. Some plain women have it, only when they have it they’re not plain anymore. (Farnsworth 81)

The first sentence in Ziegfeld’s quote says a lot about how he felt about chorus girls.

“They must attract men.” He never mentions ability as a dancer, singer, actress or even stage presence and movement ability.

It can be gathered that Ziegfeld was setting a physical standard for beauty and also declaring behavior standards for women as well. One can deduce that not only does a woman have to be born beautiful by Ziegfeld's standard but she has to behave in a certain manner as well. According to Naomi Wolf beauty not only prescribes appearance but behavior, keeping women vulnerable to outside approval (14). A woman is not free to be herself and still be considered an ideal beauty. Ziegfeld later gave specific measurements for beauty:

Beauty's Yardstick: The eyes should be the length of one eye apart. The nose should divide the face into two equal parts. A line drawn through the middle of the eyes and one drawn through the bottom of the nose should divide the face into thirds. The mouth should be one half as long as the eye. The face should be four times as wide as the eye is long. ("The Role" ReadEx 1).

There were many interviews throughout the years including the precise measurements (bust 36", waist 26" and hips 38") for a beautiful girl (Mizejewski 112). One thing Ziegfeld never mentioned in any of these interviews was skill. These women were singers, dancers and/or actresses and yet stage presence or ability was never brought up in any interview with Ziegfeld and did not appear to the general public to be part of his audition process in casting *Follies*. To Ziegfeld beauty was the only thing that mattered and the reason the public kept coming back to see the show because of his positive experiences promoting Sandow and Held. Ziegfeld had great success using beauty and sensationalism as marketing techniques, the consumers bought his product. Ziegfeld's public relations office regularly announced the high costs and authenticity of jewels,

fabrics and furs onstage. If one wanted to see the most expensive sets and costumes to date on a Broadway stage they bought a ticket for *Follies*.

In 1919 Ziegfeld published the “Six Chief Points of Beauty” to further support his declaration as “The Great Glorifier” of women.

First, eyes: They must be large. They must be soulful. In color they must be blue or brown. Grey eyes cannot be beautiful. They are too hard, too intellectual. They are the eyes of the typical college girl. Black eyes are seldom beautiful. They have an opaque quality that is repellant.

Second, nose: It must be straight. It must be shapely. It must be of a size in proportion to the rest of the face.

Third, teeth: They must be regular and white. The nearer they look like the proverbial pearls or grains of young white corn the better.

Fourth, hair: It must be natural. No woman with bleached or dyed hair reaches my standard of beauty. She shows her lack of the sense of beauty and fitness when she attempts to improve upon nature. Old, yes, but true. As old and as true as love. Nature paints a girl's hair red, her skin clear and white, her eyes blue. Who could improve upon that color scheme?

Fifth, feet and ankles: They must be small and trim.

Sixth, a buoyant walk: The woman who walks a rolling gait, an uneven one, or who drags her feet as though there was lead in her boots, misses an important point in the sextette of beauty. (F. Ziegfeld 179)

In 1922 Ziegfeld released the exact proportions of his ideal girl; her height should be five feet five and one-half inches, her weight is one hundred twenty-five

pounds, and a foot size five. “The height should be about seven and a half times the length of the head. The head should be four times the length of the nose. When the arms are hanging straight as the sides, they should be three-fifths of the body” (Glenn 171). According to Naomi Wolf these beauty standards not only hurt women but also, “hurt men by preventing them from seeing women. It replaces a real woman with a vision (174).” Ziegfeld set such a precise and mathematical standard for beauty that it is virtually impossible for any women to reach it. Therefore women felt the need to continue to adhere to the Ziegfeld Girls and producers beauty, fashion and dieting tips in order to fit into Ziegfeld’s ideals. It can be understood that men who attended these shows felt that these beauty standard were truth rather than opinion. Men were, and perhaps still are, unable to see women without comparing them to unrealistically specific beauty measurements. Although beauty standards today are not a mathematically specific as Ziegfeld stated the beauty standard for contemporary women has been affected by the standards promoted for actresses at the turn-of-the-century. In present day movies novels, interesting stories only happen to beautiful women, whether the women themselves are interesting or not. “Stories do not happen to women who are not beautiful” (Wolf 61).

Hand Picked Stars

Ziegfeld and his public relations office began hand picking and creating stars out of the Ziegfeld Girls by releasing secrets or teases about how each girl maintained her beauty, spent her free time or fashions they wore on and off of the stage (Mizejewski 42). As previously mentioned, it was Held’s milk baths that convinced Ziegfeld that the release of beauty secrets would win over consumers. When *Follies* was first starting out

in 1908, Ziegfeld used Nora Bayes' offstage habits to backhandedly market the show. This time, instead of milk baths, it was lollipops. According to the publicity department at Ziegfeld's office Nora sucked on a lollipop every three hours to keep up her strength. The story was later supplemented with the beauty secret that she ate a lollipop before every meal in order to keep her hunger at bay, after all she must maintain her slim figure; in 1908 the sales of lollipops increased (Grossman 49). Although Ziegfeld did not profit from the sale of lollipops he used Bayes and her reported approach to dieting as a way to promote *Follies*. This type of marketing is most likely targeted as women.

Lillian Lorraine was the first woman to wear an ankle bracelet on the Broadway stage, a new fashion in the early 1900s with the popularity of shorter hemlines on women's skirts. Ziegfeld made sure it appeared in newspapers across the country, the new fashion trend was a hit and women were talking about Lorraine, her jewelry and the *Follies*. For Vera Maxwell it was her dance crazes, the "Seasick Dip" and the "Fox Trot" that swept the country with the aid of Ziegfeld's, now adept public relations team.

Discovered at the rival revue *The Passing Show*, Jessica Reed was one of the highest paid chorus girls in *Follies* history, starting at two hundred-fifty dollars a week. It was Jessica who, rather than marketing a beauty regime or diet fad like some of the other girls, marketed opulence. Jessica walked around town in expensive furs, drank top of the line champagne and ate caviar wherever she went, and the newspapers reported her every move (Farnsworth 86). The Ziegfeld Girls were now representing high-class allure. To help sell her girl-next-door appeal, and to help her stand out from the hundreds of other girls in the chorus, Paulette Goddard began to carry a cute, small dog around the city with

her, and she soon became the talk of the town and started a trend that is still popular today (44-65).

Once he had perfected his marketing strategies for *Follies*, to Ziegfeld, the chorus and showgirls were commodities for a consumer to purchase. Yet he was unknowingly contradicting himself. At a time when few women could be found in the work place¹⁵, Ziegfeld was simultaneously supporting and undermining female independence. While paying his cast more than any other producer in New York at the time, Ziegfeld was supporting the women in *Follies* by compensating them in such a way that even the lowliest chorus girl was making enough money to support herself. The Ziegfeld Girl was financially independent. On the other hand Ziegfeld dictated the terms in which the chorus and showgirls in *Follies* and *Midnight Frolics* could be seen in public as well as attempting to control the precise information about their personal lives was released to the press. Susan A. Glenn suggests in her book *The Female Spectacle: The Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism*, that the girls were “clearly butts of a visual joke that reduced female identity to the status of an emotionally charged consumer object” (169). Glenn is proclaiming that the Ziegfeld Girl believed the costumes and scene designs to be artistic and even fun to portray but that the male-dominated creative team behind *Follies* knew how the women were being portrayed and wanted to keep them representing the ideal beauty to the consumer.

Ziegfeld built up his reputation with a great number of press releases that made the public believe that he was an expert on beauty. He dictated the appearance of that beauty by requiring Ziegfeld Girls, when going out in public, to wear tights, gloves, a hat,

¹⁵ According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1900 only 19% of women in the United States who were of working age participated, compared to 60% in 1999.

and high heels at all times (Mizejewski 99). Doing so emphasized Ziegfeld's ideal beauty rather than individuality, uniqueness or talent. Controlling the appearance of the women who performed in his productions ultimately turned the women in his Broadway show into products.

Who's in the Audience?

It was Ziegfeld's press and public relations team that thrust information on the people across the United States and as a result the public came to see his shows in New York City and filled in the houses across the country when *Follies* would tour. The saying at turn-of-the-century was that Broadway revues, in the years before *Follies*, attracted T.B.M., "Tired Business Men," and their wives or girlfriends (Glenn 160). Vaudeville shows were twenty-five to fifty cents a ticket but revues were between one and two dollars a ticket, attracting a more middle class T.B.M., rather than a rowdy lower class audience that was typically found at Vaudeville, Burlesque and Minstrel shows. The early 1900s saw a shift in audience make-up from sporting males and rowdies to married couples, families and matinee matrons (Mordden 4). By 1912 *Follies* proclaimed itself a New York institution. The finest of the New York City summer society wouldn't dream of missing an opening and paid upward of seventeen dollars a ticket to be there (Glenn 160).

Ziegfeld's audience was upper and middle class; therefore, in order to appeal to as many patrons as possible, he and his writing team oscillated between racy and respectable skits and songs (Mizejewski 33). This led *Follies* to a popularity among a relatively diverse audience as far as social classes and ages were concerned. As previously

mentioned, the girls Ziegfeld featured in his shows were *American*, meaning they were white, Protestant, second or third generation Americans and not of Eastern European descent. The comedians, on the other hand, were practically the opposite of the “American” girls and this led to an assortment of comedy skit and song styles that appealed to a wider range of audience members. Regardless of the casting of comedians the audience, like the chorus girls, is believed to have been entirely white. The high tickets prices as well as the segregation laws affected the make-up of Caucasian audience members (Mizejewski 126). “These [theatres for black audiences and theatres for white audiences] separate but unequal spaces created distinctions of class aesthetics. As opposed to the relatively low-budget black revues, the more costly, extravagant white revue – most obviously, Ziegfeld’s – were designated as the “real Broadway” (127). The “real Broadway” is where the American Girls were featured, “at an age when being American and being black were antithetical concepts” (130).

One may assume that with the partially dressed and occasionally completely nude women on display in *Ziegfeld Follies* that the focus of the producer’s attention was on his male audience members. This presumption would be inaccurate as many of Ziegfeld’s press releases were pertaining to beauty and diet tips for women and Ziegfeld’s integration of high fashion, by hiring Lady Duff Gordon of Lucile Ltd. to costume *Follies*, was intended to appeal primarily to female audience members. Attending the yearly edition of *Follies* was meant to be, yes, entertaining but also a prelude for women to that year’s fashion trends as presented by Lady Duff Gordon. The move toward high fashion was so successful that department stores modeled their window displays off

theatrical entertainment, most predominantly *Ziegfeld Follies* Ben Ali Haggin tableaux (Glenn 164).

In 1915 Ziegfeld hired Ned Wayburn¹⁶ as his lead choreographer and Wayburn innovated the way in which casting for *Follies* was done. Wayburn divided the women by height, body type and dance ability. The shortest girls were called “ponies” and were the featured dancers. The medium-height girls were called “chickens” and were the backbone of the chorus and the tallest girls were the “showgirls” or “A-Team” and were essentially, living mannequins (Mizejewski 114). Male audience members preferred the “ponies” and “chickens” and women audience members preferred the showgirls like Dolores who was nearly six feet tall and a near perfect clothing model (Glenn 171).

The audience was made up of the perfect type of consumer for Ziegfeld-- the upper to middle class white patron. The male audience members were buying his products in order to see the “Glorified American Girl,” and the female audience members believed that the girls performing in *Follies* could show them how to be more desirable. In this system we see another example of Naomi Wolf’s beauty myth, that beauty gives women the feeling of having the same kind of power that money gives men (30).

The Suffragette

The turn-of-century saw a steady growth in support for the women’s suffrage movement in the United States. Before the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution the women’s suffrage movement staged elaborate street parades and pageants, delivered open air speeches at outdoor rallies, put on street dances

¹⁶ Ned Wayburn was the actual creator of the famous “Ziegfeld Walk” in which the girls accentuated their pelvis, lifted their shoulders and walked with a slow gait. They would have no smile at first and then smile at the audience one they reached center stage (Mizejewski 97).

and outdoor concerts and performed pro-suffrage comedies, satires and dramas at vaudeville theatres (Glenn 129). The suffragette was not the consumer Ziegfeld was marketing toward. In point of fact there were a number of skits and song selections performed in *Follies* that catered to the consumer who was anti-suffrage. The Ziegfeld Girl was a comforting, safe alternative to the political women picketing and rallying outside. Furthermore the Ziegfeld Girl was not only safe alternative to the suffragist but also the New Woman, the Flapper and the Vamp¹⁷ as well (Mizejewski 32).

The suffragette was typically a white middle class woman who sought the right to vote. The suffragists developed three liberal arguments: One, Feminism of equal rights equals freedom through equality; Two, Feminism of fear equals the end of men's cruelty towards women; Three, Feminism of personal development equals women's freedom through opportunities to become full persons (Marilley 3). Not unlike feminists today, suffragettes were often portrayed as ugly and occasionally stereotyped as a group of angry lesbians (Mizejewski 78). The Ziegfeld Girl is presented as being neither political nor frightening. Susan A. Glenn states, "The overriding tendency of the press and the Broadway establishment, however, was to absorb the Amazonian threat of the female army into the more pleasurable image of Broadway beauty chorus" (Glenn 150).

Ziegfeld took aim at the suffragette directly, through satire and comedy in *Follies*. In *Ziegfeld Follies of 1912* he turned a parade of chorus girls into non-threatening suffragettes. In the scene "The Palace of Beauty" the cast of the *Follies* portrayed citizens trying to find the most beautiful women in the world to elect as President of the United States. In this sketch it is beauty rather than ability that Ziegfeld emphasizes in the

¹⁷ A New Woman was considered bold, independent and modern towards men and fun. A Flapper refers to a young girl post-WWI who was trying to display her independence by cutting her hair short, wearing short skirts, smoking drinking and driving automobiles. A Vamp is a woman who is independent like flapper but more sexually free and aggressive (Mizejewski 16).

electing of a female President. Parades of women dressed as policeman, soldiers and voters displayed themselves across the stage. The women carried signs that read; “For President. Our Lillian” “For Vice Pres. The Pink Lady” “Vote for the Merry Widow” and “Our Emblem the Chicken.” Lillian was referring to Lillian Lorraine, and the Pink Lady and the Merry Widow were referencing Broadway musicals that had run the previous season. “Chicken” was a slang term for a beautiful and alluring chorus girl.

Both the terms “Chicken” and “Poultry” became attached to chorus girls around 1919 and, like the “Playboy Bunny” of today, imply a combination of allure and helplessness (Glenn 151). *Ziegfeld Follies of 1914* had a staged song called “I Like to Broil My Chicken.” During the number, while one of the comedians sang the tune, chorus girls appeared onstage displayed lying seductively across real broilers (Glenn 193).

The *Ziegfeld Follies of 1913* featured a song that would become famous throughout the United States, “Ragtime Suffragette.” The song is an attack on suffragettes that comes across as humorous and playful with a catchy ragtime beat. As the song became known across the country it portrayed women’s rights activists as though they were the perpetrators rather than the victims. When the lyrics are read, rather than sung, the meaning is exceedingly clear:

Bands are playing as she swaggers by
Banners swaying while the men all sigh
Why don’t you go home and bake a cake?
One like dear old mother used to make
“Ma-Ma, Ma-Ma,” how the baby sighs

“Pa-pa, get the bottle,” Ma-ma cries
For you know that I must go and make a speech tonight
Alright! Alright! He growls and wants to bite.
That Ragtime Suffragette/That Ragtime Suffragette
Ragging with bombshells and ragging with bricks
Hagging and nagging in politics
She’s no household pet!
While her husband’s waiting home to dine
She is ragging up and down the line
Shouting votes, votes, votes, votes, votes for women.
Oh, that Ragtime Suffragette! (Williams and Ayer)

The lyrics to this catchy tune make the suffragette out to be a bad wife and mother. She is referred to as “hagging and nagging” and it is suggested that she “go home and bake a cake.” Placing these lyrics into an upbeat ragtime tune disguises the mean-spirited nature of the lyrics and had people humming and singing the tune whether they were for or against women’s right (Glenn 151).

Ziegfeld was not a friend of the suffragette. Although he was, in a way, supporting the independent women by turning his chorus girls into celebrities and giving them financial independence, Ziegfeld was by no means supporting the women’s rights movement. He was simply selling a product to the masses, and that product happened to be beautiful women, who were expected to marry and become housewives which would end of her career.

Gold Digger

There were those who believed that a girl who made her living on the stage is really pursuing the gifts of a wealthy admirer rather than the life of an artist. Wealthy male theatre-goers were warned not to become besotted with a chorus girl or she may take a man for everything he owns. In 1919 playwright Avery Hopwood defined a term for this type of girl when he opened his new play *Gold Diggers*. “Gold digger” is a term used to describe a woman who dates, escorts, flirts etc. with a man in exchange for expensive material goods. The expression “gold digger” suggests prostitution by signifying an exchange of companionship for hats, jewelry and other gifts (Mizejewski 72). In 1919 Avery Hopwood’s play was warning the consumer of the dangers of this avaricious woman.

Hopwood’s 1919 play inscribed the term into popular lexicon and declared that not all gold diggers were chorus girls but, “chorus girls are by definition gold diggers” (Glenn 198). *Gold Diggers* is a play about three chorus girls Mabel, Violet and Jerry. Mabel thinks alimony payments are a better deal than putting up with a husband, Violet is a wide-eyed romantic, and Jerry is a gold digger with a heart of gold (Glenn 201). It appears as though the character of Jerry was inspired by Ziegfeld’s first wife, Anna Held. Jerry is described as virtuous without looking like it and that she made promises with her eyes that she could not fulfill with her body. Held was a sex symbol who was paradoxically devoted to her husband, and was most well-known for her song “I Just Can’t Make My Eyes Behave.”

All three characters viewed men as meal tickets. In the play the character of Jerry says, “Either you work the men or the men work you” (Glenn 201). Not completely

negative towards chorus girls, the play simultaneously reinforces and undermines the stereotype of the chorus girls. The three female leads look at men as a way to get out of the lives they are living, in a financial sense, but the characters are well-written and the audience ends up caring for the girls rather than despising them.

The term, “gold digger,” is defined in the dialogue between two male characters, Stephen and Blake in a scene in which Blake is warning Stephen to stay away from chorus girls.

Stephen: What is she really?

Blake: She’s a gold digger!

Stephen: A gold digger? What’s that?

Blake: A gold digger is a woman, generally young, who extracts money and other valuables from the gentleman of her acquaintance, usually without making them any adequate return
(Glenn 202)

Then girls themselves didn’t have an opportunity to respond to these bold generalizations that they were all in it to marry or receive gifts from a millionaire. Despite the happy ending of the play *Gold Diggers* the image of the chorus girl as a gold digger is a display of men’s fear toward independent women who express their sexuality. Although the expression is no longer attributed to just chorus girls, it is still a derogatory statement used only to describe women; it debatably does not have an equivalent expression for men.

Selling Beauty

The consumer market during the tenure of *Follies*, 1907-1931, included those who bought into the Ziegfeld publicity stunts and press releases and those who viewed chorus girls as gold diggers, or anti-suffrage. Ziegfeld focused his efforts on the men and women who saw beauty as more interesting than talent or knowledge.

Ziegfeld sold the Ziegfeld Girl as an expert on fashion, make-up and diet while he sold himself as the man who taught women how to be beautiful. The shows played on the concept of desire; the desire of both men and women to look upon female beauty as well and sexual desire and desire for expensive material goods. All of these images of desire were overseen and controlled by a man, Ziegfeld. Women were being fed an image of ideal beauty that was created by a Broadway producer. To Ziegfeld beauty was something generic and palpable, individuality was not seen as beautiful. Make-up, clothing, accessories and many other products were marketed toward and sold to women, not just in New York, but across the United States. These products were sold to help the women be beauties like the women in *Follies*. Ziegfeld was not selling dance classes or acting and singing lessons; to him women were a product to be sold for their physical appearance, one that was made to be nearly unobtainable.

Conclusion

Ziegfeld cast and presented to the public a specific type of woman in his shows and became a master at marketing them. His self-proclaimed “gift” in deciding who is beautiful and how to use that to sell tickets to his musical comedy revue was adept. Sue- Ellen Case says that “...the common practice of casting blonde women in the roles of *ingénues*, and dark women in secondary and vamp roles, is not based on the demands of the test, but betrays cultural attitudes about relative innocence, purity and desirability of certain racial features...the casting of beautiful women in *ingénues* roles, or the rise of the beautiful stage star, participates in patriarchal prejudices that control the sign system of the representation of women on stage” (117). Ziegfeld was the patriarch of his organization and he controlled how the women presented themselves to the public and attempted to control what the public saw as beautiful and fit for the Broadway stage. He cast fair-skinned white women as the beauties of the chorus. That is not to say that he did not use the talents of ethnically diverse women. However, like Fanny Brice, darker skinned or more ethnic women were hired as comediennes or specialty singers (Mizejewski 131).

Follies was at the peak of its popularity at the same time that talking pictures were replacing silent films in Hollywood. Many Ziegfeld Girls went on to be successful in the movie business acting in sound pictures including; Ruby Keeler, Barbara Stanwyck, Louise Brooks, Paulette Goddard, Lina Basquette, Marion Davies and Marilyn Miller. The 1932 film *Blondie of the Follies* starred two former Ziegfeld Girls, Marian Davies and Billie Dove (Mizejewski 189). Ziegfeld’s proclamations of his expertise on beauty and the public’s agreement, seen through ticket and product sales, that Ziegfeld Girls

were the most beautiful girls in the United States as well as the success of Ziegfeld Girls on Broadway and in Hollywood has had an impact on the beauty standards set upon actresses today.

Las Vegas showgirls and the Rockettes are two of the most apparent modern incarnations of Ziegfeld's, and other revue shows popular at the turn of the century such as *Folies Bergère*, influence on theatre today. The Las Vegas showgirls, like the Ziegfeld Girls on the "A-Team," can be viewed as mannequins on stage in magnificent costumes. Though not entirely white and protestant like Ziegfeld Girls, a large percentage of the girls in Don Arden's *Jubilee*, a revue that has been playing at the Bally's hotel since 1981, are white and taller than five-foot five-inches as Ziegfeld required. The Rockettes is a show marketed towards middle and upper class audiences and the policy at the Rockettes required all dancers to be white until 1987 when the casting of a black dancer led the company to change their policies (Mizejewski 195). The costumes and spectacular sets of the Rockettes and *Jubilee* along with the near exact specifications on physical looks it takes to be cast in one of these shows illustrates that Ziegfeld has some influence on the beauty standards in the entertainment industry.

Diet and beauty advice from actresses that are targeted at women of all ages are rampant today. It is difficult to walk into a pharmacy or supermarket without seeing magazine covers with beauty advice or pictures promoting how fat or skinny an actress is and how she lost or gained the weight. Ziegfeld Girls' beauty and diet advice in magazines and newspapers in the 1910s and 1920s is certainly a predecessor of the exposés we are surrounded by today. Women get a sense of power from feeling beautiful and thin which is how these magazines are marketed and make a profit. Even famous

feminist journalist Gloria Steinem feels that with all her hard work her success is almost always attributed to her good looks (Gloria). The success of film and television actresses today is often attributed to their looks and, more importantly, their weight. Just as the Ziegfeld Girls had done a century ago actresses today flood magazines with diet and weight-loss tips so the women around the world can emulate the entertainment industries standard of beauty.

At the turn of the 20th century, when women were fighting for the right to vote and choosing to work and play sports rather than stay home, Ziegfeld was using female beauty to, not only sell tickets to his Broadway show but to keep women politically benign, generic and objectified. Ziegfeld was not a blatant sexist or racist by any means. He was a businessman who saw women as a product to sell to the masses and he believed that the American public wanted white, tall, thin girls who knew the secrets of staying thin and beautiful. Women became the objects on the stage rather than the subjects of theatre and must still fight today to win back their individuality. Ziegfeld used to beauty and spectacle to market *Ziegfeld Follies* which has contributed to a common practice today of prioritizing beauty, weight and high fashion over acting, singing and dancing abilities of actresses today. Since the turn of the 20th century beauty standards have been used by the patriarchy in the United States to maintain the status quo. Ziegfeld used beauty to hold a yardstick to actresses and thrust his beauty ideals to women across the country. He kept women in a place of little power by promoting their beauty and never their talent, grouping the girls in his shows together as one entity rather than individuals and promoting a male-center perspective on The American Dream in *Follies*.

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Ziegfeld, Paulette and Richard Ziegfeld. *The Ziegfeld Touch: The Life and Times of Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr.* New York: Harry N, Abrams, Inc., 1993. Print. This is a highly pictorial book about Florenz Ziegfeld Jr.'s life written by his cousins with the assistance of Patty Ziegfeld, Florenz's daughter.

Appendix A: Photographic Images

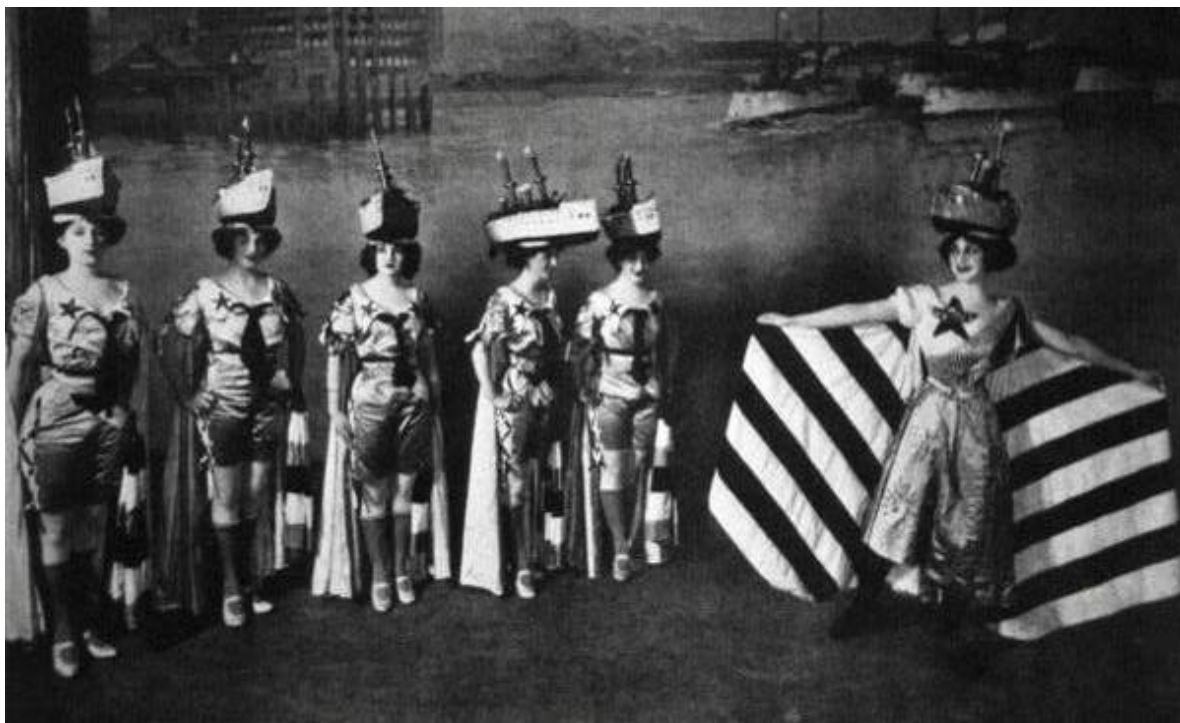


Fig. 1. “World’s Greatest Navy” *Follies of 1909* (Historical Ziegfeld)



Fig. 2 Anna Held (Historical Ziegfeld)



Fig. 3 Lillian Lorraine *Follies of 1910* (Historical Ziegfeld)



Fig. 4 Bessie McCoy in *Follies of 1911* (Historical Ziegfeld)



Fig. 5 Dolores in a dress by Lucile Ltd. (Historical Ziegfeld)



Fig. 6 Marilyn Miller in *Sally* (Historical Ziegfeld)

The Role the Face Plays

"The eyes must be the width of an eye apart," says Mr. Ziegfeld, and offers Frances Reaux as a perfect sample.

What Makes a Beautiful Girl? Here Are Measurements Approved by One of America's Leading Authorities on Feminine Beauty; the "Ziegfeld Fellies" Trademark on Beauty Is Like the "Sterling" Mark on Silver

By FLORENZ ZIEGFELD, Jr.

Beauty's Yardstick

The eyes should be the length of one eye apart.
The nose should divide the face into two equal parts.
A line drawn through the middle of the eyes and one drawn through the bottom of the nose should divide the face into thirds.
The mouth should be one-half times as long as the eye.
The face should be four times as wide as the eye is long.

A GIRL comes to see me. She is pretty—at first glance she seems beautiful. I am inclined to classify her thus in my mind. I ask her to sit down and talk with me. As soon as I can, I switch her talk from the girl and what she wants to other things—books, music, her current plays. She is off her guard, then, to some extent, and I can see what she really looks like. Perhaps at the end of three minutes I know that she is not really beautiful, but merely pretty.

Always the Same

Every time she looks up her face is the same. After the first glance you have seen all there is. She may have regular features, a charming smile, a beautiful complexion. But her face makes just one picture, the one you see when you first look at her.

If a girl's face is not intelligent, it is not beautiful. It is only a pretty mask. There may have been a day when the sweet little thing who had no brains had her place on the stage; I never selected girls of this type for one of my productions, and I never shall. To me they are not beautiful. They have no personality, and no girl is beautiful if she lacks that.

Not only is an unintelligent girl not beautiful; she is not adaptable. She cannot think on the stage. She may learn a certain routine, but she cannot throw herself into the spirit of it. More than once I have refused to engage a girl who seemed to be beautiful according to the opinions of many, but who was rather stupid.

Famous beauties have been famous for their charm and intelligence as well as for their looks. Everyone who knew Lillian Russell appreciated her intellect. Her intelligence was one of the things that made her beauty ast. The girl who is really intelligent has a buoyancy that makes her beauty alive. She seems to fit into any number which I may plan, just as she would fit into any situation off the stage, because her imagination is keen enough to put her into the scene and make her adapt herself to it, and so the costume which she wears for it.

Unless a girl possesses this power of adaptation she will not make a good actress. Each year there are special numbers in which unusual costumes and lighting and color effects are used. Now, a pretty girl may look well in one kind of dress and be quite unable to wear any other kind. She is not a real beauty, but is only pretty. Real beauty can dominate any costume, and adapt itself to it.

The girl who is not intelligent is likely to be conscious of her looks. She has them in the back of her mind all the time. That detracts from her charm, of course, and also from her looks. Beauty must be natural, not studied and aware of itself. When a girl looks out at the audience she must not be thinking of herself and of how she looks, but of the thing which she is doing at the moment. She must be doing that thing because she wants to, and enjoys doing it, just as a child enjoys playing. If she's concerned in thinking about her appearance, she loses the spirit of play.

I have seen beautiful girls whose looks did not conform to any of my rules except this one, that intelligence and personality are absolutely necessary. They had the appearance of beauty, and gave to those who saw them the impression that they were beautiful, and I would advise the girl who is eager to be as good looking as possible to seek perfect health, and a deep knowledge of her own mind.

Of course intelligence and personality cannot make a beautiful girl by themselves. There are certain requirements which a girl's face must meet if she is to be termed beautiful.

Some Rules for Beauty.

1.—The eyes. They must be large, expressive and well set. Color does not matter if it is deep and clear. Blue, gray or black eyes may be equally beautiful, if they have depth and feeling. Expressionless eyes are never lovely. The brows should conform to the general shape of the face; for instance, arched brows are beautiful on some faces and straight ones on others. Puckered brows are hideous.

2.—The nose. It should be straight and well shaped and slightly indented where it meets the forehead. Its proportions should be right for the rest of the face—that is, one-third the length of the face.

3.—The mouth. It must be beautiful both in repose and when smiling or laughing. The lips should be clear, cut, and neither too thick nor too thin. They should be healthy in color. The mouth should be as wide as the eye, and one-half times as long. A short upper lip is sometimes considered a mark of beauty, but is not beautiful unless it seems to fit in with the rest of the features. The teeth must be white and even.

4.—The complexion. It must be clear and even. The skin should be as white as the eye, and one-half times as long. A short upper lip is sometimes considered a mark of beauty, but is not beautiful unless it seems to fit in with the rest of the features. The teeth must be white and even.

5.—The hair. It should be straight and well shaped and slightly indented where it meets the forehead. Its proportions should be right for the rest of the face—that is, one-third the length of the face.

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Measure beauty by statistics if you want to—but who wants to when they can look at Alice Weaver of the Greenwich Village Follies?



country, and they are representative of all types of beauty.

It is difficult to give measurements, of course, but generally speaking, these are good ones for determining the beauty of the features.

The head should be from eight and two-thirds to nine inches long; this is the average length. Variations are not great, and few heads are less than eight and one-fourth or more than nine inches long.

The nose should divide the face into two equal parts.

A line drawn through the middle of the eyes and one drawn through the bottom of the nose should divide the face into thirds.

The mouth should be one and one-half times as long as the eye, and the eyes should be the length of one eye apart.

The face should be four times as wide as the eye is long.

Spare the Make-up.

Of course, in selecting girls for my productions I prefer that applicants appear without make-up. If they come to me rouged and made up, I simply have to discard them. Unless a girl is pretty enough to appear without any make-up at all, she is not likely to be accepted.

Naturally, I cannot indulge my personal preferences in this matter of selecting beautiful girls. It does not matter whether I prefer the classic type or not. I may think that a short upper lip is far more beautiful than a longer one, but many people do not think so. So far as it is possible, I must try to represent all types of beauty in "The Follies."

Therefore the beauty of the girls whom I select is strongly contrasted. They come from all over the

country, and they are representative of all types of beauty.

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"How I Lost 20 Pounds in one Month"

Try This
You Can Learn It in a Month

MRS. BESSIE MCCOY DAVIS, the famous dancer, who married novelist Richard Harding Davis, recently found herself getting fat. Mrs. Davis, not at all content with the results of dieting and regulation systems of exercise, began to experiment for herself. At last, she says, she found a comparatively simple method that relieved her in one month of twenty pounds of excess weight. Here she explains, for the benefit of others, her interesting new exercises.

By Bessie McCoy Davis

OF much tribulation, due to superfluous and beauty - destroying pounds, I discovered the short cut to reduction of weight. I can condense it to four words: By bending the back. The secret of weight reduction lies in the back. By exercising the back one can secure perfect balance of body. Equilibrium is the essential of correct weight.

Not merely of weight, but of its concomitant, grace, is the back the centre. A beautiful back has the habit of beautiful posture. It should not have the erectness of a soldier at drill. The rumped is not a symbol of beauty. Nor should it lean far forward in the absurd kangaroo slouch. Half way between these extremes is the pose of the beautiful back.

Having enunciated these principles of beauty of the back, let me tell you how I became twenty pounds thinner in a month.

It was seeing a photograph of mine, taken with my little daughter, Hope, that told me I had taken on a maternally aspect beyond my years. Analyzing that aspect I saw that it was due, not to years, but to excess avoirdupois. I knew that a woman looks as old as her chin. If the line of the chin is clear and keen, suggesting a razor-blade or the keel of a ship, the presumption is that she is young. If it be muffled by soft, cotton-like flesh she has at least the beginning of the appearance of middle age.

Ever since I can remember, and probably long before that, women have believed that if they could bend forward into the shape of an inverted U they were in good form. If they could contrive to touch the floor with the finger tips without bending the knees they were convinced that they were in fine fettle. But that is not enough! I could quite easily accomplish that test. Yet the easier life of my retirement from the stage



Bessie McCoy Davis, the Well-Known Dancer, Explains Her New Back Bending Exercises That Made Her Thin Again

Finding that the various forward and sidelong exercises—which we all know—were having no influence upon my excess flesh I experimented with others.

Genuine exercise consists in pulling the muscles. Bending backward I discovered that the muscles extending over the front of the body, from the knees to the neck, were pulled, that is, exercised. Pulling the muscles causes the blood to flow at accelerated speed and in greater volume. The blood stream carried away excess globules of fat on its current.

This bending back exercise I alternated with the bending forward movement. To do this you raise the hands over your head and then, bending the waist with their even, bring them down so that the finger-tips touch the floor. The knees must not be bent with the bow of the body—all movement is from the waist. At first you may not be able to touch the floor. But after a few days you will. Then try to touch the floor with the first knuckles; then with the second; then the third; last with the back of the hand. After your back has grown supple enough to do this, you ought to be able to touch the floor with your palms. The average woman can learn to do this in a month.

Three times a day I performed the bending-back exercises. Each time I felt the blood bounding through the muscles. It was like the rush of a released Niagara.

Placing my arms behind my back I bent as far back as I could. I began the exercise while kneeling upon the bed. I took this precaution because a tumble might have been painful on a hard floor. Each time I exercised the muscles yielded more and more. Gradually they became so pliant that it was as though they were pulleys that I was manipulating.

Each day I could reach farther and farther behind me, until I was able to touch the floor with my finger tips. The flesh seemed to literally melt away.

This is a very violent exercise for those unaccustomed to it. It should be gently and most gradually done for there is danger if improperly done of disturbing the balance of the internal organs. Balance is health.

I would suggest to the tyro counting five slowly as she describes the arc of a circle which she makes backward with the body. Never do it more rapidly unless you are a professional dancer. Even in that case it is best to make haste slowly. Done rhythmically, repeatedly and with the bending forward, it unquestionably rid me of excess flesh at the rate of five pounds a week. At the end of the month I weighed twenty pounds less than I had at the beginning. It was a short month, too, February.

Formulating the five exercises which I practice every day in addition to dancing, to keep myself fit, I should describe them thus: First, bending slowly half-way back; second, bending slowly all the way back, that is, until I accomplished the letter U backward; third, with arms horizontally extended, turning the upper part of the body half-way to the right; fourth, with arms horizontally extended, turning half-way to the left. Last, the forward bow without bending the knees, until the palms rest upon the floor.

(Copyright, 1918.)

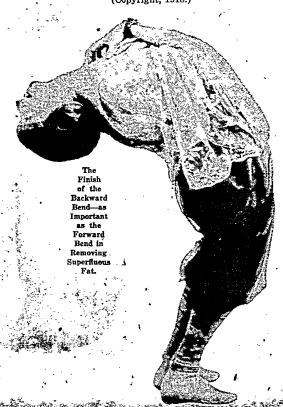


The Last Step of the Bend Forward—Palm on Floor—Which Shows the Back to Be Entirely Supple.



The Backward Bend, Combined With the Side-to-Side Twisting Movement.

Sitting Posture for the Beginning of the Bending Backward System to Reduce Weight.



The Finish of the Backward Bend—as Important as the Forward Bend in Removing Superfluous Fat.

had made me over-weight, and no one is in the pink of condition if she is too heavy. The genuine test is whether she can touch the floor with her palms—ava monkey walk.

I found that this exercise brought into play muscles that the touching the floor with the finger tips did not affect. A figure can be on the whole quite stiff and unwieldy and still compass the finger-tip exercise. But the body must be obedient to the will, and the muscles be pliant indeed to perform the genuine test, shown on this page. To stand and walk as a monkey does proves the possession of thoroughly pliant muscles.

Fig. 8 How I Lost Twenty Pounds in One Month *The Philadelphia Inquirer* 1918

**Vera Maxwell's Ten Toes
Are Insured for \$20,000**



PRETTY DANCER AND HER VALUABLE FEET

No real estate transaction figures are those, although it is a story of insurance at \$10,000 a foot. The two slim, pretty little feet, belonging to Vera Maxwell, the dancer (declared by Paul Helleau to be the prettiest stage girl in America), have been insured for \$10,000 each.

Every toe is insured at a separate price. A big toe for more than a little one, because, should the dancer lose a little toe, she might still dance, but with a big one gone—never. The insurance carries with it a weekly indemnity in case the dancer sprains an ankle or a toe or a chiropodist makes a mistake that prevents her dancing.

Fig. 9 Vera Maxwell's Ten Toes are Insured for \$20,000 *The Philadelphia Inquirer* 1914