

**The following interview with
LANE BRADBURY
was conducted by the Library of Congress
on June 1, 2021**



*“Gypsy” recording session: Lane Bradbury, second from left;
(l to r) Sandra Church, LB, Jule Styne, record producer Goddard Lieberson*

Library of Congress: Even when “Gypsy” was in previews, did you have an idea that it was destined to be something extremely special?

Lane Bradbury: No. No. I went in and I was replacing the original Dainty June and I was just CONSUMED with trying to remember everything. It was overwhelming. I had three days to learn three songs, all the dialogue, learn to twirl a baton and learn the time step!--and learning to twirl a baton and do a time step were not part of my ballet repertoire!

Twirling is hard—especially trying to learn it in 24 hours. So frustrating. When I decided to do my cabaret show [“Let Me Entertain You, Again”] that I do now, I tried to twirl again. I could not manage it. But I did learn it back then, and all the songs and dialogue and even dance and go into a split!

LOC: You had previously studied at the Actor’s Studio. Was it difficult to apply those techniques to a stage musical of this nature?

LB: I was concerned about that. I didn’t want to “act” the part, I wanted to “be” the part, but the role of Dainty June was so foreign to me, there was no way for me to relate to her at all.

Eventually, though, I found a way: when I was a little girl, Shirley Temple and Margaret O’Brien, they were my idols. So I realized that this was my opportunity to be Shirley Temple. I had just related to her so much. I could be like her and be truthful.

LOC: Can you tell me about the recording of the cast album? Was it done in one day?

LB: I only recorded one day, I don’t know if the others were there for more or not.

I remember when we did “If Mama Was Married,” I really wanted another take but they wouldn’t let me. And I was so mad! Seventeen year-old mad! So I decided then and there, *Well, I’m not going to get the album!* And I didn’t buy the album until much later after, one day, I was

walking down Broadway, and I heard it being played from inside a record store and I thought, “Oh, that’s not so bad.”

LOC: Did you have to adjust your performance from stage to recording studio?

LB: No. They wanted what we did every night on stage and that’s what we did.

LOC: The day of the recording who—besides all the actors—were in the studio with you as far as the creative team was concerned? Were they involved in the production or your performances as you recorded them?

LB: All of them. Well, I don’t think Jerry [Jerome Robbins] was there. Thank god! He’s was a tyrant. I was scared to death of him.

Stephen Sondheim was there but I don’t remember him being involved; there was no direction from him. We did our thing.

LOC: I have to ask: What was Merman like?

LB: I talk about that now in the cabaret show I have. You know, she never looked me in the eyes. She always looked at my forehead. Never connected with me; it was like I wasn’t even there. I’ve never worked with anyone like that since. It’s absolutely the opposite of how I work.

I guess she had her performance all worked out and she didn’t want me—or anyone else—to throw her. It was very, very strange.

LOC: Are you surprised not only by how enduring “Gypsy” has been as a stage show but also how enduring your original recording and presentation of it has proved to be?

LB: I’m SHOCKED! Because, when I left it, I put it behind me. But, since then, it has opened up so many doors for me. Just amazing.

Now I do my cabaret show all over and I’ve worked with the Valkyrie Theater of Dance, Drama and Film; it’s a not-for-profit for at-risk teens, teaching them dance and drama.

LOC: I have to ask, do you own the album now?

LB: Yes, I do! But it’s a record and we don’t have record players anymore!