

= South Pacific (musical) =

South Pacific is a musical composed by Richard Rodgers , with lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II and book by Hammerstein and Joshua Logan . The work premiered in 1949 on Broadway and was an immediate hit , running for 1 @,@ 925 performances . The plot of the musical is based on James A. Michener 's Pulitzer Prize @-@ winning 1947 book Tales of the South Pacific and combines elements of several of those stories . Rodgers and Hammerstein believed they could write a musical based on Michener 's work that would be financially successful and , at the same time , would send a strong progressive message on racism .

The plot centers on an American nurse stationed on a South Pacific island during World War II , who falls in love with a middle @-@ aged expatriate French plantation owner but struggles to accept his mixed @-@ race children . A secondary romance , between a U.S. lieutenant and a young Tonkinese woman , explores his fears of the social consequences should he marry his Asian sweetheart . The issue of racial prejudice is candidly explored throughout the musical , most controversially in the lieutenant 's song , " You 've Got to Be Carefully Taught " . Supporting characters , including a comic petty officer and the Tonkinese girl 's mother , help to tie the stories together . Because he lacked military knowledge , Hammerstein had difficulty writing that part of the script ; the director of the original production , Logan , assisted him and received credit as co @-@ writer of the book .

The original Broadway production enjoyed immense critical and box @-@ office success , became the second @-@ longest running Broadway musical to that point (behind Rodgers and Hammerstein 's earlier Oklahoma ! (1943)) , and has remained popular ever since . After they signed Ezio Pinza and Mary Martin as the leads , Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote several of the songs with the particular talents of their stars in mind . The piece won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1950 . Especially in the Southern U.S. , its racial theme provoked controversy , for which its authors were unapologetic . Several of its songs , including " Bali Ha 'i " , " I 'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair " , " Some Enchanted Evening " , " There Is Nothing Like a Dame " , " Happy Talk " , " Younger Than Springtime " , and " I 'm in Love with a Wonderful Guy " , have become popular standards .

The production won ten Tony Awards , including Best Musical , Best Score , and Best Libretto , and it is the only musical production to win Tony Awards in all four acting categories . Its original cast album was the bestselling record of the 1940s , and other recordings of the show have also been popular . The show has enjoyed many successful revivals and tours , spawning a 1958 film and television adaptations . The 2008 Broadway revival , a critical success , ran for 996 performances and won seven Tonys , including Best Musical Revival .

= = Background = =

Although book editor and university instructor James Michener could have avoided military service in World War II as a birthright Quaker , he enlisted in the U.S. Navy in October 1942 . He was not sent to the South Pacific theater until April 1944 , when he was assigned to write a history of the Navy in the Pacific and was allowed to travel widely . He survived a plane crash in New Caledonia ; the near @-@ death experience motivated him to write fiction , and he began listening to the stories told by soldiers . One journey took him to the Treasury Islands , where he discovered an unpleasant village , called Bali @-@ ha 'i , populated by " scrawny residents and only one pig " . Struck by the name , Michener wrote it down and soon began to record , on a battered typewriter , his version of the tales . On a plantation on the island of Espiritu Santo , he met a woman named Bloody Mary ; she was small , almost toothless , her face stained with red betel juice . Punctuated with profanity learned from GIs , she complained endlessly to Michener about the French colonial government , which refused to allow her and other Tonkinese to return to their native Vietnam , lest the plantations be depopulated . She told him also of her plans to oppose colonialism in French Indochina . These stories , collected into Tales of the South Pacific , won Michener the 1948 Pulitzer Prize for fiction .

Tales of the South Pacific comprises nineteen stories . Each stands independently but revolves

around the preparation for an American military operation to dislodge the Japanese from a nearby island . This operation , dubbed Alligator , occurs in the penultimate story , " The Landing at Kuralei " . Many of the characters die in that battle , and the last story is titled " The Cemetery at Huga Point " . The stories are thematically linked in pairs : the first and final stories are reflective , the second and eighteenth involve battle , the third and seventeenth involve preparation for battle , and so on . The tenth story , at the center , however , is not paired with any other . This story , " Fo ' Dolla ' " , was one of only four of his many works that Michener later admitted to holding in high regard . It was the one that attracted Rodgers and Hammerstein 's attention for its potential to be converted into a stage work .

" Fo ' Dolla ' " , set in part on the island of Bali @-@ ha 'i , focuses on the romance between a young Tonkinese woman , Liat , and one of the Americans , Marine Lieutenant Joe Cable , a Princeton graduate and scion of a wealthy Main Line family . Pressed to marry Liat by her mother , Bloody Mary , Cable reluctantly declines , realizing that the Asian girl would never be accepted by his family or Philadelphia society . He leaves for battle (where he will die) as Bloody Mary proceeds with her backup plan , to affiancé Liat to a wealthy French planter on the islands . Cable struggles , during the story , with his own racism : he is able to overcome it sufficiently to love Liat , but not enough to take her home .

Another source of the musical is the eighth story , " Our Heroine " , which is thematically paired with the 12th , " A Boar 's Tooth " , as both involve American encounters with local cultures . " Our Heroine " tells of the romance between Navy nurse Nellie Forbush , from rural Arkansas , and a wealthy , sophisticated planter , Frenchman Emile De Becque . After falling in love with Emile , Nellie (who is introduced briefly in story # 4 , " An Officer and a Gentleman ") learns that Emile has eight daughters , out of wedlock , with several local women . Michener tells us that " any person ... who was not white or yellow was a nigger " to Nellie , and while she is willing to accept two of the children (of French @-@ Asian descent) who remain in Emile 's household , she is taken aback by the other two girls who live there , evidence that the planter had cohabited with a darker Polynesian woman . To her great relief , she learns that this woman is dead , but Nellie endangers her relationship with Emile when she is initially unable to accept Emile 's " nigger children . " Nellie overcomes her feelings and returns to spend her life with her plantation owner .

Additional elements of South Pacific had their genesis in others of Michener 's 19 tales . One introduces the character of Bloody Mary ; another tells of a British spy hidden on the Japanese @-@ controlled island who relays information about Japanese movements to Allied forces by radio . Michener based the spy , dubbed " the Remittance Man " , on Captain Martin Clemens , a Scot , who unlike his fictional counterpart , survived the war . The stories also tell of the seemingly endless waiting that precedes battle , and the efforts of the Americans to repel boredom , which would inspire the song " There Is Nothing Like a Dame " . Several of the stories involve the Seabee , Luther Billis , who in the musical would be used both for comic relief and to tie together episodes involving otherwise unconnected characters .

= = Creation = =

= = = Inception = = =

In the early 1940s , composer Richard Rodgers and lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II , each a longtime Broadway veteran , joined forces and began their collaboration by writing two musicals that became massive hits , Oklahoma ! (1943) and Carousel (1945) . An innovation for its time in integrating song , dialogue and dance , Oklahoma ! would serve as " the model for Broadway shows for decades " . In 1999 , Time magazine named Carousel the best musical of the century , writing that Rodgers and Hammerstein " set the standards for the 20th century musical " . Their next effort , Allegro (1947) , was a comparative disappointment , running for less than a year , although it turned a small profit . After this , the two were determined to achieve another hit .

According to director Joshua Logan , a friend of both theatre men , he and Leland Hayward

mentioned Michener 's best @-@ selling book to Rodgers as a possible basis for the duo 's next play , but the composer took no action . Logan recalled that he then pointed it out to Hammerstein , who read Michener 's book and spoke to Rodgers ; the two agreed to do the project so long as they had majority control , to which Hayward grudgingly agreed . Michener , in his 1992 memoirs , however , wrote that the stories were first pitched as a movie concept to MGM by Kenneth MacKenna , head of the studio 's literary department . MacKenna 's half brother was Jo Mielziner , who had designed the sets for *Carousel* and *Allegro* . Michener states that Mielziner learned of the work from MacKenna and brought it to the attention of Hammerstein and Rodgers , pledging to create the sets if they took on the project .

Hayward attempted to buy the rights from Michener outright , offering \$ 500 ; Michener declined . Although playwright Lynn Riggs had received 1 @.@ 5 % of the box office grosses for the right to adapt *Green Grow the Lilacs* into *Oklahoma !* , Michener never regretted accepting one percent of the gross receipts from *South Pacific* . As Rodgers and Hammerstein began their work on the adaptation , Michener worked mostly with the lyricist , but Rodgers was concerned about the implications of the setting , fearing that he would have to include ukuleles and guitars , which he disliked . Michener assured him that the only instrument he had ever heard the natives play was an emptied barrel of gasoline , drummed upon with clubs .

= = = Composition = = =

Soon after their purchase of the rights , Rodgers and Hammerstein decided not to include a ballet , as in their earlier works , feeling that the realism of the setting would not support one . Concerned that an adaptation too focused on " *Fo ' Dolla '* " , the story of the encounter between Cable and Liat , would be too similar to *Madama Butterfly* , Hammerstein spent months studying the other stories and focused his attention on " *Our Heroine* " , the tale of the romance between Nellie and Emile . The team decided to include both romances in the musical play . It was conventional at the time that if one love story in a musical was serious , the other would be more comedic , but in this case both were serious and focused on racial prejudice . They decided to increase the role played by Luther Billis in the stories , merging experiences and elements of several other characters into him . Billis 's wheeling and dealing would provide comic relief . They also shortened the title to *South Pacific* ? Rodgers related that the producers tired of people making risqué puns on the word " *tales* " .

In early drafts of the musical , Hammerstein gave significant parts to two characters who eventually came to have only minor roles , Bill Harbison and Dinah Culbert . Harbison is one of the major characters in *Tales of the South Pacific* ; a model officer at the start , he gradually degenerates to the point where , with battle imminent , he requests his influential father @-@ in @-@ law to procure for him a transfer to a post in the United States . Hammerstein conceived of him as a rival to Emile for Nellie 's affections , and gave him a song , " *The Bright Young Executive of Today* " . As redrafts focused the play on the two couples , Harbison became less essential , and he was relegated to a small role as the executive officer to the commander of the island , Captain Brackett . Dinah , a nurse and friend of Nellie , is also a major character in Michener 's work , and was seen as a possible love interest for Billis , though any actual romance was limited by Navy regulations forbidding fraternization between officers (all American nurses in World War II were commissioned officers) and enlisted men . " *I 'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair* " originated as a duet for Dinah and Nellie , with Dinah beginning the song and developing its theme . According to Lovensheimer , Nellie 's and Dinah 's " friendship became increasingly incidental to the plot as the writing continued . Hammerstein eventually realized that the decision to wash Emile out of her hair had to be Nellie 's . Only then did the scene have the dramatic potential for Nellie 's emotional transition " as she realizes her love for Emile . In the final version , Dinah retains one solo line in the song .

Joshua Logan , in his memoirs , stated that after months of effort in the first half of 1948 , Hammerstein had written only the first scene , an outline , and some lyrics . Hammerstein was having trouble due to lack of knowledge of the military , a matter with which Logan , a veteran of the armed forces , was able to help . The dialogue was written in consultation between the two of them ,

and eventually Logan asked to be credited for his work . Rodgers and Hammerstein decided that while Logan would receive co @-@ writing credit on the book , he would receive no author 's royalties . Logan stated that a contract putting these changes into force was sent over to his lawyer with instructions that unless it was signed within two hours , Logan need not show up for rehearsals as director . Logan signed , although his lawyer did not then tell him about the ultimatum . Through the decades that followed , Logan brought the matter up from time to time , demanding compensation , but when he included his version of the events in his 1976 memoirs , it was disputed by Rodgers (Hammerstein had died in 1960) . Rodgers biographer Meryle Secrest suggests that Logan was compensated when South Pacific was filmed in 1958 , as Logan received a substantial share of the profits as director . According to Michener biographer Stephen J. May , " it is difficult to assess just how much of the final book Josh Logan was responsible for . Some estimates say 30 to 40 percent . But that percentage is not as critical perhaps as his knowledge of military lore and directing for the theatre , without which the creation of South Pacific would have collapsed during that summer of 1948 . "

Rodgers composed the music once he received the lyrics from Hammerstein . A number of stories are told of the speed with which he wrote the music for South Pacific ' s numbers . " Happy Talk " was said to have been composed in about twenty minutes ; when Hammerstein , who had sent the lyrics by messenger , called to check whether Rodgers had received them , his partner informed him that he had both lyrics and music . Legend has it he composed " Bali Ha 'i " in ten minutes over coffee in Logan 's apartment ; what he did create in that time frame was the three @-@ note motif which begins both song and musical . Hammerstein 's lyrics for " Bali Ha 'i " were inspired by the stage backdrop which designer Jo Mielziner had painted . Feeling that the island of Bali Ha 'i did not appear mysterious enough , Mielziner painted some mist near the summit of its volcano . When Hammerstein saw this he immediately thought of the lyric , " my head sticking up from a low @-@ flying cloud " and the rest of the song followed easily from that .

= = = Casting and out @-@ of @-@ town previews = = =

In May 1948 , Rodgers received a telephone call from Edwin Lester of the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera . Lester had signed former Metropolitan Opera star Ezio Pinza for \$ 25 @,@ 000 to star in a new show , Mr. Ambassador . The show had not been written , and it never would be . Lester hoped that Rodgers would take over Pinza 's contract . Pinza had become bored as the Met 's leading lyric bass , and having played the great opera houses , sought other worlds to conquer . Rodgers immediately saw Pinza as perfect for the role of Emile . Lester carefully broached the subject to Pinza and his wife / business manager and provided them with a copy of Tales of the South Pacific . When Pinza read the book , he told Lester , " Sell me right away ! " Pinza 's contract for South Pacific included a clause limiting his singing to 15 minutes per performance . With Pinza 's signing , Rodgers and Hammerstein decided to make him the lead male role , subordinating the story of the pair of young lovers . It was unusual on Broadway for the romantic lead to be an older male .

For the role of Nellie , Rodgers sought Mary Martin , who had nearly been cast to originate the role of Laurey in Oklahoma ! Martin was playing the title role in the touring company of Annie Get Your Gun . After Hammerstein and Rodgers saw her play in Los Angeles in mid @-@ 1948 , they asked her to consider the part . Martin was reluctant to sing opposite Pinza 's powerful voice ; Rodgers assured her he would see to it the two never sang at the same time , a promise he mostly kept . Rodgers and Martin lived near each other in Connecticut , and after her tour Rodgers invited Martin and her husband , Richard Halliday , to his home to hear the three songs for the musical that he had completed , none of them for Nellie . " Some Enchanted Evening " especially struck Martin , and although disappointed the song was not for her , she agreed to do the part . Although Nellie and Emile were already fully developed characters in Michener 's stories , during the creation of South Pacific , Rodgers , Hammerstein and Logan began to adapt the roles specifically to the talents of Martin and Pinza and to tailor the music for their voices .

Martin influenced several of her songs . While showering one day during rehearsals , she came up with the idea for a scene in which she would shampoo her hair onstage . This gave rise to " I 'm

Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair " . Built around a primitive shower that Logan remembered from his time in the military , the song became one of the most talked @-@ about in South Pacific . To introduce another of Martin 's numbers to her , Rodgers called her over to his apartment , where he and Hammerstein played " I 'm in Love with a Wonderful Guy " for her . When Martin essayed it for herself , she sang the final 26 words , as intended , with a single breath , and fell off her piano bench . Rodgers gazed down at her , " That 's exactly what I want . Never do it differently . We must feel you couldn 't squeeze out another sound . "

The producers held extensive auditions to fill the other roles . Myron McCormick was cast as Billis ; according to Logan , no one else was seriously considered . The two roles which gave the most trouble were those of Cable and Bloody Mary . They tried to get Harold Keel for the role of Cable (he had played Curly in the West End production of Oklahoma !) only to find that he had signed a contract with MGM under the name Howard Keel . William Tabbert was eventually cast as Cable , though Logan instructed him to lose 20 pounds (9 @. @ 1 kg) . African @-@ American singer Juanita Hall was cast as Bloody Mary ; Logan recalled that at her audition , she took a squatting pose which proclaimed , " I am Bloody Mary and don 't you dare cast anyone else ! " Betta St. John , who under the name Betty Striegler had replaced Bambi Linn as Louise in Carousel , took the role of Liat . Logan directed (he and Hayward co @-@ produced with Rodgers and Hammerstein) , Mielziner did the stage design , Trude Rittmann and Robert Russell Bennett prepared the orchestration , and Elizabeth Montgomery of Motley Theatre Design Group designed the costumes . Salvatore Dell 'Isola served as music director .

= = = Original production = = =

Rehearsals began at Broadway 's Belasco Theatre on February 2 , 1949 . There was no formal chorus ; each of the nurses and Seabees was given a name , and , in the case of the men , \$ 50 to equip themselves with what clothing they felt their characters would wear from the military surplus shops which lined West 42nd Street . Don Fellows , the first Lt. Buzz Adams , drew on his wartime experience as a Marine to purchase a non @-@ regulation baseball cap and black ankle boots . Martin and Pinza had not known each other , but they soon formed a strong friendship . Of the mood backstage , " everyone agreed : throughout the rehearsals Logan was fiery , demanding , and brilliantly inventive . " He implemented lap changes (pioneered by Rodgers and Hammerstein in Allegro) , whereby the actors coming on next would already be on a darkened part of the stage as one scene concluded . This allowed the musical to continue without interruption by scene changes , making the action almost seamless . He soon had the Seabees pacing back and forth like caged animals during " There Is Nothing Like a Dame " , a staging so effective it was never changed during the run of the show . One Logan innovation that Rodgers and Hammerstein reluctantly accepted was to have Cable remove his shirt during the blackout after he and Liat passionately embrace on first meeting , his partial nakedness symbolizing their lovemaking . As originally planned , Martin was supposed to conclude " I 'm in Love with a Wonderful Guy " with an exuberant cartwheel across the stage . This was eliminated after she vaulted into the orchestra pit , knocking out Rittman .

There were no major difficulties during the four weeks of rehearsal in New York ; Martin later remembered that the " gypsy run @-@ through " for friends and professional associates on a bare stage was met with some of the most enthusiastic applause she could remember . One of the few people having trouble was Pinza , who had difficulty adjusting to the constant alterations in the show ? he was used to the operatic world , where a role rarely changed once learned . Pinza 's mispronunciations of English exasperated Logan , and driving to New Haven for the first week of previews , Pinza discussed with his wife the possibility of a return to the Met , where he knew audiences would welcome him . She told him to let South Pacific ' s attendees decide for themselves . When the tryouts began in New Haven on March 7 , the play was an immediate hit ; the New Haven Register wrote , " South Pacific should make history " .

Nevertheless , a number of changes were made in New Haven and in the subsequent two weeks of previews in Boston . The show was running long ; Logan persuaded his friend , playwright Emlyn Williams , to go over the script and cut extraneous dialogue . There were wide expectations of a hit ;

producer Mike Todd came backstage and advised that the show not be taken to New York " because it 's too damned good for them " . The show moved to Boston , where it was so successful that playwright George S. Kaufman joked that people lining up there at the Shubert Theatre " don 't actually want anything ... They just want to push money under the doors . "

South Pacific opened on Broadway on April 7 , 1949 , at the Majestic Theatre . The advance sale was \$ 400 @ , @ 000 , and an additional \$ 700 @ , @ 000 in sales was made soon after the opening . The first night audience was packed with important Broadway , business , and arts leaders . The audience repeatedly stopped the show with extended applause , which was sustained at length at the final curtain . Rodgers and Hammerstein had preferred , in the past , not to sponsor an afterparty , but they rented the St. Regis Hotel 's roof and ordered 200 copies of The New York Times in the anticipation of a hit . Times critic Brooks Atkinson gave the show a rave review .

Three days after the opening , Pinza signed a contract with MGM to star in films once his obligation to appear in the show expired . He left the show June 1 , 1950 , replaced by Ray Middleton , though Pinza missed a number of shows due to illness before that . Martin recalled that , unused to performing eight shows a week , the former opera star would sing full out early in the week , leaving himself little voice towards the end , and would have his understudy go on . Nevertheless , during the year he was in the show , and although aged 58 , he was acclaimed as a sex symbol ; George Jean Nathan wrote that " Pinza has taken the place of Hot Springs , Saratoga , and hormone injections for all the other old boys " .

A national tour began in Cleveland , Ohio , in April 1950 ; it ran for five years and starred Richard Eastham as Emile , Janet Blair as Nellie and Ray Walston as Billis , a role Walston would reprise in London and in the 1958 film . For the 48 @ , @ 000 tickets available in Cleveland , 250 @ , @ 000 requests were submitted , causing the box office to close for three weeks to process them . Jeanne Bal and Iva Withers were later Nellies on this tour . A scaled @ - @ down version toured military bases in Korea in 1951 ; by the request of Hammerstein and Rodgers , officers and enlisted soldiers sat together to view it .

Martin left the Broadway production in 1951 to appear in the original London West End production ; Martha Wright replaced her . Despite the departure of both original stars , the show remained a huge attraction in New York . Cloris Leachman also played Nellie during the New York run ; George Britton was among the later Emiles . The London production ran from November 1 , 1951 for 802 performances at the Theatre Royal , Drury Lane . Logan directed ; Martin and Wilbur Evans starred , with Walston as Billis , Muriel Smith as Bloody Mary and Ivor Emmanuel in the small role of Sgt. Johnson . Sean Connery and Martin 's son Larry Hagman , both at the start of their careers , played Seabees in the London production ; Julie Wilson eventually replaced Martin . On January 31 , 1952 , King George VI attended the production with his daughter Princess Elizabeth and other members of the Royal Family . He died less than a week later .

The Broadway production transferred to the Broadway Theatre in June 1953 to accommodate Rodgers and Hammerstein 's new show , Me and Juliet , although South Pacific had to be moved to Boston for five weeks because of schedule conflicts . When it closed on January 16 , 1954 , after 1 @ , @ 925 performances , it was the second @ - @ longest @ - @ running musical in Broadway history , after Oklahoma ! . At the final performance , Myron McCormick , the only cast member remaining from the opening , led the performers and audience in " Auld Lang Syne " ; the curtain did not fall but remained raised as the audience left the theatre .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Act I = = =

On a South Pacific island during World War II , two half @ - @ Polynesian children , Ngana and Jerome , happily sing as they play together (" Dites @ - @ Moi ") . Ensign Nellie Forbush , a naïve U.S. Navy nurse from Little Rock , Arkansas , has fallen in love with Emile de Becque , a middle @ - @ aged French plantation owner , though she has known him only briefly . Even though

everyone else is worried about the outcome of the war , Nellie tells Emile that she is sure everything will turn out all right (" A Cockeyed Optimist ") . Emile also loves Nellie , and each wonders if the other reciprocates those feelings (" Twin Soliloquies ") . Emile expresses his love for Nellie , recalling how they met at the officers ' club dance and instantly were attracted to each other (" Some Enchanted Evening ") . Nellie , promising to think about their relationship , returns to the hospital . Emile calls Ngana and Jerome to him , revealing to the audience that they are his children , unbeknownst to Nellie .

Meanwhile , the restless American Seabees , led by crafty Luther Billis , lament the absence of available women ? Navy nurses are commissioned officers and off @-@ limits to enlisted men . There is one civilian woman on the island , nicknamed " Bloody Mary " , a sassy middle @-@ aged Tonkinese vendor of grass skirts , who engages the sailors in sarcastic , flirtatious banter as she tries to sell them her wares (" Bloody Mary ") . Billis yearns to visit the nearby island of Bali Ha 'i ? which is off @-@ limits to all but officers ? supposedly to witness a Boar 's Tooth Ceremony (at which he can get an unusual native artifact) ; the other sailors josh him , saying that his real motivation is to see the young French women there . Billis and the sailors further lament their lack of feminine companionship (" There Is Nothing Like a Dame ") .

U.S. Marine Lieutenant Cable arrives on the island from Guadalcanal , having been sent to take part in a dangerous spy mission whose success could turn the tide of the war against Japan . Bloody Mary tries to persuade Cable to visit " Bali Ha 'i " , mysteriously telling him that it is his special island . Billis , seeing an opportunity , urges Cable to go . Cable meets with his commanding officers , Captain George Brackett and Commander William Harbison , who plan to ask Emile to help with the mission because he used to live on the island where the mission will take place . They ask Nellie to help them find out more about Emile 's background , for example , his politics and why he left France . They have heard , for instance , that Emile committed a murder , and this might make him less than desirable for such a mission .

After thinking a bit more about Emile and deciding she has become attracted on the basis of little knowledge of him , Nellie tells the other nurses that she intends to end her relationship with him (" I 'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair ") . When he arrives unexpectedly and invites Nellie to a party where he will introduce her to his friends , however , she accepts . Emile declares his love for Nellie and asks her to marry him . When she mentions politics , he speaks of universal freedom , and describes fleeing France after standing up against a bully , who died accidentally as the two fought . After hearing this , Nellie agrees to marry Emile . After he exits , Nellie joyously gives voice to her feelings (" I 'm in Love with a Wonderful Guy ") .

Cable 's mission is to land on a Japanese @-@ held island and report on Japanese ship movements . The Navy officers ask Emile to be Cable 's guide , but he refuses their request because of his hopes for a new life with Nellie . Commander Harbison , the executive officer , tells Cable to go on leave until the mission can take place , and Billis obtains a boat and takes Cable to Bali Ha 'i . There , Billis participates in the native ceremony , while Bloody Mary introduces Cable to her beautiful daughter , Liat , with whom he must communicate haltingly in French . Believing that Liat 's only chance at a better life is to marry an American officer , Mary leaves Liat alone with Cable . The two are instantly attracted to each other and make love (" Younger Than Springtime ") . Billis and the rest of the crew are ready to leave the island , yet must wait for Cable who , unbeknownst to them , is with Liat (" Bali Ha 'i " (reprise)) . Bloody Mary proudly tells Billis that Cable is going to be her son @-@ in @-@ law .

Meanwhile , after Emile 's party , Nellie and he reflect on how happy they are to be in love (Reprises of " I 'm in Love with a Wonderful Guy " , " Twin Soliloquies " , " Cockeyed Optimist " and " I 'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair ") . Emile introduces Nellie to Jerome and Ngana . Though she finds them charming , she is shocked when Emile reveals that they are his children by his first wife , a dark @-@ skinned Polynesian woman , now deceased . Nellie is unable to overcome her deep @-@ seated racial prejudices and tearfully leaves Emile , after which he reflects sadly on what might have been (" Some Enchanted Evening " (reprise)) .

= = = Act II = = =

It is Thanksgiving Day . The GIs and nurses dance in a holiday revue titled " Thanksgiving Follies " . In the past week , an epidemic of malaria has hit the island of Bali Ha 'i . Having visited Bali Ha 'i often to be with Liat , Cable is also ill , but escapes from the hospital to be with Liat . As Liat and Cable spend more time together , Bloody Mary is delighted . She encourages them to continue their carefree life on the island (" Happy Talk ") and urges them to marry . Cable , aware of his family 's prejudices , says he cannot marry a Tonkinese girl . Bloody Mary furiously drags her distraught daughter away , telling Cable that Liat must now marry a much older French plantation owner instead . Cable laments his loss . (" Younger Than Springtime " (reprise)) .

For the final number of the Thanksgiving Follies , Nellie performs a comedy burlesque dressed as a sailor singing the praises of " his " sweetheart (" Honey Bun ") . Billis plays Honey Bun , dressed in a blond wig , grass skirt and coconut @-@ shell bra . After the show , Emile asks Nellie to reconsider . She insists that she cannot feel the same way about him since she knows about his children 's Polynesian mother . Frustrated and uncomprehending , Emile asks Cable why he and Nellie have such prejudices . Cable , filled with self @-@ loathing , replies that " it 's not something you 're born with " , yet it is an ingrained part of their upbringing (" You 've Got to Be Carefully Taught ") . He also vows that if he gets out of the war alive , he won 't go home to the United States ; everything he wants is on these islands . Emile imagines what might have been (" This Nearly Was Mine ") . Dejected and feeling that he has nothing to lose , he agrees to join Cable on his dangerous mission .

The mission begins with plenty of air support . Offstage , Billis stows away on the plane , falls out when the plane is hit by anti @-@ aircraft fire , and ends up in the ocean waiting to be rescued ; the massive rescue operation inadvertently becomes a diversion that allows Emile and Cable to land on the other side of the island undetected . The two send back reports on Japanese ships ' movements in the " Slot " , a strategic strait ; American aircraft intercept and destroy the Japanese ships . When the Japanese Zeros strafe the Americans ' position , Emile narrowly escapes , but Cable is killed .

Nellie learns of Cable 's death and that Emile is missing . She realizes that she was foolish to reject Emile because of the race of his children 's mother . Bloody Mary and Liat come to Nellie asking where Cable is ; Mary explains that Liat refuses to marry anyone but him . Nellie comforts Liat . Cable and Emile 's espionage work has made it possible for a major offensive , Operation Alligator , to begin . The previously idle fighting men , including Billis , go off to battle .

Nellie spends time with Jerome and Ngana and soon comes to love them . While the children are teaching her to sing " Dites @-@ Moi , " suddenly Emile 's voice joins them . Emile has returned to discover that Nellie has overcome her prejudices and has fallen in love with his children . Emile , Nellie and the children rejoice (" Dites @-@ Moi " (reprise)) .

= = Principal roles and notable performers = =

= = Songs = =

= = = Additional songs = = =

A number of songs were extensively modified , or were omitted , in the weeks leading up to the initial Broadway opening . They are listed in the order of their one @-@ time placement within the show :

" Bright Canary Yellow " , a short song for Nellie and Emile , was placed just before " A Cockeyed Optimist " , of which the opening line , " When the sky is a bright canary yellow " was intended to play off of the earlier song .

" Now Is the Time " (Emile) was placed in the beach scene (Act I , Scene 7) just after Emile tells Nellie why he killed the man in France . It was to be reprised after " You 've Got to Be Carefully Taught " , but it was felt that for Emile to remain on stage while singing of immediate action was self

@-@ contradictory . It was replaced in Act I by a reprise of " Some Enchanted Evening " ; in Act II it was initially replaced by " Will You Marry Me ? " (later repurposed for Pipe Dream) on March 24 , 1949 , and then by " This Nearly Was Mine " on March 29 , just over a week before the Broadway opening on April 7 .

" Loneliness of Evening " (Emile) was cut before the Broadway opening . It was to occur in the first backstage scene (Act II , Scene 2) prior to " Happy Talk " and was sung to the same melody as " Bright Canary Yellow " . Its melody can be heard in the 1958 film as Emile reads aloud the card with the flowers he has brought backstage for Nellie to the Thanksgiving show ; the second stanza was repurposed and sung by the Prince in the 1965 TV production of Cinderella .

A reprise of " Younger Than Springtime " that follows Cable 's rejection of Liat , was added after January 1949 . It followed two separate attempts at songs for Cable . One song , designated as " My Friend " was a duet for Cable and Liat , included such lyrics as " My friend , my friend , is coming around the bend " and was rejected by Logan as one of the worst he 'd ever heard . Rodgers and Hammerstein 's second attempt to place a song there , " Suddenly Lovely " , was considered by Logan too lightweight and was later repurposed for The King and I as " Getting to Know You " . The melody for " Younger than Springtime " was from a song , " My Wife " , intended for Allegro but not used .

" Honey Bun " was not included in the January 1949 libretto (a note marks that the lyrics will be supplied later) .

" My Girl Back Home " (Cable) preceded " You 've Got to be Carefully Taught " in the original score but was cut before the first Broadway production . It appears in the movie version as a duet for Nellie and Cable . It was reinstated for the 2002 London revival , for Cable .

" You 've Got to be Carefully Taught " originally had several singing lines for Emile following the conclusion of the lyrics for Cable .

= = Revivals = =

= = = 20th century = = =

A limited run of South Pacific by the New York City Center Light Opera Company opened at New York City Center on May 4 , 1955 , closing on May 15 , 1955 . It was directed by Charles Atkin , and had costumes by Motley and sets by Mielziner . The cast included Richard Collett as Emile , Sandra Deel as Nellie , Carol Lawrence as Liat , Sylvia Syms as Bloody Mary and Gene Saks as the Professor . A second limited run of the same production with a different cast opened at City Center on April 24 , 1957 , closing on May 12 , 1957 . It was directed by Jean Dalrymple , and the cast included Robert Wright as Emile , Mindy Carson as Nellie and Hall reprising the role of Bloody Mary . That production was given again in 1961 , this time with Ann McLerie and William Chapman in the lead roles .

There have been many stock or summer revivals of South Pacific . One , in 1957 at Long Island 's Westbury Music Fair , occurred at the same time that Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus was resisting the integration of Central High School by the Little Rock Nine . Nellie 's pronouncement that she was from Little Rock was initially met with boos . Logan refused to allow Nellie 's hometown to be changed , so a speech was made before each performance asking for the audience 's forbearance , which was forthcoming .

There were two revivals at Lincoln Center . Richard Rodgers produced the 1967 revival , which starred Florence Henderson and Giorgio Tozzi , who had been Rossano Brazzi 's singing voice in the 1958 film . Joe Layton was the director . The cast album was issued on LP and later on CD . The musical toured North America from 1986 to 1988 , headlined by Robert Goulet and Barbara Eden , with David Carroll as Cable , Armelia McQueen as Bloody Mary and Lia Chang as Liat , first directed by Geraldine Fitzgerald and then Ron Field . A New York City Opera production in 1987 featured alternating performers Justino Díaz and Stanley Wexler as Emile , and Susan Bigelow and Marcia Mitzman as Nellie .

A 1988 West End revival starred Gemma Craven and Emile Belcourt , supported by Bertice Reading , among others , and was directed by Roger Redfern . It ran at the Prince of Wales Theatre from January 20 , 1988 to January 14 , 1989 .

= = = 21st century = = =

A new production with slight revisions to the book and score was produced by the Royal National Theatre at the company 's Olivier Theatre in London for a limited run from December 2001 through April 2002 , timed to celebrate the centenary of Richard Rodgers ' birth . Trevor Nunn directed , with musical staging by Matthew Bourne and designs by John Napier . Lauren Kennedy was Nellie , and Australian actor Philip Quast played Emile , Borrowing from the 1958 film , this production placed the first Emile @-@ Nellie scene after the introduction of Cable , Billis and Bloody Mary .

A British touring production of South Pacific opened at the Blackpool Grand Theatre on August 28 , 2007 . The tour ended at the Cardiff New Theatre on July 19 , 2008 . It starred Helena Blackman as Nellie and Dave Willetts as Emile . Julian Woolford directed , with choreography by Chris Hocking . This production was most noted for its staging of the overture , which charted Nellie 's journey from Little Rock , Arkansas , to the South Pacific . On entering the theatre , the audience first saw a map of the U.S. , not the theater of war .

A Broadway revival of South Pacific opened on April 3 , 2008 at Lincoln Center 's Vivian Beaumont Theater . Bartlett Sher directed , with musical staging by Christopher Gattelli and associate choreographer Joe Langworth . The opening cast starred Kelli O 'Hara as Nellie , Paulo Szot as Emile and Matthew Morrison as Lt. Cable , with Danny Burstein as Billis and Loretta Ables Sayre as Bloody Mary . Laura Osnes replaced O 'Hara during her seven @-@ month maternity leave , beginning in March 2009 , and also between January and August 2010 . Szot alternated with David Pittsinger as Emile . The production closed on August 22 , 2010 , after 37 previews and 996 regular performances .

With a few exceptions , the production received rave reviews . Ben Brantley wrote in The New York Times :

I know we 're not supposed to expect perfection in this imperfect world , but I 'm darned if I can find one serious flaw in this production . (Yes , the second act remains weaker than the first , but Mr. Sher almost makes you forget that .) All of the supporting performances , including those of the ensemble , feel precisely individualized , right down to how they wear Catherine Zuber 's carefully researched period costumes .

The production , with most of the original principals , was taped and broadcast live in HD on August 18 , 2010 on the PBS television show Live from Lincoln Center .

A production based on the 2008 Broadway revival opened at the Barbican Theatre in London on August 15 , 2011 and closed on October 1 , 2011 . Sher again directed , with the same creative team from the Broadway revival . Szot and Welsh National Opera singer Jason Howard alternated in the role of Emile , with Samantha Womack as Nellie , Ables Sayre as Bloody Mary and Alex Ferns as Billis . The production received mostly positive reviews . A U.K tour followed , with Womack , Ables Sayre and Ferns .

A U.S. national tour based on the 2008 revival began in San Francisco at the Golden Gate Theatre on September 18 , 2009 . Sher directed , and the cast starred Rod Gilfry (Emile) and Carmen Cusack (Nellie) . The Sher production was also produced by Opera Australia at the Sydney Opera House from August to September 2012 and then at Princess Theatre , Melbourne through October 2012 . It starred Teddy Tahu Rhodes as Emile , Lisa McCune as Nellie , Kate Ceberano as Bloody Mary and Eddie Perfect as Billis . The production then played in Brisbane for the 2012 holiday season , with Christine Anu as Bloody Mary , and resumed touring in Australia in September 2013 .

= = Reception and success = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

Reviewers gave the original production uniformly glowing reviews ; one critic called it " South Terrific " . The New York Herald Tribune wrote :

The new and much @-@ heralded musical , South Pacific , is a show of rare enchantment . It is novel in texture and treatment , rich in dramatic substance , and eloquent in song , a musical play to be cherished . Under Logan 's superb direction , the action shifts with constant fluency [He] has kept the book cumulatively arresting and tremendously satisfying . The occasional dances appear to be magical improvisations . It is a long and prodigal entertainment , but it seems all too short . The Rodgers music is not his finest , but it fits the mood and pace of South Pacific so felicitously that one does not miss a series of hit tunes . In the same way the lyrics are part and parcel of a captivating musical unity .

The New York Daily Mirror critic wrote , " Programmed as a musical play , South Pacific is just that . It boasts no ballets and no hot hoofing . It has no chorus in the conventional sense . Every one in it plays a part . It is likely to establish a new trend in musicals . " The review continued : " Every number is so outstanding that it is difficult to decide which will be the most popular . " The review in New York World @-@ Telegram found the show to be " the ultimate modern blending of music and popular theatre to date , with the finest kind of balance between story and song , and hilarity and heartbreak . " Brooks Atkinson of The New York Times especially praised Pinza 's performance : " Mr. Pinza 's bass voice is the most beautiful that has been heard on a Broadway stage for an eon or two . He sings ... with infinite delicacy of feeling and loveliness of tone . " He declared that " Some Enchanted Evening " , sung by Pinza , " ought to become reasonably immortal . " Richard Watts , Jr. of the New York Post focused on Mary Martin 's performance , writing , " nothing I have ever seen her do prepared me for the loveliness , humor , gift for joyous characterization , and sheer lovableness of her portrayal of Nellie Forbush ... who is so shocked to find her early racial prejudices cropping up . Hers is a completely irresistible performance . "

When South Pacific opened in London in November 1951 , the reviews were mixed . London 's Daily Express praised the music but disliked other elements of that show , writing , " We got a 42nd Street Madame Butterfly , the weakest of all the Hammerstein @-@ Rodgers musicals . The Daily Mail suggested , " The play moved so slowly between its songs that it seemed more like South Soporific . " The Times applauded the songs but indicated that " before the end the singing and the dancing have dwindled to almost nothing , while the rather sad little tale is slowly and conventionally wound up . " The Manchester Guardian , however , noted the anticipation in advance of the opening and concluded that " there was no disappointment ... the show bounces the audience and well deserves the cheers . " Drama critic Kenneth Tynan of The Spectator wrote that South Pacific was " the first musical romance which was seriously involved in an adult subject ... I have nothing to do but thank Logan , Rodgers and Hammerstein and climb up from my knees , a little cramped from the effort of typing in such an unusual position . "

A 2006 review asserted : " Many are the knowledgeable and discriminating people for whom Rodgers and Hammerstein 's South Pacific , brilliantly co @-@ written and staged by Joshua Logan , was the greatest musical of all . " In 1987 , however , John Rockwell of The New York Times reviewed the City Opera production , commenting that while South Pacific had been innovative for 1949 , " Sondheim has long since transcended its formal innovations , and the constant reprises of the big tunes sound mechanical . In 1949 , South Pacific epitomized the concerns of the day ? America 's responsibilities in the world and the dangers of racism At its 1967 State Theater revival , the show struck many as dated . It still seems that way , with M * A * S * H having contemporized this same setting " . A 2008 Huffington Post review criticized the play as having an Orientalist and Western @-@ centric storyline in which stereotypical natives take on " exotic background roles " in relation to Americans , and it characterized the relationship between Cable and Liat as underage prostitution , charging that she " speaks not a word in the whole musical , only smiles and takes the Yankee to bed . " South Pacific is the only major American musical set in World War II , but former Marine Robert Leckie wrote his memoir of that conflict , Helmet for My Pillow , after he walked out of a performance : " I have to tell the story of how it really was . I have to let people know the war wasn 't a musical . "

= = = Box office and awards = = =

South Pacific opened on Broadway with \$ 400 @, @ 000 in advance sales . People were so eager to obtain tickets that the press wrote about the lengths people had gone to in getting them . Because " house seats " were being sold by scalpers for \$ 200 or more , the attorney general 's office threatened to close the show . However , the parties who provided the scalpers with the tickets were never identified , and the show ran without interference . The production had a \$ 50 @, @ 600 weekly gross , and ran for 1 @, @ 925 performances . The national tour began in 1950 and grossed \$ 3 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 in the first year , making \$ 1 @, @ 500 @, @ 000 in profit . The original cast album , priced at \$ 4 @. @ 85 , sold more than a million copies .

The original production of South Pacific won ten Tony Awards , including Best Musical , Best Male Performer (Pinza) , Best Female Performer (Martin) , Best Supporting Male Performer (McCormick) , Best Supporting Female Performer (Hall) , Best Director (Logan) , Best Book and Best Score . In 1950 , the musical won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama , the second musical to do so after *Of Thee I Sing* , which won in 1932 . Rodgers became the first composer of musical comedy to win the Pulitzer , as composer George Gershwin had not been recognized for *Of Thee I Sing* . The Pulitzer Prize was initially given only to Rodgers and Hammerstein ; Logan was later recognized in an amended announcement , much to his annoyance .

The 2001 London revival garnered a Laurence Olivier Award for Philip Quast (Emile) . The 2008 revival won seven Tony Awards , including Best Revival (Sher and Szot also won , and the show won in all four design categories) , and five Drama Desk Awards , including Outstanding Musical Revival . The late Robert Russell Bennett was also honored that season for " his historic contribution to American musical theatre in the field of orchestrations , as represented on Broadway this season by Rodgers and Hammerstein 's *South Pacific* . " The 2011 London production received three Olivier Award nominations , including Best Musical Revival , but won none .

= = Themes and cultural effect = =

= = = Race = = =

Part of the reason why *South Pacific* is considered a classic is its confrontation of racism . According to professor Philip Beidler , " Rodgers and Hammerstein 's attempt to use the Broadway theater to make a courageous statement against racial bigotry in general and institutional racism in the postwar United States in particular " forms part of *South Pacific* ' s legend . Although *Tales of the South Pacific* treats the question of racism , it does not give it the central place that it takes in the musical . Andrea Most , writing on the " politics of race " in *South Pacific* , suggests that in the late 1940s , American liberals , such as Rodgers and Hammerstein , turned to the fight for racial equality as a practical means of advancing their progressive views without risking being deemed communists . Trevor Nunn , director of the 2001 West End production , notes the importance of the fact that Nellie , a southerner , ends the play about to be the mother in an interracial family : " It 's being performed in America in 1949 . That 's the resonance . "

From the early drafts , Hammerstein and Logan made the issue of racial prejudice central to the story . Hammerstein repeatedly rewrote the Act II backstage scene where Emile , Nellie and Cable confront the question of the Americans ' racism . As critic Robert Butler pointed out in his educational companion to the 2001 London production , " if one young person has a prejudice , it might be a character flaw ; if two young people share a prejudice , it tells us something about the society in which they grew up " . In one draft , Emile advises that the Americans are no better than the Axis Powers , in their prejudice , and suggests they go home to sing songs about how all are created free and equal . Lovensheimer states that a postwar American audience would have found such onstage sentiments to be offensive . In the staged version , Emile 's expressions are limited to two lines arguing that prejudice is not inborn .

At the heart of this scene is Cable 's song " You 've Got to Be Carefully Taught " , in which Cable realizes the sources of his own racism . Its frank lyrics made it perhaps the most controversial element of the show . Michener recalled in his memoirs that a delegation of New Englanders had approached him after a New Haven tryout and urged him to recommend the song 's removal to Rodgers and Hammerstein . When Michener told Hammerstein , he laughed and replied , " That 's what the show is about ! " Boston drama critic Elliot Norton , after seeing the show in tryouts , strongly recommended its removal , or at least that Cable sing it less " briskly " , as there was much bigotry in Boston ; Logan replied that that was all the more reason for leaving it unaltered . Several New York reviewers expressed discomfort with the song ; Wolcott Gibbs wrote of " something called ' You 've Got to Be Taught ' " , a poem in praise of tolerance that somehow I found a little embarrassing " while John Mason Brown opined that he was " somewhat distressed by the dragged @-@ in didacticism of such a plea for tolerance as ' You 've Got to Be Taught ' " . After the Broadway opening , Hammerstein received a large number of letters concerning " You 've Got to Be Carefully Taught " . Judging by the letters that remain among his papers in the Library of Congress , the reaction was mixed . One correspondent wrote " What can I say to a man who writes , ' You 've got to be taught to hate and fear ? ' ... Now that I know you , I feel that my informants didn 't praise you enough . " Nevertheless , another wrote , " I feel the inclusion of the song particularly in the album and to some extent in the show itself is not helpful to the cause of brotherhood , your intent to the contrary notwithstanding " .

When the tour of the show reached a racially segregated theatre in Wilmington , Delaware , Rodgers and Hammerstein threatened to cancel the performances there unless seating was integrated , which it was . In 1953 , with the tour in Atlanta , there was controversy over " You 've Got to Be Carefully Taught " . Two Georgia state legislators , Senator John D. Shepard and Representative David C. Jones , objected to the song , stating that though South Pacific was a fine piece of entertainment , that song " contained an underlying philosophy inspired by Moscow " , and explained , " Intermarriage produces half @-@ breeds . And half @-@ breeds are not conducive to the higher type of society In the South , we have pure blood lines and we intend to keep it that way . " They stated that they planned to introduce legislation to outlaw such communist @-@ inspired works . The Northern press had a field day ; Hammerstein , when asked for comment , responded that he did not think the legislators were representing their constituents very well , and that he was surprised at the suggestion that anything kind and decent must necessarily originate in Moscow . In part because of the song , touring companies of South Pacific had difficulty getting bookings in the Deep South .

In the final scene of Act I , Nellie rejects Emile because of his part @-@ Polynesian children . In so doing , Nellie fails to live up to the American ideal that " all men are created equal " , which Emile had earlier affirmed . This scene was also toned down by Hammerstein ; in early drafts , Nellie , initially unable to force out a word to describe Emile 's first wife , after he supplies the word " Polynesian " , responds with " colored " . This pronouncement , which makes Nellie less sympathetic as a character , was restored for the 2008 Lincoln Center production . As Frank Rich of The New York Times commented , " it 's upsetting because Nellie isn 't some cracker stereotype ? she 's lovable ... But how can we love a racist ? " Most argues that even Emile is tainted by racism , as his lifestyle is dependent on the maintenance of a system whereby he benefits from underpaid native labor ? Bloody Mary is able to attract workers to make grass skirts for sale to GIs because , as she puts it , " French planters stingy bastards ! "

= = = Sex and gender roles = = =

Nellie Forbush , in her journey from Little Rock , Arkansas , to serving as a Navy nurse and on to the domesticity of the final scene of South Pacific , parallels the experience of many American women of the period . They entered the workforce during the war , only to find afterwards a societal expectation that they give up their jobs to men , with their best route to financial security being marriage and becoming a housewife . One means of securing audience acceptance of Nellie 's choices was the sanitization of her sexual past from her counterpart in the Michener work ? that

character had a 4 @-@ F boyfriend back in Arkansas and a liaison with Bill Harbison while on the island .

The male characters in South Pacific are intended to appear conventionally masculine . In the aftermath of World War II , the masculinity of the American soldier was beyond public question . Cable 's virility with Liat is made evident to the audience . Although Billis operates a laundry ? Nellie particularly praises his pleats ? and appears in a grass skirt in the " Thanksgiving Follies " , these acts are consistent with his desire for money and are clearly intended to be comic . His interest in the young ladies on Bali H 'ai establishes his masculinity . Lovensheimer writes that Billis is more defined by class than by sexuality , evidenced by the Seabee 's assumption , on learning that Cable went to college in New Jersey , that it was Rutgers (the state 's flagship public university) , rather than Ivy League Princeton , and by his delight on learning that the rescue operation for him had cost \$ 600 @,@ 000 when his uncle had told him he would never be worth a dime .

Meryle Secrest , in her biography of Rodgers , theorizes that South Pacific marks a transition for the pair " between heroes and heroines who are more or less evenly matched in age and stories about powerful older men and the younger women who are attracted to them " . Lovensheimer , however , points out that this pattern really only holds for two of their five subsequent musicals , The King and I and The Sound of Music , and in the former , the love between Anna and the King is not expressed in words . He believes a different transition took place : that their plots , beginning with South Pacific , involve a woman needing to enter and accept her love interest 's world to be successful and accepted herself . He notes that both Oklahoma ! and Carousel involve a man entering his wife 's world , Curly in Oklahoma ! about to become a farmer with expectations of success , whereas Billy Bigelow in Carousel fails to find work after leaving his place as a barker . Lovensheimer deems Allegro to be a transition , where the attempts of the lead female character to alter her husband Joe 's world to suit her ambition lead to the breakup of their marriage . He argues that the nurse Emily , who goes with Joe in his return to the small town where he was happy , is a forerunner of Nellie , uprooting her life in Chicago for Joe .

Secrest notes that much is overlooked in the rush to have love conquer all in South Pacific , " questions of the long @-@ term survival of a marriage between a sophisticate who read Proust at bedtime and a girl who liked Dinah Shore and did not read anything were raised by Nellie Forbush only to be brushed aside . As for the interracial complexities of raising two Polynesian children , all such issues were subsumed in the general euphoria of true love . " Lovensheimer too wonders how Nellie will fare as the second Madame de Becque , " little Nellie Forbush from Arkansas ends up in a tropical paradise , far from her previous world , with a husband , a servant , and two children who speak a language she does not understand " .

= = = Cultural effect = = =

A mammoth hit , South Pacific sparked huge media and public attention . South Pacific was one of the first shows for which a variety of souvenirs were available : fans could buy South Pacific neckties , or for women , lipstick and scarves . Fake ticket stubs could be purchased for use as status symbols . There were South Pacific music boxes , dolls , fashion accessories and even hairbrushes for use after washing men from hair . Martin 's on @-@ stage shower prompted an immediate fashion craze for short hair that could be managed through once @-@ a @-@ day washing at home , rather than in a beauty salon , and for the products which would allow for such care . The songs of South Pacific could be heard on the radio , and they were popular among dance bands and in piano lounges . Mordden comments that South Pacific contained nothing but hit songs ; Rodgers and Hammerstein 's other successful works always included at least one song which did not become popular .

The cast album , recorded ten days after the show 's opening , was an immediate hit . Released by Columbia Records , it spent 69 weeks at # 1 on Billboard and a total of 400 weeks on the charts , becoming the best @-@ selling record of the 1940s . It was one of the early LP records , with a turntable speed of 33 ? rpm , and helped to popularize that technology ? previously , show albums and operas had been issued on sets of 78 rpm records , with high prices and much less music on a

single disc . In the years to come , the LP would become the medium of choice for the " longhair " music niche of show , opera and classical performances .

An indirect effect of the success of the show was the career of James Michener . His one percent of the show as author of the source material , plus the income from a share which the duo allowed him to buy on credit , made him financially independent and allowed him to quit his job as an editor at Macmillan and to become a full @-@ time writer . Over the next five decades , his lengthy , detailed novels centering on different places would dominate the bestseller lists .

= = Music and recordings = =

= = = Musical treatment = = =

The role of Nellie Forbush was the first time with Hammerstein that Rodgers made the leading female role a belter , rather than a lyric soprano like Laurey in Oklahoma ! and Julie in Carousel . According to Mordden , " Nellie was something new in R & H , carrying a goodly share of the score on a ' Broadway ' voice " .

Nellie does not sing together with Emile , because Rodgers promised Martin that she would not have to compete vocally with Pinza , but the composer sought to unite them in the underlying music . A tetrachord , heard before we see either lead , is played during the instrumental introduction to " Dites @-@ Moi " , the show 's first song . Considered as pitch classes , that is , as pitches without characterization by octave or register , the motif is C @-@ B @-@ A @-@ G. It will be heard repeatedly in Nellie 's music , or in the music (such as " Twin Soliloquies ") that she shares with Emile , and even in the bridge of " Some Enchanted Evening " . Lovensheimer argues that this symbolizes what Nellie is trying to say with her Act II line " We 're the same sort of people fundamentally ? you and me " .

Originally , " Twin Soliloquies " came to an end shortly after the vocal part finishes . Logan found this unsatisfying and worked with Trude Rittmann to find a better ending to the song . This piece of music , dubbed " Unspoken Thoughts " , continues the music as Nellie and Emile sip brandy together , and is called by Lovensheimer " the one truly operatic moment of the score " . " This Nearly Was Mine " is a big bass solo for Emile in waltz time , deemed by Rodgers biographer William G. Hyland as " one of his finest efforts " . Only five notes are used in the first four bars , a phrase which is then repeated with a slight variation in the following four bars . The song ends an octave higher than where it began , making it perfect for Pinza 's voice .

Two songs , " I 'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair " and " Honey Bun " are intended to imitate American popular songs of the 1940s . In the former , the triple recitation of the song title at intervals suggests a big band arrangement of the wartime era , while in the bridge , the final eight bars (repeating the lyrics from the bridge 's first eight bars) gives a suggestion of swing . The sections beginning " If the man don 't understand you " and " If you laugh at different comics " have a blues style . Lovensheimer deems the song " Nellie 's spontaneous and improvisatory expression of her feelings through the vocabulary of popular song " . Mordden suggests that " I 'm in Love with a Wonderful Guy " with its " take no prisoners bounce " , might well be the center of the score , with the typical American girl defending her love by spouting clichés , many of which , such as " corny as Kansas in August " Hammerstein made up , and " sure enough , over the years they have become clichés " .

= = = Recordings = = =

Columbia Records recorded the overture and most of the songs from the original production in 1949 , using members of the cast including Ezio Pinza and Mary Martin . Drawing from the original lacquer disc masters , Columbia released the album in both the new LP format and on 78 @-@ rpm discs . Soon after Sony acquired Columbia in 1988 , a CD was released from the previously unused magnetic tape recording from the same 1949 sessions in New York City . The CD includes the

bonus tracks " Loneliness of Evening " (recorded in 1949 by Mary Martin) , " My Girl Back Home " (Martin) , " Bali Ha 'i " (Pinza) and Symphonic Scenario for Concert Orchestra (original orchestrations by Robert Russell Bennett) . According to critic John Kenrick , the original cast recording " is the rare stuff that lasting legends are made of " , an essential classic . The original cast album was added to the National Recording Registry in the Library of Congress on March 21 , 2013 for long @-@ term preservation . The film soundtrack was released on the RCA Victor label in March 1958 . Kenrick calls the recording " mixed up " and does not recommend it .

Masterworks Broadway released a recording of the 1967 Lincoln Center production starring Florence Henderson as Nellie , Giorgio Tozzi as Emile , Justin McDonough as Cable and Irene Byatt as Bloody Mary . The recording includes a version of " Bali Ha 'i " , sung in French by Eleanor Calbes , the Liat . According to Kenrick , " Every track of this 1967 Lincoln Center cast recording is such a winner that you can 't help wondering why it took so long for this winner to make its way to CD . " Kenrick notes that the album is a more complete alternative to the original cast album .

In 1986 José Carreras and Kiri Te Kanawa made a studio recording of South Pacific , the sessions of which were filmed as a documentary , similar in style to Leonard Bernstein 's successful West Side Story documentary a year earlier that featured the same stars . Emile 's music was transposed to fit Carreras 's tenor voice . The recording also featured Sarah Vaughan as Bloody Mary and Mandy Patinkin as Cable . Stephen Holden reviewed the album in The New York Times , " the star of this South Pacific isn 't any individual , but rather the score itself " . Kenrick calls the recording badly miscast " pretentious trash . " Kenrick gives mixed praise to the 1988 London revival cast album .

The 2001 Royal National Theatre 's revival cast album was recorded in 2002 on First Night Records with Philip Quast as Emile , Lauren Kennedy as Nellie , Edward Baker @-@ Duly as Cable , Sheila Francisco as Bloody Mary and Nick Holder as Billis . The album includes the cut song , " Now Is the Time " . While Kenrick allows that most critics like the recording , he finds it a waste of money . The 2005 Carnegie Hall concert version was released on April 18 , 2006 by Decca Broadway with Reba McEntire as Nellie , Brian Stokes Mitchell as Emile , Lillias White as Bloody Mary , Jason Danieleley as Cable and Alec Baldwin as Billis . Kendrick describes this recording as " one of the most ravishing that this glorious Rodgers & Hammerstein classic has ever received " and " a show tune lover 's dream come true . " The 2008 Broadway revival cast album was released on May 27 , 2008 by Masterworks Broadway . Kenrick finds it " very satisfying " .

= = Film and television versions = =

South Pacific was made into a film of the same name in 1958 , and it topped the box office that year . Joshua Logan directed the film , which starred Rossano Brazzi , Mitzi Gaynor , John Kerr , Ray Walston and Juanita Hall ; all of their singing voices except Gaynor 's and Walston 's were dubbed . Thurl Ravenscroft , later television 's Tony the Tiger , sang the basso profundo notes in " There Is Nothing Like a Dame " . The film opened with Cable 's flight to the island in a PBY , followed by the Seabees ' beach scene , and added Billis ' rescue and scenes from the mission to spy on the Japanese . The film won the Academy Award for Best Sound . It was also nominated for the Oscar for Best Scoring of a Musical Picture (Alfred Newman and Ken Darby) , and the 65 mm Todd @-@ AO cinematography by Leon Shamroy was also nominated . The film was widely criticized for its use of color to indicate mood , with actors changing color as they began to sing . The film includes the song " My Girl Back Home " , sung by Cable , which was cut from the stage musical . The movie was the third @-@ highest @-@ grossing film in the U.S. of the 1950s ; its UK revenues were the highest ever , a record it kept until Goldfinger in 1963 . Although reviewers have criticized the film ? Time magazine stated that it was " almost impossible to make a bad movie out of it ? but the moviemakers appear to have tried " ? it has added success on television , videotape and DVD to its box office laurels .

A made @-@ for @-@ television film , directed by Richard Pearce , was produced and televised in 2001 , starring Glenn Close as Nellie , Harry Connick , Jr. as Cable and Rade Sherbedgia as Emile . This version changed the order of the musical 's songs (the film opens with " There Is Nothing Like

a Dame ") and omits " Happy Talk " . " My Girl Back Home " was filmed but not included in the broadcast due to time constraints ; it was restored for the DVD , issued in 2001 . The last half @-@ hour of the film features scenes of war , including shots of segregated troops . Lovensheimer states that the film returned to the Michener original in one particular : " Harry Connick Jr . ' s Joe Cable is a fascinating combination of sensitive leading man and believable Leatherneck " .

The movie and Close were praised by The New York Times : " Ms. Close , lean and more mature , hints that a touch of desperation lies in Nellie 's cockeyed optimism . " The review also commented that the movie " is beautifully produced , better than the stagy 1958 film " and praised the singing . Kenrick , however , dislikes the adaptation : " You certainly won 't ever want to put this disaster in your player , unless you want to hear the sound of Rodgers and Hammerstein whirling in their graves . Glenn Close is up to the material , but her supporting cast is uniformly disastrous . A pointless and offensive waste of money , time and talent . "

A 2005 concert version of the musical , edited down to two hours , but including all of the songs and the full musical score , was presented at Carnegie Hall . It starred Reba McEntire as Nellie , Brian Stokes Mitchell as Emile , Alec Baldwin as Billis and Lillias White as Bloody Mary . The production used Robert Russell Bennett 's original orchestrations and the Orchestra of St. Luke 's directed by Paul Gemignani . It was taped and telecast by PBS in 2006 and released the same year on DVD . The New York Times critic Ben Brantley wrote , " Open @-@ voiced and open @-@ faced , Reba McEntire was born to play Nellie " ; the production was received " in a state of nearly unconditional rapture . It was one of those nights when cynicism didn 't stand a chance . " Kenrick especially likes Mitchell 's " This Nearly Was Mine " , and praises the concert generally : " this excellent performance helped restore the reputation of this classic " .