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INTRODUCTION

Conflict. It's what drives most stories, makes them interesting, and makes them successful. In the short two- to three-hour on-stage duration of a Broadway musical, conflict between main characters needs to be established at the outset in order to capture the audience's attention. Many of the most successful shows have clear-cut heroes and villains. Others have villains who are converted into heroes by show's end, while others operate in reverse by having a seemingly benevolent character who turns out to be evil to the core at the end. And there are shows where you're never quite sure who is the hero and who is the villain.

For much of Broadway's history, character conflict was mild. Plots were subservient to the songs and generally lightweight. It wasn't until Rodgers and Hammerstein's landmark *Oklahoma!* in 1943 that storylines began to catch up with the songs, so that not only did audiences become more involved with the stories, but the songs themselves became interwoven into the plots, with lyrics explaining characters' motivations and furthering the action. In addition, villains almost never sang. The concept of an evil character having a good voice was appropriate only to opera, with the antagonist usually being a baritone or bass; but toward the second half of the 20th century, this all began to change, especially with regard to musical comedy. Shows like *Damn Yankees* and *Peter Pan* featured villains who could not only sing, but also whom audiences loved to hate.

This collection features songs made famous by both heroes and villains of many of Broadway's biggest hits. Heroic songs center on not just the lead characters, but also the ones whose attributes best define the concept of the "good guy": bravery, generosity, idealism, or being just so good-natured, nothing could get the best of them. The "villain" songs are sung by those who are dastardly, unrepentant, and evil through and through, with many actually enjoying their unrelenting treachery. Whichever hat you prefer, white or black, there are great songs from Broadway history on every page.

HEROES

Although his character is a fraud, The Wiz (Andre DeShields) dispenses some valuable advice to Dorothy (Stephanie Mills) and her friends in the song "Believe in Yourself" from *The Wiz* (1974). The all-black, urbanized adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* retains the same characters as those in the 1939 film classic, and although the faux Wiz is still a pompous sham, his song preaches optimism and fortitude, qualities that should help anyone achieve his or her heart's desire. For that, he deserves Broadway heroic status.

Camelot is a show that features Mordred, one the baddest of all bad guys. He's so bad, that it takes two good guys to ward off his efforts at doing his dirty deeds: King Arthur (Richard Burton) and Sir Lancelot (Robert Goulet), fearless warriors who have the misfortune of both falling for the beautiful Queen Guenevere (Julie Andrews). Arthur and Lancelot are each given the opportunity to introduce themselves and their stellar personality traits to the audience in song. Arthur's "Camelot" is more of a Chamber of Commerce commercial for the orderly regularity of the kingdom's weather patterns, but when Richard Burton sings it, it somehow comes off as noble and heroic (we

MY FRIENDS

(from "Sweeney Todd")

Music and Lyrics by
STEPHEN SONDHEIM

Misterioso (♩ = 100)

Piano introduction in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The music is marked *p* and *simile*. It features a repeating eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

TODD:
p sempre dolce

Vocal line for Todd: "These are my friends. See how they glis-ten.____"
Piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern.

Vocal line for Todd: "See this one shine, how he smiles in the light, my____"
Piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern.

Più mosso

Vocal line for Todd: "friend,____ my faith - ful friend.____"
Piano accompaniment changes to a slower tempo, marked *mp* and *rit. e dim.*. The right hand features a more complex melodic line.