

## ANN RONELL

*Our darling baby's one year older  
And shaking a wicked shoulder*

Benjamin Sears<sup>1</sup>

In the latter years of the Twentieth Century there has been a steady rediscovery of the composers from “Tin Pan Alley”, Broadway, and Hollywood from the first half of the 20th century. Part of this rediscovery has been the women of Tin Pan Alley, most of whom are no longer remembered, even though they wrote a number of “standards”. Included in this group are a sizeable group of women who were active during this “Golden Era”, some consistently, others occasionally. Among them are Nora Bayes (*Shine On Harvest Moon*), Dana Suesse (the “Girl Gershwin”, who wrote *You Oughta Be in Pictures*), Kay Swift (*Fine and Dandy, Can't We Be Friends?*), Ann Ronell (*Willow Weep for Me*), and Maria Grever (*What a Difference a Day Made*) amongst composers; Anne Caldwell (who worked regularly with Jerome Kern in his pre-**Show Boat** years), Dorothy Donnelly (**The Student Prince**), and Dorothy Fields (*I Can't Give You Anything But Love*) amongst the lyricists.

One of the best, most prolific, and successful of these women songwriters was Ann Ronell. She was born Ann Rosenblatt in Omaha, Nebraska on December 25, 1905<sup>2</sup> (and, curiously, 88 years later she would die on December 25.), third child of four born to Mollie and

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<sup>1</sup>Benjamin Sears, with pianist Bradford Conner, is a performer, archivist, and historian of American popular song from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with five CDs, covering Irving Berlin, the Gershwins, and E.Y. Harburg, to his credit. There are a number of people to be thanked for their help on this article. Jane Knowles, Radcliffe College archivist, allowed me access to a treasure trove of Ronell material; Oscar Brand and Edward Jablonski, both personal friends of Ronell, shared thoughts and stories; E.A. Kral, a Nebraska historian; Joan Peyser; and Robert Tieman of the Walt Disney Archives for Disney information and a critical eye. Bradford Conner has modestly refused a “by-line”, but without his research and critical comments this could not have been written.

<sup>2</sup>Apparently a lady needn't reveal her age. Virginia Grattan in *American Women Songwriters* (Greenwood Press, 1993) lists Ann's year of birth as 1903. Her 1993 obituaries say she was 85, which would indicate 1908, and her Radcliffe College yearbook says 1906! However, it is clear that she was 17 when she graduated from Central High School in Omaha, thus making 1905 correct. Her name was not immune, either. The Central High Yearbook says “Ann”, the Radcliffe yearbook says “Anna”, and “Anne” is used, too. When she changed her

Morris Rosenblatt. As with many of her New York-born contemporary songwriters she was descended from recent immigrants, her father being a Russian emigré who arrived in this country from Czarist Russian in 1890 when he was fifteen. Her early years are not well recorded, though she made mention in interviews of life in Omaha, in one case telling that her father took her to concerts and gave her dancing lessons. As early as grammar school she was composing songs, and by high school she was writing songs for school shows. She received advice from “a noted band leader”<sup>3</sup> to study harmony, and after her graduation from Central High School in 1923 she enrolled first at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, where “her courses ranged from German to the Bible”<sup>4</sup>. Since Wheaton had no music program, she then transferred, after her sophomore year, to Radcliffe College (Cambridge, Massachusetts) with the intention of furthering her musical studies, though her initial major was in literature. At Radcliffe (where she was in the Class of 1927) she was active in various musical activities, and eventually switched her major to music. Radcliffe shared its faculty with Harvard University (in those days classes were taught separately), and Rosenblatt studied with such luminaries as Edward Ballantine, Archibald Davison, Edward Burlingame Hill, and Walter Spalding. She was so successful in the general exams in music that she was excused from taking final exams in music in 1927.

For college plays she wrote songs and background music; for a college music publication she wrote reviews and interviewed composers who were in Boston for performances of their works by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. BSO conductor Serge Koussevitzky was known for his championing of modern composers of all styles, and Rosenblatt had encountered Aaron Copland and Vladimir Dukelsky through her interviewing. In 1926 she was interested in speaking with George Gershwin who would be performing in recital at Symphony Hall in January, 1927. In 1989 she told Joan Peyser of her first meeting with George:

On a vacation from college, I went to New York and called on Gershwin at the 103<sup>rd</sup> Street house. Ira answered and I asked for George. George had picked up the extension and when he heard Ira tell me he was too busy to see me, George interrupted and told me

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name to Ronell, the “Ann” spelling remained consistent.

<sup>3</sup>*Song Writer as Plucky as Three Little Pigs*, Jessie Ash Arndt, **The Christian Science Monitor**, January 3, 1955. Arndt does not say who the band leader was.

<sup>4</sup>*Ann Ronell — Omaha’s Musical “Trailblazer”* by Edward Jablonski, **Nebraska Life Magazine**, Vol. 1, #4, Fall, 1997.

to come over.

A white-coated butler answered the door. The elevator took me up to the fifth floor where George had his studio. I told him I was an admirer. He asked me what I was studying. I answered orchestration and counterpoint, with a major in English literature. Soon he was interviewing me. He asked what I was writing. I told him of my interest in musical comedy and he suggested I get in the dancing chorus of a show or work as a rehearsal pianist. He played for me and I danced the Charleston. He kept asking questions like when was I coming back to New York. I told him I had an arrangement to play a two-piano concert with Elizabeth Hayes, a black girl at school. "If you come to New York with her," he said, "I'll try to help you."

After I graduated I went back to Omaha, Nebraska. Then I got a letter from George. He wanted to see me, he said. Very little news from New York ever reached Omaha, Nebraska. My parents had never heard of Gershwin. But my brother had graduated from Harvard Law School and was living in Manhattan so my father, who had taken me to concerts all my life and given me dancing lessons, said "If you have a contact you say is so good, maybe he will get your songs published."

George was a generous and helpful person. I was a nineteen-year-old amateur when we met and he was twenty-nine and world renowned."<sup>5</sup>

Her experience of Gershwin's generosity was similar to that of one of her colleagues, Kay Swift, who got her start on Broadway when George helped her get a position as rehearsal pianist for the Rodgers & Hart show, **A Connecticut Yankee**. In Ronell's case the show was one of his own, **Rosalie**, where she worked coaching Marilyn Miller.<sup>6</sup> She coached other singers besides Miller and also taught music during her early years in New York. Given her diminutive size (5'2½", and throughout her life about 100 pounds), she also took odd jobs modeling children's clothes.

At some point Gershwin encouraged her to change her name to Ronell, which she used for the rest of her life. This seems to have been a trait with him, who changed his own name (to Gershwin after it had gone from Gershovitz to Gershvin), influenced the aforementioned Vladimir Dukelsky to become Vernon Duke, and turned Katharine Swift into "Kay" simply by

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<sup>5</sup>*The Memory of All That*, Joan Peyser, Simon & Schuster (New York), 1993.

<sup>6</sup>Gershwin did another show with Miller, **Show Girl**, which did not reach production. Some accounts say that **Show Girl** was Ronell's first Broadway project, though the dates would indicate **Rosalie** as the more likely one.

using the nickname so regularly.

Ronell later recounted, “George was sacred to me. He was my idol. I became like a sister to the family and was his protégée.”<sup>7</sup>

In addition to Gershwin, Ronell turned to Irving Berlin for advice. “I got to [his] office at 8:30 one morning and was met by the scrub woman. I didn’t know then that he usually got in about 10:30. But I waited. And when he came in, he just couldn’t escape me. I told him I’d been waiting a long time.”<sup>8</sup> Irving Berlin was not known for taking on younger songwriters, and with Ronell it was no different; apparently her long wait resulted initially only in that mid-morning meeting. She turned her attentions to Berlin’s partner, Saul Bornstein, showing him *Willow Weep for Me*. Bornstein had a number of objections to the song — starting with the fact that it was dedicated to George Gershwin and “nobody, she was informed, dedicated a popular song to anyone. In turn, he was informed, Ann Ronell did”.<sup>9</sup> Eventually the dispute was taken to Mr. Berlin himself for resolution and the outcome was that Irving Berlin Music published the song, with great success. As will be seen, it also did not hurt that, at that time, Irving Berlin Music was publishing songs from Walt Disney films.

As soon as 1929, Ronell was placing songs in shows, with *Down by the River* being used in a Radio City Music Hall show. Two years later she was one of many contributors (including E.Y. Harburg, Irving Berlin, Ira Gershwin, Leo Robin, Dorothy Fields, Jay Gorney, Philip Charig, and Vernon Duke — quite a “Who’s Who” of songwriters of the time!) to the show **Shoot the Works** with *Let’s Go Out in the Open Air* (sung by Imogene Coca). 1932 saw the songs that made her famous, *Rain on the Roof* and *Willow Weep for Me*. The latter has remained a great favorite of jazz performers, if not as much with singers. June Christy had a famous recording with the Kenton band, other jazz singers to record it include Billie Holiday and Dinah Washington; Gunther Schuller discusses Art Tatum’s instrumental improvisation at great length in his second volume on the history of jazz, *The Swing Years*. Alec Wilder, often acerbic in his assessments, speaks highly of *Willow Weep for Me* in *American Popular Song*, calling it “an

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<sup>7</sup>*The Memory of All That*.

<sup>8</sup>*Song Writer as Plucky as Three Little Pigs*.

<sup>9</sup>*Ann Ronell — Omaha’s Musical “Trailblazer”*. The song is often mistakenly thought of as written in memory of George.

exceptional song. It's on a par with [Hoagy] Carmichael's experiments and was written, I'm sure, far from the maddening crowd of commercial song writers. It's as if the writer didn't need any profit from it. By that I don't mean that it's dilettantish, merely that it does exactly what it pleases."<sup>10</sup> As late as 1988, a *New Yorker* review lists a number of songs in a revue and mentions "a woman named Ann Ronell, whose *Willow Weep for Me* is quite at home with the best of the songs."<sup>11</sup> While many of Ronell's songs are worthy of critique, it is only this one that ever receives critical attention.

Earlier had come her personal favorite of her songs, *Baby's Birthday Party* [1930, Famous Music Corporation], a superficially straightforward but surprisingly sophisticated song. Coming from 1930, it shows, not unexpectedly, the influence of Gershwin. The musical phrase for the title is a direct quote, albeit with a slight rhythmic alternation, from *Military Dancing Drill (Strike Up the Band, 1927 version)*, a show that Ronell would have known. *Baby's Birthday Party* begins by describing what seems to be a typical summer outdoor birthday party for a small child with decorations and entertainment ("Here come the clowns and trick magicians/The dancers are in positions/And soon we will hear musicians play"). The middle section of the song sends a musical clue that perhaps not all is what it appears, as the music suddenly switches to a Boogie-Woogie style, though the lyrics do not immediately stray to any degree from the images of the A section. In the second statement of the B theme, we get our first idea from the lyrics as to what is going on: "Baby's turned the band up loud and louder/With T.N.T. and J.A.Z.Z. powder". After the Boogie, the A section returns, with the lyrics continuing in the same vein, until the final statement of the musical theme, when we find out that "our darling baby's one year older/and shaking a wicked shoulder". This is the type of song that is most likely to come from a schooled composer. Rather than the immediate and repeated jokes typical of a Tin Pan Alley/Vaudeville song (Berlin's *You'd Be Surprised*, is a fine example), the humor is drawn more from the contradictions between the lyrics and the music, with the Boogie section supporting traditional "Happy Birthday"-style lyrics, then the final joke in the lyrics coming during music that does not suggest "shaking a wicked shoulder". This type of humor

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<sup>10</sup>*American Popular Song* by Alec Wilder, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990 edition.

demands a lot from the listener, particularly in terms of a fairly lengthy attention span in waiting for the pay-off of the joke, so it is no surprise than *You'd Be Surprised* has survived while *Baby's Birthday Party* remains a rarity.

Another example of Ronell's creativity and ability to spin out an idea is *The Candy Parade* [1931, Miller Music]. After a 1997 performance of the song, Boston *Globe* critic Richard Buell wrote of it, "this sounded, well, exactly the way a song so named and of its date *would* sound, but what made it special was the unstinting verve with which she took the confectionary conceit and ran with it. And ran. And ran. No she wouldn't, you kept on thinking. But she always did."<sup>12</sup> As early as the third line she sets the "confectionary conceit": "First come the bugle forces/Riding on their sugar horses." From there on the song is a running description of the parade leader's "stick of peppermint sterling", "likrish horns", "choc'late soldiers" ("ev'ry gun's a lollypop" [sic]), and on, all the way to "big banana zeppelins".

Ronell became caught up in the Tin Pan Alley exodus to Hollywood of the early '30s, joining the Gershwins, Rodgers & Hart, Berlin, Kern, Harburg, Fields, and many others. She joined the Hollywood community in 1933 and shortly thereafter met Lester Cowan, a film producer, who became her husband on November 6, 1935 when they were married at sea on the *Santa Elena*. Ronell met with more consistent success on the West Coast than some others. In Hollywood she became involved in the creation of *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?*, a song that is well-known by the general public, even if few know the names of the authors. The song was written for the Disney *Silly Symphony* short, **Three Little Pigs**. David Tietyen in his book, *The Musical World of Walt Disney* tells of the song's creation:

The next major *Silly Symphony* was **Three Little Pigs**. It featured Disney's first hit song, which was also the first hit song ever derived from a cartoon, *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?*

As was the case with other Disney films, childhood memories played a role. In this case it involved the composer, Frank Churchill. While he was a boy on his father's ranch near San Luis Obispo, California, he had three pigs and he used to play the harmonica to them. One day, a wolf killed one of his pigs. In an interview published by *Author and*

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<sup>11</sup>Edith Oliver, *The Theater Column*, **The New Yorker**, July 26, 1988.

<sup>12</sup>*Slice of Americana Served Up With Style*, Richard Buell, **The Boston Globe**, July 4, 1997.

*Composer*, Churchill recalled: “Then one day Walt Disney came to me and instantly, of course, it recalled my boyhood experience. . . . I thought it would be rather interesting to have the two little pigs playing flutes, and dancing about joyously, and contrasting these two with the one who worked hard all day.”

Churchill claims he wrote the song in the short space of five minutes. The melody is loosely patterned after *Happy Birthday*. Ted Sears, a writer in Disney’s story department who had never written song lyrics before, contributed the lyrics: “I build my house of straw. . . . I build my house of stick. . . .” Ann Ronell later added lyrics to complete the song for the popular market.<sup>13</sup>

The full contribution of Ted Sears is clear from the song as presented in the film. For the first pig, the lyrics run

I built my house of straw  
I built my house of hay  
I toot my flute  
I don’t give a hoot  
And play around all day.<sup>14</sup>

Ronell’s “extra material” was a development of this idea into a narrative form, then writing the entire second verse (“Came a day when fate did frown, etc.”) making the song publishable for the mass market. She also took the basic tune for the Ted Sears lyrics and gave it a little more shape than the somewhat chanted version of the cartoon. The final result is that the film has no lyrics or music by Ann Ronell; the music for the verse is adapted by Ann Ronell, with the lyrics of the verses of the published sheet music essentially all Ann Ronell.

Other Ronell songs include: *Beach Boy*; *Andy Panda*; *On a Merry-Go-Round*; *In a Silly Symphony*; *C’est La Vie*; *Mickey Mouse and Minnie’s in Town* (“accepted as the official Mickey Mouse birthday song”<sup>15</sup>); *Love Happy*; *Beloved*; *The River*; *You’re Lovely*; *Hondo*; and *Dark Moon*. Throughout her career, Ronell consistently wrote both words and music to her songs. Occasionally, she contributed lyrics to another composer’s work, but did not set other lyrics to her own music. When the Ogden Nash/Kurt Weill show *One Touch of Venus* was made into a

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<sup>13</sup>*The Musical World of Walt Disney* by David Tietyen, Hal Leonard Publishing, Milwaukee, WI, 1990.

<sup>14</sup>© Disney

<sup>15</sup>*Little Lady of Song: An Interview with Composer Ann Ronell*, United States Information Agency interview, 1964/5.

film, it was Ronell, not Nash, who wrote the lyrics for two Weill songs, (*Don't Look Now, But My Heart is Showing* and *My Week*).

Film work became the major part of Ronell's career, including a stint as production assistant, then music director, most often with Paramount and United Artists. She wrote songs and background music, and was the first woman (in Hollywood, at least) to conduct a major film soundtrack, **Tomorrow the World** (United Artists, 1944). Her films include **Down to Their Last Yacht** (1935), **The Big Broadcast** (1936), **Champagne Waltz** (1937), **The River is So Blue** (1938), **Blockade** (1938), **Algiers** (1938), **You Can't Beat an Honest Man** (1939), **Magic in Music** (1940), **The Story of G.I. Joe** (1945) (the *Ernie Pyle Infantry March* from this film had some popularity when it was adopted by the United States Army Ground Forces; another popular film march by Ronell was her adaptation of the theme by Louis Gruenberg for **Commandos Strike at Dawn** into the *Commando March*), **One Touch of Venus** (1948), **Love Happy** (1949), and **Main Street to Broadway** (1953). **Meeting at a Far Meridian** (1964) was a joint Soviet/US production by Lester Cowan Productions and Mosfilm Studio. Ronell served as conductor for the film, and from it came the song *Take Me, Take Me to the Moon*. The song was originally *Moscow Windows* by Tikhon Khrennikov. Ronell supplied an English lyric, then found that "it was necessary to make some additional changes in the song, as American popular songs are usually longer than the original 12 bars of *Moscow Windows*. So, with Mr. Khrennikov's permission, I extended the composition to 30 bars, adding a prelude of 8 bars and developed new lyrics accordingly, still retaining the original musical inspiration. Since there have been a number of popular songs in America to date with the word Moscow in the title, I wrote new lyrics with a different idea under the title of *Take Me, Take Me to the Moon*."<sup>16</sup>

Ronell was involved also in some other film "firsts". "To the best of my knowledge, **G.I. Joe** was the first film drama to use a theme song sung over the title credits. Though it was a radical departure to score the picture this way, my collaborator Louis Applebaum and I set in motion a fashion which is more prevalent than ever today."<sup>17</sup> She also was involved in ". . .making a record album from **Ladies in Retirement** as the first recording of a complete film

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<sup>16</sup>*Little Lady of Song*.

<sup>17</sup>*Little Lady of Song*.

score for the public by a Hollywood producer.”<sup>18</sup>

Her film efforts led to two Oscar nominations, both in 1945: the score for **The Story of G.I. Joe**, and from the same film, the song *Linda*.

Broadway did get Ann Ronell’s attention again for 1942's **Count Me In**, for which she wrote *both* lyrics and music, making her the first woman to do so for a Broadway show (Kay Swift had preceded her as the first woman composer of a complete Broadway score, **Fine and Dandy**). Songs from this show include *You’ve Got It All*, *Someone in the Know*, *On Leave for Love*, and one that had some popularity, *The Woman Behind the Man Behind the Gun*. Book writers for the show included Nancy Hamilton, herself a successful lyricist (*How High the Moon*), and in the cast were Charles Butterworth, Gower Champion, and Luella Gear. Ann donated her songs to the show, which was the creation of students and faculty at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. The student was Leo Grady and the faculty member was a drama instructor named Walter Kerr. Aided by another member of the faculty, Father Gerald Hartke, the show was put on at the school, where it gained the attention of the Shuberts. It was successful “out of town”, but flopped in New York, even though Cole Porter “praised her work as the most singable score to be heard in years”.<sup>19</sup> Her last Broadway effort was a single song, *The Lullaby*, for a 1953 Arthur Miller drama, **The Crucible**.

In another similarity to the older Kay Swift, Ronell had a great interest in “serious” music. **The Magic Spring** (words and music, 1935), was a ballet/opera written for Patricia Bowman. Her other contribution to ballet was a commission from the National Orchestral Association for the libretto for the Nicolai Berezowsky ballet, **Ship South**. She was more prolific in the field of opera. Inspired by Gershwin’s **Porgy and Bess**, she wrote **Oh! Susanna** (1947/8, with book by Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements), a folk opera based on the life of Stephen Foster. **Oh! Susanna** received major productions from the Cleveland Playhouse and the Pasadena Playhouse, in addition to 100 local productions in other cities throughout the country. Her other operatic endeavors were in the area of translating/adapting European works into English, first with Mozart’s **The Magic Flute** and Pergolesi’s **La Serva Padrona**. Later, for the

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<sup>18</sup>*Little Lady of Song*.

<sup>19</sup>*Ann Ronell’s Song Writing Dynamo*, Jerene Clair Cline, Omaha **Sunday World-Herald**

Metropolitan Opera of New York she wrote a libretto for Strauss's **The Gypsy Baron** (used during the 1959-60 season), and shared the same duties for Flotow's **Martha**, revising a version she had originally done in 1938 with Vicki Baum for the Hollywood Bowl, for use in the 1961-62 and 1967-68 Met seasons.<sup>20</sup> According to her obituary in *Variety*, she "created controversy among the critics with her Americanized version of **Martha**" (though no explanation of the controversy is given).<sup>21</sup> Gustave Schirmer was in the audience for the Hollywood Bowl performance of **Martha** and subsequently published that libretto, followed by an offer to Ronell to translate a collection of opera arias (*Favorite Soprano Arias*) into English for publication by Schirmer. Her version of **The Gypsy Baron** was also used by the San Francisco and Los Angeles light opera associations, as was an adaptation of Oskar Straus's **The Chocolate Soldier**.

After her career in film (a biographical card for her 40<sup>th</sup> Radcliffe reunion in 1967 says "Retirement plans: none whatever"<sup>22</sup>), she served on the boards of the National Academy of Popular Music, the American Guild of Authors and Composers, the Dramatists Guild, and the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP). She also initiated a recording project of the recollections of the great songwriters of her era.<sup>23</sup> Composing was not ignored however, as she also turned to writing Jewish liturgical music for Sabbath services and the holidays.

In her later years, Ann Ronell could usually be found holding forth in her regular booth at New York's *The Flame* restaurant on 58<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Here she regularly took her meals and did most of her socializing. Otherwise, her last years were marked by the clichéd triumph and tragedy, starting with the death of Lester Cowan in 1990. In 1991 the Song Writers Hall of Fame honored *Willow Weep for Me*;<sup>24</sup> an honor which put the song squarely in the ranks of songs by the Gershwins, Berlin, Arlen, and Rodgers & Hart. A fall in 1992 left her confined

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**Magazine**, November 28, 1948

<sup>20</sup>Metropolitan Opera Archives.

<sup>21</sup>Ann Ronell Obituary, *Variety*, January 5, 1994.

<sup>22</sup>Radcliffe College Archives.

<sup>23</sup>*Ann Ronell — Omaha's Musical "Trailblazer"*. In conversation with the author, Jablonski said that it is not known what became of this project.

<sup>24</sup>Telegram to Ann Ronell from Sammy Cahn, quoted in *Ann Ronell — Omaha's Musical "Trailblazer"*.

to a wheelchair, but this did not stop her from staying in contact with the outside world, or from attending ASCAP functions. Then, on her birthday in 1993, she died in New York following surgery at the age of eighty-eight.

Edward Jablonski described her as “. . . a kind and most sensitive woman”<sup>25</sup>, a description certainly born out by her attentions to Harold Arlen’s wife Anya (who suffered from neurological problems which later proved to be a brain tumor). Jablonski also quotes a housemother at Radcliffe describing her as “very temperamental but popular, big-hearted and always means well.”<sup>26</sup> This description is certainly borne out in the stories of her tenacity as told above. Her good-heartedness, besides her attentions to Anya Arlen, extended to charitable works. She gave a scholarship to the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan, and later became a member of its Advisory Board, both efforts in support of her great interest in music education for youth. This interest led to activity in bringing “opera in English” productions to public schools, working with conductors Richard Lert and Hugo Strelitzer in Los Angeles.<sup>27</sup>

Her High School and College Yearbooks both had quotes startling in their prescient summing up of her character. The editors of Radcliffe’s *The Yardstick* were lengthy in their comments:

Anne is a composer. Need we say more? Sometimes we fear that she is only lent to us for a short time — as any genius, merely passing by. But again she seems quite human, saved from the ethereal by the very earthly characteristics of a profound love of jazz and a wholesale and very ardent hero-worship.<sup>28</sup>

Her Central High School Yearbook said it more succinctly: “You never think of Ann without music or dancing”.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Harold Arlen: Rhythm, Rainbows, and Blues*, Edward Jablonski, Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1996.

<sup>26</sup> *Ann Ronell — Omaha’s Musical “Trailblazer”*.

<sup>27</sup> *Ann Ronell Biography*, United Artists, circa 1950.

<sup>28</sup> *The Yardstick*, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1927.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in *Ann Ronell — Omaha’s Musical “Trailblazer”*.

*Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?*

Comparison of lyric from the film by Ted Sears, and published version of the first verse by Ann Ronell

Lyric by Ted Sears :<sup>30</sup>

*Fade in:*

I built my house of straw  
I built my house of hay  
I toot my flute  
I don't give a hoot  
And play around all day.

*Dissolve to second pig:*

I built my house of sticks  
I built my house of twigs  
With a hey diddle diddle  
I play on the fiddle  
While I dance all kinds of jigs.

*Dissolve to third pig:*

I built my house of stones  
I built my house of bricks  
I've had no chance to sing and dance  
For work and play don't mix.

*Cut to two pigs coming upon the industrious one:*

He don't take no time to play  
Time to play, time to play  
All he does is work all day

*Third pig:*

You can play and laugh and fiddle  
Don't think you can make me sore  
I'll be safe and you'll be sorry  
When the wolf comes to your door.

Long ago there were three pigs,  
Little handsome piggy-wigs,  
For the big bad, very bad, very bad wolf,  
They didn't give three figs.

Number one was very gay,  
And he built his house with hay,  
With a hey-hey toot,  
He blew on his flute,  
And played around all day.

Number two was fond of jigs  
And so he built his house with twigs  
Heigh diddle diddle,  
He played on his fiddle,  
And danced with lady pigs;

Number three said "nix on tricks"  
I will build my house with bricks,  
He had no chance to sing and dance,  
'Cause work and play don't mix!

Ha-Ha Ha! The two, little, do little pigs  
Just winked and laughed Ha-Ha!

Lyric by Ann Ronell:

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<sup>30</sup>© Disney