

**VOLUME 1**

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**Cole Porter's Breakthrough**

**Lead: The 1940s were not a good decade for Cole Porter.**

**Intro.: "A Moment in Time" with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Though he was one of the hottest properties in Broadway with a seemingly endless stream of successes in the 1930s and though his music and lyrics represented the epitome of sophistication and wit, during the war decade Porter went through a long period of personal and professional discouragement.**

**Much of his depression grew out of a severe riding accident in the summer of 1937. Porter and his wife Linda were separated at the time due to his excessive lifestyle. He was with friends at an estate on Long Island when a high-spirited horse tripped and fell on first one leg, reared up and fell again on the other. Months of painful therapy followed and when he when he finally returned to work, despite a quick series of musical hits, his creative edge seemed to have been dulled and during the war years his reputation was jolted by a series of flops.**

**He was disappointed with the limited success of the musical "Mexican Hayride," the failure of**

**"Seven Lively Arts," and the movie "The Pirate." He was even more dissatisfied with the movie based on his life. "Night and Day" featured Cary Grant in an unlikely portrayal of Porter and was a box office success, but the story was a long series of fabrications wrapped in Technicolor and gloss with little to recommend it save a string of Porter's own songs. His association with Orson Welles in the 1946 musical "Around the World in 80 Days" only lasted 75 performances and did nothing to enhance his declining reputation.**

**When the possibility of creating a musical based on Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" came late in the decade he was not enthusiastic. Yet,**

**the play, "Kiss Me Kate" turned out to be his greatest hit. With it Porter turned his back on depression and failure and once again began to produce musical hits. "Kiss Me Kate" was a play within a play, depicting the lives of a theater couple, Fred and Lilly who, though divorced were still romantically attached.**

**After a rocky start, the show opened at the new Century Theater in New York on December 30, 1948. It was a smash. The musical was the longest running of Cole Porter's career. Many of its songs became standards such as "Wonderbar," "Another Op'nin' Another Show," and one of his most tender love songs, "So In Love." The show was typical of the**

**sophistication of Porter's work and appropriately marked the end of his long creative depression.**

**At the University of Richmond, I'm Dan Roberts.**

**Resources**

**Schwartz, Charles. *Cole Porter: A Biography*. New York: Dial Press, 1977 (Paperback Edition: Da Capo Paperback, 1979).**

**Furia, Philip. *The Poets of Tin Pan Alley: A History of America's Great Lyricists*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.**

**Maxwell, Elsa. *R.S.V.P. Elsa Maxwell's Own Story*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1954.**

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