

Rodgers & Hammerstein

The Kings of Musical Theatre

"You've got to be taught to hate and
fear."

-Oscar Hammerstein II

"There isn't anything I wanted to do
that I haven't. At the same time,
there isn't anything I've ever done
that I didn't want to do better."

-Richard Rodgers

Oscar Hammerstein II

- ◉ Oscar Greeley Clendenning Hammerstein II
 - ◉ Born July 12, 1895
 - ◉ Died August 23, 1960
 - ◉ American librettist, theatrical producer, & theatre director
 - ◉ Librettist - A person who writes the words to an opera or musical
 - ◉ He won 8 Tony awards and 2 Oscars
 - ◉ He co-wrote 850 songs
 - ◉ Many are standard repertoire for singers and jazz musicians



- ◉ Hammerstein was the lyricist and playwright in his partnerships
 - ◉ His collaborators wrote the music
 - ◉ He collaborated with composers:
 - ◉ Jerome Kern, Vincent Youmans, Rudolf Friml, Richard A. Whiting, Sigmund Romberg, and Richard Rodgers
 - ◉ Rodgers was the best known partnership
 - ◉ Rodgers & Hammerstein produced 9 Broadway musicals together
 - ◉ 5 of which were monumental successes

- ◉ Oscar Greeley Clendenning Hammerstein II was born in New York City
 - ◉ His grandfather was Polish-born German theatre impresario Oscar Hammerstein I
 - ◉ Impresario - A person who organizes and often finances concerts, plays, or operas
- ◉ Hammerstein's father managed the Victoria Theatre for his father and was a producer of vaudeville shows
 - ◉ But he was opposed to his son's desire to participate in the arts
- ◉ When he was 19, and still a student at Columbia, his father died of Bright's disease, June 10, 1914
 - ◉ Symptoms of which doctors originally attributed to scarlet fever
- ◉ When he and his brother arrived home, they attended their father's funeral with their grandfather
 - ◉ And more than a thousand others
 - ◉ At Temple Israel in Harlem

- ◉ After his father's death, he participated in his first play with the Varsity Show, entitled *On Your Way*
 - ◉ Throughout the rest of his college career, Hammerstein wrote and performed in several Varsity Shows
- ◉ Hammerstein attended Columbia University from 1912-1916
 - ◉ Studied at Columbia Law School until 1917
- ◉ As a student, he maintained high grades and engaged in numerous extracurricular activities
 - ◉ Including playing first base on the baseball team and becoming an active member of Pi Lambda Phi
 - ◉ A mostly Jewish fraternity
- ◉ After quitting law school to pursue theatre, Hammerstein began his first professional collaboration, with Herbert Stothart, Otto Harbach and Frank Mandel
 - ◉ He began as an apprentice and went on to form a 20-year collaboration with Harbach

- ◉ Out of this collaboration came his first musical, Always You
 - ◉ For which he wrote the book and lyrics
 - ◉ It opened on Broadway in 1920
- ◉ Throughout the next forty years, Hammerstein teamed with many other composers, including Jerome Kern
 - ◉ With whom Hammerstein enjoyed a highly successful collaboration
- ◉ In 1927, Kern and Hammerstein had their biggest hit, Show Boat, which is often revived
 - ◉ Still considered one of the masterpieces of the American musical theatre
- ◉ Other Kern-Hammerstein musicals include Sweet Adeline, Music in the Air, Three Sisters, and Very Warm for May
- ◉ Hammerstein also collaborated with Vincent Youmans for Wildflower, Rudolf Friml for Rose-Marie, and Sigmund Romberg for The Desert Song and The New Moon

- Hammerstein's most successful and sustained collaboration began when he teamed up with Richard Rodgers
 - They wrote a musical adaptation of the play *Green Grow the Lilacs* called *Oklahoma!*
- Rodgers' first partner, Lorenz Hart, originally planned to collaborate with Rodgers on this piece, but his alcoholism had become out of control, and he was unable to write
 - Hart also was not certain that the idea had much merit, and the two therefore separated
- After *Oklahoma!*, Rodgers and Hammerstein were the most important contributors to the musical-play form
 - With such masterworks as *Carousel*, *The King and I* and *South Pacific*

- Hammerstein died of stomach cancer on August 23, 1960, at age 65
- Shortly after the opening of *The Sound of Music* on Broadway
 - The final song he wrote was "Edelweiss", which was added near the end of the second act of *The Sound of Music*
 - After his death, *The Sound of Music* was made into the hit 1965 film adaptation
 - Won the Academy Award for Best Picture.
- The lights of Times Square were turned off for one minute as well as London's West End lights being dimmed in recognition of his contribution to musical theatre

Richard Rodgers

- ◉ Richard Charles Rodgers
 - ◉ Born June 28, 1902
 - ◉ Died December 30, 1979
- ◉ American composer
 - ◉ More than 900 songs and 43 Broadway musicals
 - ◉ Also composed for films and television
- ◉ Best known for his partnerships with lyricists Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II
- ◉ Rodgers was the first person to win one of each of the top show-biz awards
 - ◉ An Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar, and a Tony or EGOT
 - ◉ He has also won a Pulitzer Prize, one of two people to receive each award
 - ◉ Marvin Hamlisch is the other



- ◉ Born into a prosperous German Jewish family in Arverne, Queens, New York City
 - ◉ Rodgers was the son of Mamie (Levy) and Dr. William Abrahams Rodgers
 - ◉ Williams was a prominent physician who had changed the family name from Abrahams
- ◉ Richard began playing the piano at age six
- ◉ He attended P.S. 10, Townsend Harris Hall and DeWitt Clinton High School
 - ◉ Rodgers spent his early teenage summers in Camp Wigwam where he composed some of his first songs
- ◉ Rodgers, Lorenz Hart, and later collaborator Oscar Hammerstein II all attended Columbia University
 - ◉ At Columbia, Rodgers joined the Pi Lambda Phi fraternity
- ◉ In 1921, Rodgers shifted his studies to the Institute of Musical Art
 - ◉ Now Juilliard

- ◉ Rodgers was influenced by composers such as Victor Herbert and Jerome Kern
 - ◉ Also by the operettas his parents took him to see on Broadway when he was a child
 - ◉ Operetta - Short, humorous opera with spoken dialogue
- ◉ In 1919, Richard met Lorenz Hart, thanks to Phillip Leavitt, a friend of Richard's older brother
- ◉ Rodgers and Hart struggled for years in the field of musical comedy, writing several amateur shows
 - ◉ They made their professional debut with the song "Any Old Place With You"
 - ◉ Featured in the 1919 Broadway musical comedy A Lonely Romeo
- ◉ Their first professional production was the 1920 Poor Little Ritz Girl
 - ◉ Which also had music by Sigmund Romberg
- ◉ Their next professional show, The Melody Man, did not premiere until 1924

- ◉ Rodgers was considering quitting show business altogether to sell children's underwear, when he and Hart finally broke through in 1925
- ◉ They wrote the songs for a benefit show presented by the prestigious Theatre Guild, called The Garrick Gaieties
 - ◉ The critics found the show fresh and delightful
 - ◉ Only meant to run one day, the Guild knew they had a success and allowed it to re-open later
 - ◉ The show's biggest hit was "Manhattan"
 - ◉ The two were now a Broadway songwriting force
- ◉ Throughout the rest of the decade, the duo wrote several hit shows for both Broadway and London
 - ◉ Included Dearest Enemy (1925), The Girl Friend (1926), Peggy-Ann (1926), A Connecticut Yankee (1927), and Present Arms (1928)

- With the Depression in full swing during the first half of the 1930s, the team sought greener pastures in Hollywood
 - The hardworking Rodgers later regretted these relatively fallow years
 - He and Hart did write some classic songs and film scores while out west
- In 1935, they returned to Broadway and wrote an almost unbroken string of hit shows that ended only with Hart's death in 1943
- Among the most notable are Jumbo (1935), On Your Toes (1936), Babes in Arms (1937), I Married an Angel (1938), The Boys from Syracuse (1938), Pal Joey (1940), and their last original work, By Jupiter (1942)

- His partnership with Hart began having problems because of the lyricist's unreliability and declining health
 - Rodgers began working with Oscar Hammerstein II, with whom he had previously written songs
- Their first musical, the groundbreaking hit *Oklahoma!* (1943), marked the beginning of the most successful partnership in American musical theatre history
- Their work revolutionized the form
 - What was once a collection of songs, dances and comic turns held together by a weak plot became an integrated masterpiece
- After Hammerstein's death in 1960, Rodgers wrote both words and music for his first new Broadway project *No Strings* (1962)
 - Earned two Tony Awards

- Rodgers also wrote both the words and music for two new songs used in the film version of *The Sound of Music*
- At its 1978 commencement ceremonies, Barnard College awarded Rodgers its highest honor, the Barnard Medal of Distinction
- Rodgers died in 1979 at age 77 after surviving cancer of the jaw, a heart attack, and a laryngectomy
 - laryngectomy - removal of the larynx and separation of the airway from the mouth, nose, and esophagus
- In 1990, the 46th Street Theatre was renamed "The Richard Rodgers Theatre" in his memory
 - In 1999, Rodgers and Hart were each commemorated on United States postage stamps



Hammerstein on left, Rodgers on right

Rodgers & Hammerstein

- Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II were an influential, innovative and successful American musical theatre writing team
- They created a string of popular Broadway musicals in the 1940s and 1950s, initiating what is considered the "golden age" of musical theatre
- With Rodgers composing the music and Hammerstein writing the lyrics, five of their Broadway shows, Oklahoma!, Carousel, South Pacific, The King and I, and The Sound of Music, were outstanding successes
 - As was the television broadcast of Cinderella
 - The many accolades their shows collected included thirty-four Tony Awards, fifteen Academy Awards, the Pulitzer Prize, and two Grammy Awards.
- Their musical theatre writing partnership has been called the greatest of the 20th century



Rodgers & Hammerstein's
OKLAHOMA!

Oklahoma!

- ◉ Independently of each other, Rodgers and Hammerstein had been attracted to making a musical based on Lynn Riggs' stage play *Green Grow the Lilacs*
- ◉ Jerome Kern declined Hammerstein's offer to work on such a project and Hart refused Rodgers' offer to do the same
- ◉ Rodgers and Hammerstein began their first collaboration
 - ◉ The result, *Oklahoma!* (1943), marked a revolution in musical drama
- ◉ *Oklahoma!* introduced a number of new storytelling elements and techniques
 - ◉ Including its use of song and dance to convey plot and character rather than act as a diversion from the story
 - ◉ Also the firm integration of every song into the plot-line

- Oklahoma! was originally called Away We Go! and opened at the Shubert Theatre in New Haven in March 1943
- Only a few changes were made before it opened on Broadway, but three would prove significant:
 - The addition of a show-stopping number, "Oklahoma!"
 - The deletion of the musical number "Boys and Girls Like You and Me", which would soon after be replaced with a reprise of "People Will Say We're in Love"
 - And the decision to re-title the musical after the song

- The original Broadway production opened on March 31, 1943, at the St. James Theatre
- The typical musical of the time was usually written around the talents of a specific star performer, such as Ethel Merman or Fred Astaire
 - No stars were used in the production
- In *Oklahoma!*, the story and the songs were considered more important than sheer star power
 - Nevertheless, the production ran for a then-unprecedented 2,212 performances, finally closing on May 29, 1948
- Many enduring musical standards come from this show, among them:
 - "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'", "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top", "I Cain't Say No", "People Will Say We're in Love", and "Oklahoma!"

- ◉ In 1955 *Oklahoma!* was made into an Academy Award-winning musical film
 - ◉ The first feature shot with the Todd-AO 70 mm widescreen process
 - ◉ The film starred Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones,
 - ◉ It's soundtrack was #1 on the 1956 album charts
- ◉ After their initial success with *Oklahoma!*, the pair took a break from working together
- ◉ Hammerstein concentrated on the musical *Carmen Jones*
 - ◉ A Broadway version of Bizet's *Carmen*
 - ◉ With the characters changed to African Americans in the contemporary South
 - ◉ For which he wrote the book and lyrics
 - ◉ The musical was adapted to the screen in 1954, and scored a Best Actress Oscar nomination for leading lady Dorothy Dandridge

**RODGERS &
HAMMERSTEIN'S**

SOUTH PACIFIC



South Pacific

- ◉ Musical composed by Richard Rodgers
 - ◉ Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II
- ◉ Premiered in 1949 on Broadway
 - ◉ Immediate hit
 - ◉ ran for 1,925 performances
- ◉ Based on James A. Michener's 1947 book, *Tales of the South Pacific*
 - ◉ Combines elements of several of those stories
- ◉ The original Broadway production enjoyed immense critical and box-office success
 - ◉ It became the second-longest running Broadway musical to that point
 - ◉ Behind *Oklahoma!* (1943)

- Rodgers and Hammerstein believed they could write a musical based on Michener's work that would be financially successful
 - Would also send a strong progressive message on racism
- The piece won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1950
 - In the Southern U.S., its racial theme provoked controversy
 - For which its authors were unapologetic!
- 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

- 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
 - The men were given \$50 to equip themselves with what clothing they felt their characters would wear
- Don Fellows, the first Lt. Buzz Adams, drew on his wartime experience as a Marine
- Purchased a non-regulation baseball cap and black ankle boots

- The director implemented lap changes
 - A technique pioneered by Rodgers and Hammerstein in *Allegro*
 - when 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

- 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

- A national tour began in Cleveland, Ohio, in April 1950
 - It ran for five years
- For the 48,000 tickets available in Cleveland, 250,000 requests were submitted
 - Caused the box office to close for three weeks to process them
- A scaled-down version toured military bases in Korea in 1951
 - At the request of Hammerstein and Rodgers, officers and enlisted soldiers sat together to view it

- The Broadway production transferred to the Broadway Theatre in June 1953
 - In order to accommodate Rodgers and Hammerstein's new show, *Me and Juliet*
- *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"
 - Symbolically the curtain did not fall but remained raised as the audience left the theatre

DARRYL F. ZANUCK presents

RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN'S

The King and I

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STARRING

DEBORAH KERR · YUL BRYNNER

WITH RITA MORENO · MARTIN BENSON
REX THOMPSON

FROM 20th CENTURY-FOX IN
CINEMASCOPE
55

MORE THAN YOUR EYES HAVE EVER SEEN

PRODUCED BY CHARLES BRACKETT · DIRECTED BY WALTER LANG · SCREENPLAY BY ERNEST LEHMAN · MUSIC BY RICHARD RODGERS · BOOK AND LYRICS BY OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II

FROM THE MUSICAL PLAY
BASED ON 1888 AND
THE KING OF Siam
BY BURLINEL LONDON · PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEROME ROBBINS

- the fifth musical written by Rodgers & Hammerstein II
 - Based on the 1944 novel Anna and the King of Siam by Margaret Landon
 - Derived from the memoirs of Anna Leonowens, governess to the children of King Mongkut of Siam
- The musical premiered on March 29, 1951
 - At Broadway's St. James Theatre
 - It ran nearly three years
 - Then the fourth longest-running Broadway musical in history
 - Has had many tours and revivals

- ◉ Mongkut, King of Siam, was about 57 years old in 1861
- ◉ He had lived half his life as a Buddhist monk and was an able scholar, founding a new order of Buddhism and a temple in Bangkok
 - ◉ Paid for by his half-brother, King Nangklao
- ◉ Through his decades of devotion, Mongkut acquired an ascetic lifestyle and a firm grasp of Western languages
 - ◉ Ascetic: characterized by or suggesting the practice of severe self-discipline and abstention from all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons
- ◉ When Nangklao died in 1850, Mongkut became king
- ◉ At that time, various European countries were striving for dominance and American traders sought greater influence, in Southeast Asia
- ◉ He ultimately succeeded in keeping Siam an independent nation, partly by familiarizing his heirs and harem with Western ways

- In 1861, Mongkut wrote to his Singapore agent, Tan Kim Ching, asking him to find a British lady to be governess to the royal children
- At the time, the British community in Singapore was small, and the choice fell on a recent arrival there, Anna Leonowens
 - Who was running a small nursery school in the colony
- Upon receiving the King's invitation, Leonowens sent her daughter, Avis, to school in England, to give Avis the social advantage of a prestigious British education
 - Then traveled to Bangkok with her five-year-old son, Louis
- King Mongkut had sought a Briton to teach his children and wives after trying local missionaries
 - They used the opportunity to proselytize

- ◉ In 1867, Leonowens left Bangkok on a six-month leave of absence to visit her daughter Avis in England
 - ◉ Intending to deposit Louis at a school in Ireland and return to Siam with Avis
 - ◉ Due to unexpected delays and opportunities for further travel, Leonowens was still abroad in late 1868, when Mongkut fell ill and died
- ◉ Leonowens did not return to Siam, although she continued to correspond with her former pupil, the new king Chulalongkorn

- Although the part of the King was only a supporting role to Lawrence's Anna, Hammerstein and Rodgers thought it essential that a well-known theatrical actor play it
- The obvious choice was Rex Harrison, who had played the King in the movie, but he was booked
 - As was Noël Coward
- Alfred Drake, the original Curly in Oklahoma!, made contractual demands which were deemed too high
- With time running short before rehearsals, finding an actor to play the King became a major concern
- Mary Martin, the original Nellie Forbush in South Pacific, suggested that her co-star, Yul Brynner, in a 1946 musical set in China try for the role
- Pre-rehearsal preparations began in late 1950

- ◉ Hammerstein had wanted Logan to direct and co-write the book, as he had for South Pacific
 - ◉ When Logan declined, Hammerstein decided to write the entire book himself
- ◉ The duo hired John van Druten as director
- ◉ The show was budgeted at \$250,000
 - ◉ \$2,280,000 adjusted for inflation
- ◉ Making it the most expensive Rodgers and Hammerstein production to that point
 - ◉ Prompting some mockery that costs exceeded even their expensive flop Allegro
 - ◉ Investors included Hammerstein, Rodgers, Logan, Martin, Billy Rose and Hayward
 - ◉ The children who were cast as the young princes and princesses came from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including Puerto Rican or Italian
 - ◉ None were Thai

- At his first meeting with Sharaff, Brynner, who had only a fringe of hair, asked what he was to do about it
- When told he was to shave it, Brynner was horror-struck and refused, convinced he would look terrible
- He finally gave in during tryouts and put dark makeup on his shaved head
 - The effect was so well-received that it became Brynner's trademark
- Brynner regretted that there were not more tryout performances
 - Feeling that the schedule did not give him an adequate opportunity to develop the complex role of the King
- When he told this to Hammerstein and Rodgers, they asked what sort of performance they would get from him
 - He responded, "It will be good enough, it will get the reviews"

Rodgers &
Hammerstein's

Cinderella



Cinderella

- ◉ Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella is a musical written for television
 - ◉ Music by Richard Rodgers
 - ◉ Book and Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II
- ◉ It is based upon the fairy tale Cinderella
 - ◉ Specifically the French version Cendrillon, ou La Petite Pantoufle de Verre, by Charles Perrault

History

- In the 1950s, television adaptations of musicals were fairly common.
 - Broadcast versions of Annie Get Your Gun, Wonderful Town, Anything Goes, and Kiss Me, Kate were all seen during the decade
- In 1955, NBC had broadcast the Broadway musical Peter Pan
 - It was such a hit the network looked for more family-oriented musical projects.
- NBC approached Rodgers and Hammerstein
 - Asked them to write an original musical expressly for television
 - Rather than an adaptation of an existing musical

- The team decided to adapt the fairy tale Cinderella
 - Since they were new to television, they sought the advice of industry insider, Richard Lewine
- Lewine was then the Vice President in charge of color television at CBS
- He told Rodgers and Hammerstein that CBS was also seeking a musical project
 - Had already signed Julie Andrews
 - Who was then starring in My Fair Lady on Broadway

- ◉ Rodgers and Hammerstein retained ownership of the show
 - ◉ Had control over casting, direction, set and costumes
- ◉ CBS controlled the technical aspects of the broadcast
 - ◉ Had an option for a second broadcast
- ◉ CBS announced the production on September 5, 1956
- ◉ The musical had to fit into the 90-minute program with six commercial breaks
 - ◉ It was divided into six short acts

- ◉ Rehearsals started on February 21, 1957
 - ◉ TV experienced, Emmy Award-winning director Ralph Nelson and choreographer Jonathan Lucas were hired
 - ◉ Rodgers' friend, Robert Russell Bennett, provided the orchestrations
 - ◉ Alfredo Antonini, a veteran with CBS, conducted the orchestra
- ◉ In early March, the company moved to CBS Television Color Studio 72
 - ◉ The first CBS-TV color studio in New York
 - ◉ The smallest color studio in the CBS empire at the time

- The 56 performers, 33 musicians and 80 stagehands and crew worked crammed into the small studio together
 - With four giant RCA TK-40A color TV cameras
 - A wardrobe of up to 100 costumes
 - Over half a dozen huge set pieces
 - And numerous props and special effects equipment
- The orchestra played in a small room with special equipment to overcome the suppressed acoustics
- CBS invested in a massive marketing campaign, as did the sponsors
 - Ed Sullivan also promoted the show with an appearance by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II
- It was broadcast live on March 31, 1957

Reception

- The 1957 version of Cinderella was seen by the largest audience in history at the time of its premiere
 - 107,000,000 people in the USA
 - Fully 60% of the country's population at that time
- Variety estimated that 24.2 million households were tuned into the show
 - With an average of 4.43 viewers each