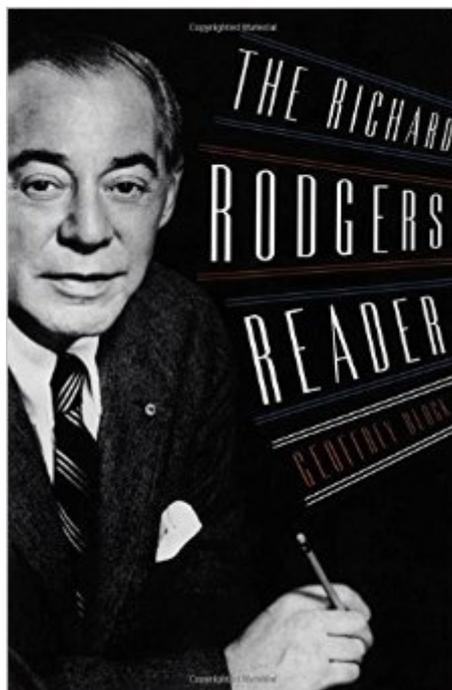


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The Richard Rodgers Reader (Readers On American Musicians)



Synopsis

Richard Rodgers was one of America's most prolific and best-loved composers. A world without "My Funny Valentine," "The Lady is a Tramp," "Blue Moon," and "Bewitched," to name just a few of the songs he wrote with Lorenz Hart, is scarcely imaginable, and the musicals he wrote with his second collaborator, Oscar Hammerstein--Oklahoma!, Carousel, South Pacific, The King and I, and The Sound of Music--continue to enchant and entertain audiences. Arranged in four sections, Rodgers and Hart (1929-1943), Rodgers and Hammerstein (1943-1960), Rodgers After Hammerstein (1960-1979), and The Composer Speaks (1939-1971), The Richard Rodgers Reader offers a cornucopia of informative, perceptive, and stylish biographical and critical overviews. It also contains a selection of Rodgers's letters to his wife Dorothy in the 1920s, the 1938 Time magazine cover story and New Yorker profiles in 1938 and 1961, and essays and reviews by such noted critics as Brooks Atkinson, Eric Bentley, Leonard Bernstein, Lehman Engel, Walter Kerr, Ken Mandelbaum, Ethan Mordden, George Jean Nathan, and Alec Wilder. The volume features personal accounts by Richard Adler, Agnes de Mille, Joshua Logan, Mary Martin, and Diahann Carroll. The collection concludes with complete selections from more than thirty years of Rodgers's own writings on topics ranging from the creative process, the state of the Broadway theater, even Rodgers's bout with cancer, and a generous sample from the candid and previously unpublished Columbia University interviews. For anyone wishing to explore more fully the life and work of a composer whose songs and musicals have assumed a permanent--and prominent--place in American popular culture, The Richard Rodgers Reader will offer endless delights.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) was one of America's most prolific and successful popular composers of the first half of the 20th century. As a songwriter, Rodgers occupies a central place in the core repertory of The Great American Songbook. No fewer than 9 of Rodgers's songs are listed among Variety's Golden 100 songs of Tin Pan Alley, a figure that equals Irving Berlin's status among all songs copyrighted between 1918 and 1956. Rodgers's work in collaboration with lyricists Lorenz Hart (1895-1943) and then Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960) arguably did more to shape and transform the American stage musical than that of any other single composer. From the beginning, with a benefit performance of the Garrick Gaieties in 1925, Rodgers's earliest shows contained one or more songs that remain standards. Beginning in 1935 and lasting right up to Hart's death in 1943, the team turned out one success after another, including a quartet of musicals that enjoy revivals today -- "On Your Toes", "Babes in Arms", "The Boys from Syracuse", and "Pal Joey". In 1942 Rodgers began a second long-term partnership with Hammerstein that launched the third great phase of the American musical, according to Ethan Mordden's opening essay. Understanding full well the grip of conventions on the musical, Rodgers, Hammerstein, director Rouben Mamoulian, and choreographer Agnes DeMille made the radical decision in "Oklahoma!" (1943) to allow the story to drive everything that happened on the stage. Gone were the oft-irrelevant song and dance numbers required in earlier works that effectively stopped the show. "Oklahoma!

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