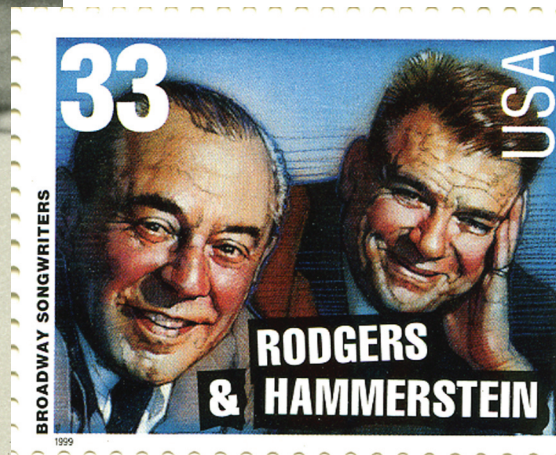


Richard Rodgers

Composer (1902 – 1979)



Rodgers was born in Queens, the son of a prominent physician who had changed the family name from Abrahams. He attended DeWitt Clinton High School and later Columbia University. In 1921, Rodgers shifted his studies to the Institute of Musical Art, now Juilliard.

In 1919, Rodgers met Lorenz Hart but the collaboration produced no successes until 1925, when they wrote the songs for a benefit show, *The Garrick Gaieties*. The critics found the show fresh and delightful. The show's biggest hit—the song that Rodgers believed “made” Rodgers and Hart—was *Manhattan*.

Throughout the rest of the decade, the duo wrote several hit shows and produced such standards as *Here in My Arms*, *Mountain Greenery*, *My Heart Stood Still* and *You Took Advantage of Me*. In the early 1930s, the team went to Hollywood where they wrote a number of classic songs and film scores, including *Love Me Tonight* (1932), which introduced three standards: *Lover*, *Mimi*, and *Isn't It Romantic?*

Returning to Broadway in 1935, they began an almost unbroken string of hit shows that ended only with Hart's death in 1943. Among the most notable were *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).

In 1943, Rodgers began working with Columbia classmate Oscar Hammerstein II. Their first musical, the groundbreaking hit *Oklahoma!* (1943), marked the beginning of the most successful partnership in American musical theatre history.

The team went on to create four more hits that are among the most popular of all musicals: *Carousel* (1945), the Pulitzer Prize-winning *South Pacific* (1949), *The King and I* (1951), and *The Sound of Music* (1959), all replete with songs that every Centurion can hum, some even in tune. Their musicals earned a total of 35 Tony Awards, 15 Academy Awards, two Pulitzer Prizes, two Grammy Awards, and two Emmy Awards. After Hammerstein's death in 1960, Rodgers wrote both words and music for *No Strings* (1962), earning him two more Tony Awards.

Rodgers' long marriage to Dorothy Rodgers, writer, art collector, socialite and inventor (of among other things, the Jonny-mop) produced two daughters, MARY RODGERS GUETTEL and Linda Rodgers Emory. Mary has written a number of books and columns, and she and her son Adam Guettel also became composers. Rodgers died in December 1979.