



# Some Enchanted Evening

## STUDY GUIDE

Created by Paper Mill Playhouse's Education Department.

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## **ABOUT THE GUIDE**

This guide is designed to enrich your students' educational experience of *Some Enchanted Evening* by providing illuminating background information as well as opportunities for reflection, discussion, and creative response. It is not meant to be a comprehensive look at the work of Rodgers and Hammerstein, but rather an introduction to understanding their place in musical theatre history.

Please note:

- Highlighted words like **this** can be found in the glossary
- A speech bubble with a number inside of it like the one below indicates the corresponding discussion question(s) for that page's content



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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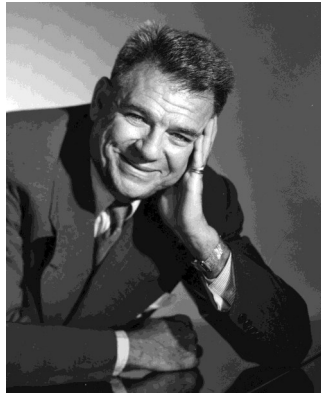
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# MEET THE CREATIVE TEAM



**RICHARD RODGERS**

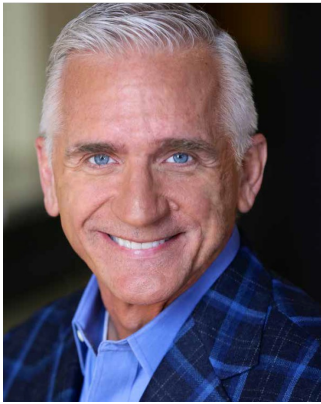
**COMPOSER**



**OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II**

**LYRICIST**

*This creative duo transformed musical theatre and created the form for the modern musical. We'll learn more about them a little later!*



**MARK S. HOEBEE**

**DIRECTOR**

**MARK S. HOEBEE** (*Director, Producing Artistic Director*) joined the artistic team at Paper Mill Playhouse in 2000. Under his leadership, Paper Mill was presented with the Regional Theatre Tony Award in 2016 and in recent years launched such noteworthy projects as the world premieres of *Newsies*, in partnership with Disney Theatrical Productions; *Honeymoon in Vegas*; *Ever After*; *Bandstand*; *A Bronx Tale*; *The Honeymooners*; *My Very Own British Invasion*; *Unmasked: The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber*, with the Really Useful Group; and *The Sting* starring Harry Connick, Jr.; as well as the American premieres of the 25th Anniversary Production of *Les Misérables*, working alongside Cameron Mackintosh; Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*; and the national tour of *The Bodyguard* starring Deborah Cox.



**ANDREW DAVID SOTOMAYOR**

**MUSIC DIRECTOR**

**ANDREW DAVID SOTOMAYOR** Music directing credits include the first national tour of *Escape to Margaritaville*; the Off Broadway premiere of *Curvy Widow*; *Man of La Mancha* (Westport Country Playhouse); *Newsies* and *West Side Story* (Maltz Jupiter Theatre); *The Will Rogers Follies* (Merry-Go-Round Playhouse); and *Cutman: A Boxing Musical* (Goodspeed), among others. As a composer, he has provided music and lyrics for the original musicals *50 Shades of F\*\*\*d Up* and *Committed* as well as scores for the short film *Cuba 1961: A Love Story* and the independent feature film *Bx3M*. He is a proud graduate of Stetson University, Florida.

# RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S HISTORY AND LEGACY: WHO WERE THEY?

**Richard Rodgers** was born in Queens, NY, to parents Dr. William Abrahams Rodgers and Mamie Levy. He started playing piano at age 6 and saw many operettas while growing up. While he began undergraduate studies at Columbia University, he dropped out after two years to focus on music at the Institute of Musical Art (now Julliard). Prior to starting school, he had met Lorenz Hart—his first creative partner with whom he'd work for 24 years including on shows like *Pal Joey*, *A Connecticut Yankee*, *On Your Toes* and *Babes in Arms*. He was a major contributor to the **Tin Pan Alley** era of Broadway. Rodgers' most career-defining work came from his collaboration with Oscar Hammerstein II. The two revolutionized musical theatre and experienced great success. Rodgers was the first person to "EGOT" and the only person to also win the Pulitzer Prize and a Kennedy Center Honor.

**Oscar Hammerstein II** was born in New York City to Alice Nimmo and William Hammerstein, a theatrical manager. He attended Columbia University Law School because his father did not want him to be in the arts. During his first year of undergraduate studies he joined the Columbia University Players as a performer. He continued to perform and eventually write for the troupe's shows. During his first year of law school, he convinced his uncle (a producer) to hire him as an assistant stage manager. This grew into a production stage manager role in which he sometimes was able to assist on lyric writing and revisions. Before teaming with Richard Rodgers, Hammerstein collaborated with Jerome Kern. The two wrote *Show Boat* in 1927.

While both had prior creative partnerships, their lives overlapped before formally teaming up. They grew up in the same part of Manhattan. Rodgers had known Hammerstein as a teenage boy when he went to see the annual **Varsity Show** at Columbia. They even collaborated on a couple of songs for a subsequent Varsity Show when they were both at Columbia.

Their partnership formally began at Rodgers' behest. He asked Hammerstein if he'd consider collaborating with him because he thought Hart's health was declining. In an NPR's Fresh Air interview, Todd Purdum, author of "Something Wonderful: Rodgers and Hammerstein's Broadway Revolution," recounts how the two teamed up:

"Hammerstein said, 'well, as long as Larry can do the work, you have to stay with him because it would kill him if you left him. But if he can't do the work, then I'll be there. And that's what happened.'"

Their first collaboration was on *Oklahoma!*

# RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S HISTORY AND LEGACY: WHAT DID THEY ACCOMPLISH?

While developing their first collaboration, *Oklahoma!*, Hammerstein wrote most of the lyrics before Rodgers wrote the score which was the reverse of the normal process. They integrated songs into the show in a way that advanced the plot and elevated the storytelling, another choice that was novel for their time. The show was both critically and popularly successful. It marked not just the beginning of fruitful partnership that generated 11 musicals, but also a new age for Broadway and musical theatre as an art form. Rodgers and Hammerstein dramatized serious issues and themes for the stage in a way that had never been done before. Some of these topics included abandonment, alcoholism, racism, abuse, and death. Their 1949 musical, *South Pacific*, a show that presents “good” people grappling with their own prejudices, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, only the second musical to receive the prestigious honor. As of 2020, only 10 musicals have received the prize.

## Other highlights of their accomplishments include:

- ⇒ 34 TONYS, 15 Oscars, 2 Grammys
- ⇒ Creation of the **Conditional Ballad**
- ⇒ With their frequent collaborator, choreographer Agnes DeMille, they introduced the device of the **dream ballet**

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As a result of their theatrical innovations, the art form, which was once known as “musical comedy” was now known simply as a “musical”

# RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S HISTORY AND LEGACY: TACKLING ISSUES ON STAGE

As previously mentioned, Rodgers and Hammerstein changed the world's expectations of what can and cannot be portrayed on stage. Taboo issues like domestic violence and racism that were not a part of polite conversation were thrust into the spotlight. These topics were transformed from hypotheticals into something very personal through compelling or likable characters navigate their journeys in relation to and in the context of these larger issues.

In 2019 Lin-Manuel Miranda penned a piece for the Atlantic about the role of artists in politics. He traces that relationship back to Rodgers and Hammerstein. He wrote:

*"Consider The Sound of Music. It isn't just about climbing mountains and fording streams. Look beyond the adorable von Trapp children: It's about the looming existential threat of Nazism. No longer relevant? A GIF of Captain von Trapp tearing up a Nazi flag is something we see 10 times a day on Twitter, because all sorts of Nazis are out there again in 2019. As last spring's searing Broadway revival of Oklahoma! revealed, lying underneath Hammerstein's elephant-eye-high corn and chirping birds is a lawless society becoming itself, bending its rules and procedures based on who is considered part of the community (Curly) and who is marginalized (poor Jud ... seriously, poor Jud). Or consider your parents' favorite, South Pacific. At its center, our hero, Nellie Forbush, must confront her own internalized racism when she learns that the new love of her life has biracial children from a previous marriage. Let your parents know if they forgot: Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals form the spine of Broadway's "golden age," and they also deeply engage with the politics of their era."*

Today, we are accustomed to seeing musicals that address or focus on socio-political hot topics. *Next to Normal* explores mental illness, *Fun Home* looks at growing up and figuring out one's sexual identity, even *Newsies* relies on its audience believing in the strength and importance of unions. These examples and many, many more are a part of Rodgers and Hammerstein's legacy.





# RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S HISTORY AND LEGACY: REVIVALS

Playbill.com recently published an article that listed the 16 most revived Broadway shows from 1927 to 2020. Of those 16 shows, 3 were Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals. They were:

- *The King and I*, which premiered in 1951 and was revived in 1977, 1985, 1996, and 2015
- *Oklahoma!*, which premiered in 1943 and was revived in 1951, 1953, 1979, 2002, and 2019
- *Carousel*, which premiered in 1945 and was revived in 1949, 1954, 1957, 1994, and 2018

It's clear that Rodgers and Hammerstein's work continues to capture the imaginations and attention of not just artists but audiences. We continue to find meaning in these shows. They can be performed true to their original productions or be reimagined for a new age—but either way their themes still spark reflection and conversation. Here are a few examples of these revivals from their original productions to their most recent revivals.



On the left: a photo of the romantic leads, Laurey and Curly in the original 1943 Broadway production of *Oklahoma!*

Above: a photo of the romantic leads, Laurey and Curly, from the 2019 Broadway revival of *Oklahoma!*

# RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S HISTORY AND LEGACY: REVIVALS



Tuptim and Lun Tha, the secondary romantic pairing in *The King and I*.

On the left, the original 1951 Broadway production.

On the right, the 2015 Broadway revival.



On the left: the original 1945 Broadway cast of *Carousel*

On the right: the 2018 Broadway revival cast of *Carousel*



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# SOME ENCHANTED EVENING:

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FEATURED SONGS AND SHOWS

*Some Enchanted Evening* is a collection of Rodgers and Hammerstein's most beloved compositions. You don't have to be familiar with their shows to enjoy these beautiful songs. But, if you want to learn more we've provided short synopses of each featured show and listed which songs to look out for in *Some Enchanted Evening*.

### *Oklahoma!*

Rodgers and Hammerstein's first musical takes place in Oklahoma Territory in 1906. Based on Lynn Riggs' 1931 play *Green Grows the Lilacs*, the musical centers on Laurey, a farm girl, and her burgeoning romance with Curly, a cowboy. As the territory is on the precipice of becoming a state, its people navigate rivalries between cowboys and farmers,

Featured Songs: Surrey with the Fringe on Top, People Will Say We're in Love, I Cain't Say No, Out of My Dreams, Oh What a Beautiful Mornin', Oklahoma

### *State Fair*

Originally based on Phil Strong's novel of the same name, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *State Fair* was the only musical they wrote for film. *State Fair* follows the Frake Family's 1946 Iowa State Fair. Ma and Pop are looking to win blue ribbons while their children, Margy and Wayne, search for romance.

Featured Songs: It Might as Well Be Spring, It's a Grand Night for Singing,

### *South Pacific*

The musical is based on several stories from James Michener's book "Tales of the South Pacific." It takes place during World War II on an island in the South Sea Islands where there are American troops stationed. Nellie, a nurse, falls in love with Emile—a French plantation owner and widower with two mixed race children. Lieutenant Cable falls in love with Liat, a young girl from the island. The two Americans grapple with their prejudices that prevent them from committing fully to the ones they love.

Featured Songs: There is Nothing Like a Dame, Some Enchanted Evening, A Wonderful Guy, Younger Than Springtime, I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair, Happy Talk

### *Allegro*

*Allegro* tracks the life of an everyday man, Joseph Taylor, Jr. from birth up until he is 35 years old. He's born in a small town, marries his childhood sweetheart, and moves to the big city to work as a doctor at a well-regarded hospital before having a mid-life crisis. This musical utilizes a **Greek Chorus** to assist with the storytelling.

Featured Songs: The Gentleman is a Dope

# SOME ENCHANTED EVENING: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FEATURED SONGS AND SHOWS

## *The King and I*

Based on Margaret Landon's novel "Anna and the King of Siam," this musical follows Anna Leonowens—an English governess who comes to Siam (modern day Thailand) to work with the King's children in an effort to bring some Western culture to their country. Anna and the King have distinctly different cultures, traditions, and outlooks but seek to find understanding and respect in spite of these differences.

Featured Songs: I Have Dreamed, Something Wonderful, Shall We Dance, I Whistle a Happy Tune

## *The Sound of Music*

Based on the real lives of the Von Trapp family, the Sound of Music tells the story of Maria Ranier who is postulant (nun in training) that becomes the governess for an Austrian naval captain's 7 children. Despite a rocky start, she and Captain Von Trapp fall in love and eventually marry. As the story unfolds, the looming threat of Nazism and impending war are the constant backdrop and comes to the forefront at the musical's climax.

Featured Songs: The Sound of Music, A Bell is No Bell, An Ordinary Couple, Sixteen Going on Seventeen, My Favorite Things, The Lonely Goatherd,

## *Carousel*

Based on Ferenc Molnar's play Liliom, this musical revolves around Billy Bigelow, a carnival barker with a dark side, and Julie Jordan—a millworker who falls in love with Billy. They get married, but stress about money and the realities of married life put cracks in their romance. Driven to crime to support his family, Billy gets killed in an armed robbery gone wrong. 15 years later, he is allowed to return to earth for day—he follows Julie and their daughter and struggles to find a way to communicate with them.

Featured Songs: If I Loved You, When the Children Are Asleep, Soliloquy, June is Bustin' Out All Over

## *Flower Drum Song*

This musical is based on the novel, "The Flower Drum Song" by Chinese-American author C. Y. Lee,. It is set in San Francisco's Chinatown in the 1950s and focuses on Wang-Ta, a young man who is trying to find love and assimilate to American culture while keeping with peace with his very traditional father.

Featured Songs: Don't Marry Me, Love Look Away,



## Where to Watch:

### FINDING RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S WORK ONLINE

Below we've listed the most readily available filmed stage versions of each show. Many of Rodgers and Hammerstein's shows have been adapted into movies which are quite easy to find. You can always check with your local library as they might also have DVDs available of the movie adaptations or filmed stage versions! If a musical is not listed below, we cannot find a filmed stage version. Finally, YouTube has a plethora of clips from each of these musicals—their Broadway versions as well as productions from across the country.

#### Oklahoma!

- 1999 London Revival available on BroadwayHD
- 1999 London Revival available on Amazon Prime (\$3.99)

#### State Fair

- 1962 movie in full available on YouTube
- 1962 movie available on Amazon Prime (\$3.99)

#### South Pacific

- 1958 movie adaptation available on YouTube (\$3.99)
- 1958 movie adaptation available on Amazon Prime (\$3.99)

#### The King and I

- 2018 Lincoln Center's production at London Palladium available on BroadwayHD

#### The Sound of Music

- 2015 Sound of Music Live (London) is available on BroadwayHD
- 2015 Sound of Music Live (London) is available on PBS.org

#### Carousel

- 2013 Live from Lincoln Center available on BroadwayHD
- 2018 Revival full version can be found on YouTube at this time

# Glossary:

**COMPOSER:** someone who writes the music for a show

**LYRICIST:** someone who creates the words for the songs in a show

**DIRECTOR:** someone who is in charge of leading a production and executing a specific vision by guiding their actors and creative team to the finished product

**MUSIC DIRECTOR:** someone who oversees the musical elements of a production including but not limited to arranging music, teaching music, and leading music rehearsals

**TIN PAN ALLEY:** refers to a collection of music publishers and songwriters who worked in New York City at 28th Street between 5th and 6th avenues in the early 19th century until the late 1940s. Some notable Tin Pan Alley song writers include the Gershwins, George M. Cohan, and Johnny Mercer.

**VARSITY SHOW:** an annual show that originated in 1894 as a fundraiser for Columbia's athletic teams. The shows generally satirize life at Columbia through takes on politics, student groups, administrators and other aspects of campus life

**CONDITIONAL BALLAD:** also known as the conditional love song, it is a song in a musical that is performed by two people who will potentially be romantically linked, but either their own feelings or their circumstances prevent them from committing to the relationship in this moment. Examples include: If I Loved You from *Carousel*, I'll Know from *Guys and Dolls*, Perfect for You from *Next to Normal*, and Falling Slowly from *Once*

**DREAM BALLET:** a number in a musical that is exclusively performed in dance, with no singing or dialogue. The production number reflects the themes of the musical or can express an inner turmoil or thoughts of the character(s)

# Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is the lasting significance of the term changing from musical comedy to musical?
2. What themes do you think are best explored or expressed through song? Why?
3. Refer back to the quote from Lin-Manuel Miranda. Can you think of a musical you've seen or are familiar with that explores difficult or political themes? Is it successful? Why or why not?
4. Do you think artists have a responsibility to address the issues of their time? Why or why not?
5. What do you think motivates producers to revive certain shows? What elements do you think a show should have to receive a revival? What do you think makes a revival successful?
6. Have you seen a revival or any production of a Rodgers & Hammerstein show? If so, what storylines, themes, etc. stood out to you that still felt relevant and what felt dated?
7. Refer to the photos of original productions and their most recent revivals. Using context clues (e.g. what mood do the photos evoke? What do the costumes look like? Who has been cast in these roles etc.) - what kinds of changes do you think were made, if any? Why do you think a revival makes changes?
8. Note that a majority of these musicals were based on or adapted from books or plays that already existed. Today, we can see a trend of musicals adapted from movies. Does this feel different? Do you think one is different or better? What do you think is important to consider when choosing stories to be adapted for musical theatre?
9. While viewing the concert, were you hearing any of these songs for the first time? If so, what was your impression? How did they make you feel? What did you think they were about?
10. If you were previously familiar with the music, what was it like to hear them out of the context of their original show? What feelings did they evoke?
11. Did you notice any recurring themes in the songs that were part of the concert? If so, what were they?