Kern, Jerome (1885-1945) Encyclopedia Article

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Kern, Jerome (1885-1945)

Jerome Kern was one of the most significant composers for Broadway and Hollywood. With his string of Princess Theater musicals, the immortal musical *Show Boat* (1927), and his songs for stage and screen, Kern in many ways defined the American popular song.

Through his series of Princess Musicals such as *Oh, Boy!* (1917), Kern helped to create an intimacy in the musical comedy which helped to end the dominance of European imports on Broadway. But it was with *Show Boat* (1927) and its cavalcade of songs such as "Ol' Man River" and "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" that Kern achieved his greatest fame. Other important Kern songs include "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" from *Roberta* (1933) and "All the Things You Are" from *Very Warm for May* (1939). He wrote songs for the films *Swing Time* (1936) and *You Were Never Lovelier* (1942), among others. He won two Academy Awards for best song, in 1936 for "The Way You Look Tonight" and in 1940 for "The Last Time I Saw Paris." Kern, in his scores for stage and screen, established a standard for popular song which exists to the present day.

Further Reading:

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