

Irving Berlin

author: James Kaplan

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Synopsis

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A fast-moving, musically astute portrait of arguably the greatest composer of American popular music

Irving Berlin (1888-1989) has been called - by George Gershwin, among others - the greatest songwriter of the golden age of the American popular song. "Berlin has no place in American music," legendary composer Jerome Kern wrote; "He is American music." In a career that spanned an astonishing nine decades, Berlin wrote some 1,500 tunes, including "Alexander's Ragtime Band", "God Bless America", and "White Christmas". From ragtime to the rock era, Berlin's work has endured in the very fiber of American national identity.

Exploring the intertwining of Berlin's life with the life of New York City, noted biographer James Kaplan offers a visceral narrative of Berlin as self-made man and witty, wily, tough Jewish immigrant. This fast-paced, musically opinionated biography uncovers Berlin's unique brilliance as a composer of music and lyrics. Masterfully written and psychologically penetrating, Kaplan's book underscores Berlin's continued relevance in American popular culture.

Reader's comments

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