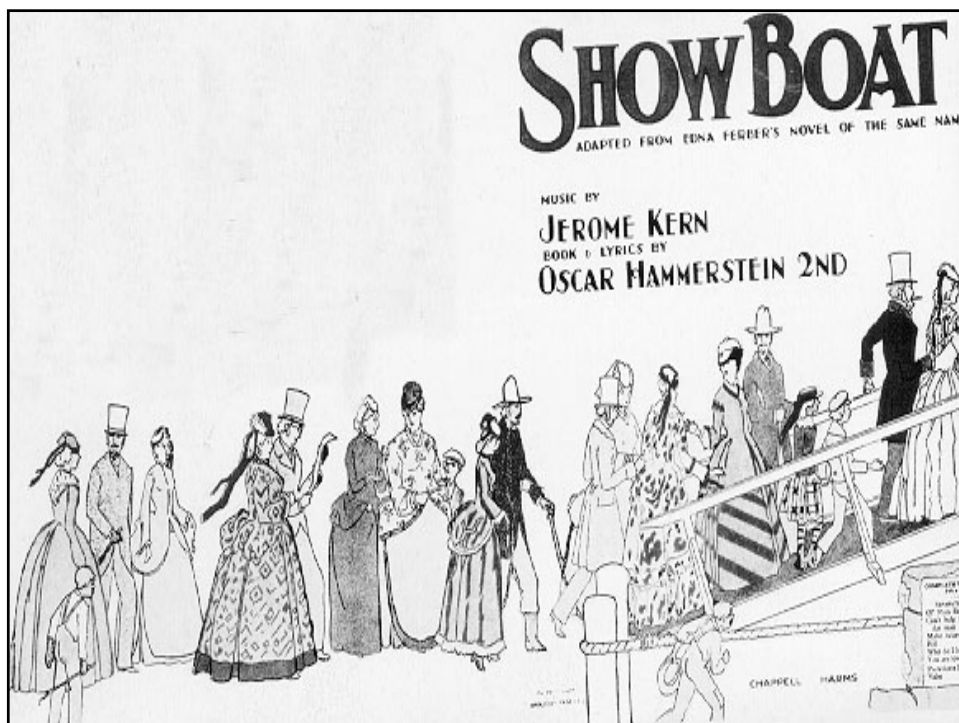


Show Boat

and the American Musical

*A presentation for
The Guild of Mercury Opera Rochester
by Robert Martin Ferris*



Influences on the American Musical

- English Comic Opera (Gilbert & Sullivan)
- Minstrel Show
- Revue (*Ziegfeld Follies*)
- Vaudeville and Burlesque
- Musical Comedy
- European Operetta (*The Merry Widow*)

“*Show Boat* marked the initial effort to make of musical comedy an integrated artistic creation, to fuse the disparate elements--song, dance, comedy and production numbers--so that each emerge naturally, even inevitably, from the play's context.”

“Before *Show Boat*, plot, characters and setting had served merely as hooks on which to dangle song, dance and musical routines. With *Show Boat* the dramatic text and musical score acquired scope and breadth, a concept which generated a long lineage, including such notable musicals as *Pal Joey*, *Carousel*, *Oklahoma!*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *West Side Story*, *My Fair Lady* and *Man of La Mancha*.”

The World of Flo Ziegfeld

Randolph Carter (1974)

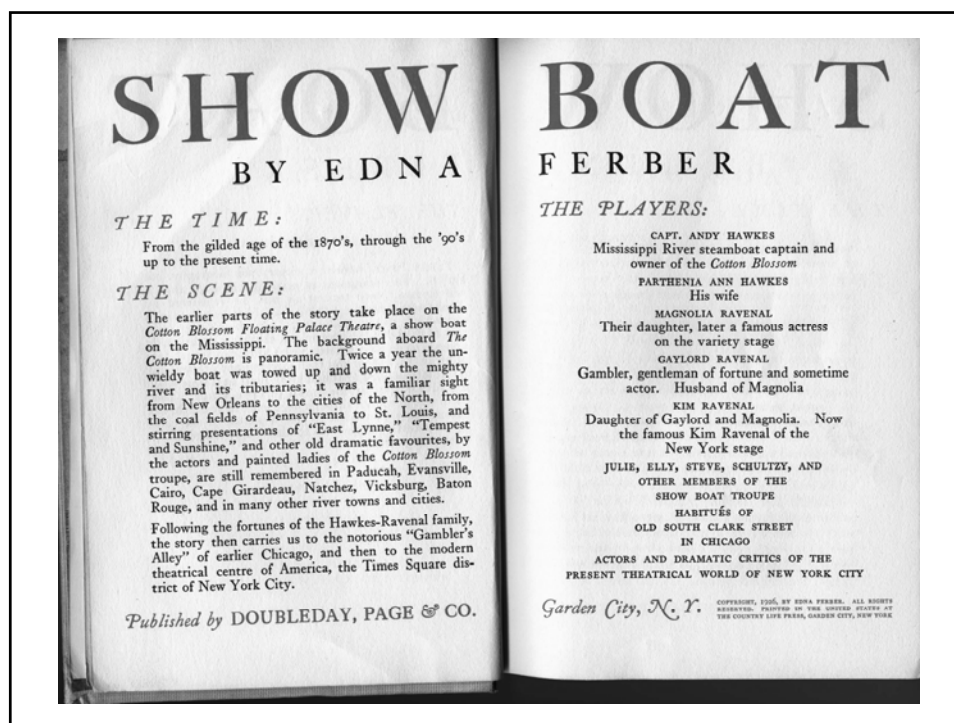


Edna Ferber

1885-1968

- American novelist and playwright
- Member of Algonquin Round Table
- Novels include
Show Boat, Cimarron, Saratoga Trunk, Giant
- Plays (with George S. Kaufman) include
The Royal Family, Dinner at Eight, Stage Door
- Pulitzer Prize in 1924 for *So Big*
- Novels usually feature strong female protagonist
- Spent several weeks on a show boat to soak up “atmosphere”





"The music mounted, and I give you my word my hair stood on end, the tears came to my eyes... That was music to outlast Jerome Kern's day and mine."

Edna Ferber



Jerome Kern

1885-1945

- American born, European trained
- Princess Theater musicals (1915-1917)
in collaboration with Guy Bolton and P.G. Wodehouse
- Collaborations with Oscar Hammerstein II
 - Show Boat* (1927)
 - Music in the Air* (1932)
 - Very Warm for May* (1939)
- Collaborations with Otto Harbach
 - The Cat and the Fiddle* (1931)
 - Roberta* (1933)
- Later career as film composer
 - Swing Time* (1936)
 - Cover Girl* (1944)

Songs from Broadway shows and film scores:

- Smoke Gets in Your Eyes
- Yesterdays
- The Song is You
- Lovely to Look At
- The Way You Look Tonight
- A Fine Romance
- All the Things You Are
- Long Ago (and Far Away)

“It is my opinion that the musical numbers
should carry the action of the play
and should be representative of the
personalities of the characters who sing them.”

Jerome Kern

Oscar Hammerstein II

1895-1960

- Born into prominent theatrical family
- With co-lyricist/librettist Otto Harbach, collaborated with prominent composers
 - Rudolph Friml (*Rose Marie*)
 - Sigmund Romberg (*The Desert Song*)
 - Jerome Kern (*Sunny*)
- Fruitful collaboration with composer Richard Rodgers
 - Oklahoma!* (1943)
 - Carousel* (1945)
 - South Pacific* (1949)
 - The King & I* (1951)
 - The Sound of Music* (1959)
- Neighbor and mentor of Stephen Sondheim



Florenz Ziegfeld

1867-1932

- *Ziegfeld Follies (1907-1931)*
- featured performers included Will Rogers, Eddie Cantor, Fannie Brice, Bert Williams, W.C. Fields, Ed Wynn
- Commissioned over 500 songs from composers such as Victor Herbert, Jerome Kern and Irving Berlin
- “A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody” (1919)
- Ziegfeld Theater opened in 1927,
designed by Joseph Urban

I AM KEEN ON DOING SHOWBOAT ON ACCOUNT OF YOUR
MUSIC BUT HAMMERSTEINS BOOK IN PRESENT SHAPE
HAS NOT A CHANCE IF HAMMERSTEIN WILL FIX THE
BOOK I WANT TO DO IT OR ALLOW SOMEONE ELSE TO
COME IN IF NECESSARY IF NOT YOU RETURN THE
ADVANCE AS YOU YOURSELF SUGGESTED IF
HAMMERSTEIN IS WILLING TO WORK WITH ME TO GET IT
RIGHT LET'S DO IT TOGETHER ALL WE WANT IS SUCCESS

Telegram from Florenz Ziegfeld to Jerome Kern

March 3, 1927



Production History of *Show Boat*

- **1927 Premiere**
Cast includes Norma Terris, Howard Marsh,
Helen Morgan, Jules Bledsoe, Charles Winninger,
Edna May Oliver
- **1936 Motion Picture** (Universal; B&W)
Directed by James Whale
Cast includes Irene Dunne, Allan Jones, Helen Morgan,
Paul Robeson, Charles Winninger, Hattie McDaniel



- **1946 Revival**

Cast includes Jan Clayton, Buddy Ebsen,
Charles Fredericks, Carol Bruce

*Became standard performing version for the
next 50 years*

- **1951 Motion Picture (MGM)**

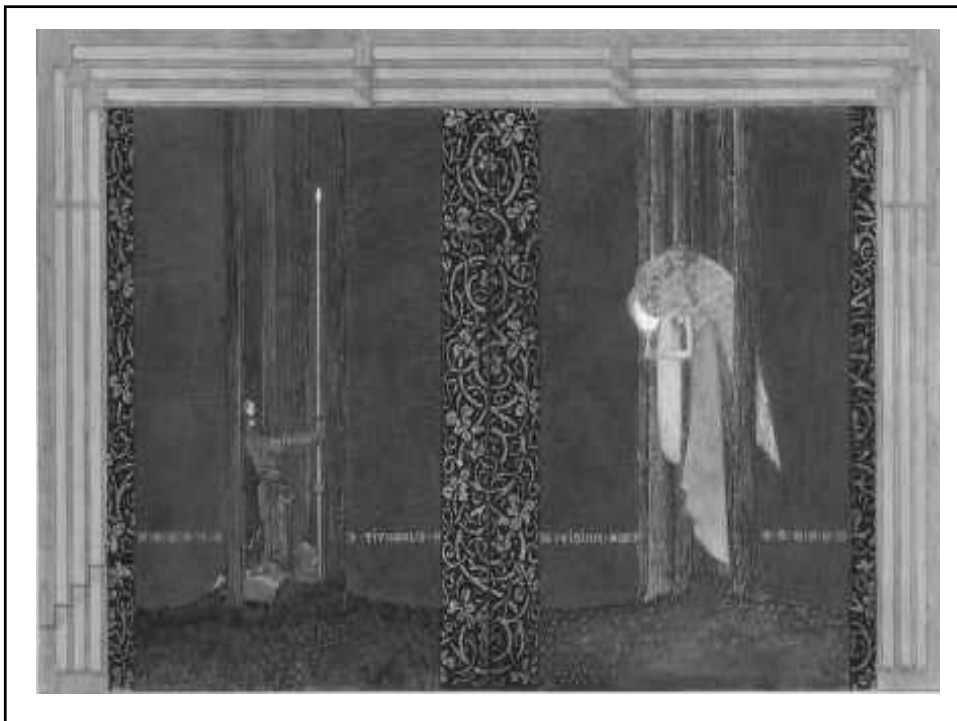
Directed by George Sidney

Cast includes Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel,
William Warfield, Ava Gardner, Joe E. Brown,
Agnes Moorhead, Marge and Gower Champion



- 1954 Enters repertoire of New York City Opera
- 1977 *Show Boat: The Story of a Classic American Musical*
by Miles Krueger
- **1988 Studio Recording** (EMI)
Conducted by John McGlinn
Cast includes Frederica Von Stade, Jerry Hadley,
Teresa Stratas, Bruce Hubbard
Complete recording of all extant versions
- **1994 Broadway Revival** (Toronto, 1993)
Directed by Hal Prince
Cast includes Mark Jacoby, Rebecca Luker, Lorette McKee,
John McMartin, Michel Bell, Elaine Stritch, Gretha Boston
Version to be performed by Mercury Opera Rochester







“Cotton Blossom”

Cotton blossom, cotton blossom,
Love to see you growin' free.
When they pack you on the levee
You're a heavy load to me!
Cotton blossom, cotton blossom,
Love to see you growin' wild!
On the levee you're too heavy
For this poor black child!

Cotton Blossom, Cotton Blossom,
Captain Andy's floating show!
Thrills and laughter, concert after,
Everybody's sure to go!
Cotton Blossom, Cotton Blossom,
Captain Andy's floating show!
Thrills and laughter, concert after,
Get your girl and go!

“Old Man River”

Ol' Man River
Dat Ol' Man River
He mus know sumpin'
But don't say nuthin'
He just keeps rollin',
He keeps on rollin' along.
He don't plant taters,
He don't plant cotton,
An' dem dat plants 'em
Is soon forgotten,
But Ol' Man River,
He jes' keeps rollin' along.



“Ol’ Man River” (Reprise)

New things come,
‘N old things go
But all things look the same to Joe--
Wars go on, and some folks die,
The rest forget the reason why.
I keeps laughing
Instead of crying,
I must keep living
Until I’m dying,
But Ol’ Man River,
He just keeps rolling along!





Mercury Opera
Rochester

will present

Show Boat

at the
Eastman Theater

on

June 1 & 2, 2007

Audio Cuts

Show Boat And the American Musical Stage

Rob Ferris

Track	Title	Time
01	Overture.....	5:38
02	Cotton Blossom - Niggers all work on de Mississippi	4:55
03	Mis'ry's Comin' Aroun' - Mis'ry's comin' aroun'.....	6:10
04	Mis'ry's Comin' Aroun' (Hal Prince Production).....	4:15
05	You Are Love - 'That you, Nola'	8:02
06	It's Getting Hotter in the North.....	8:59
07	Why Do I Love You	4:13
08	Nobody Else but Me.....	6:48

TT 49:00