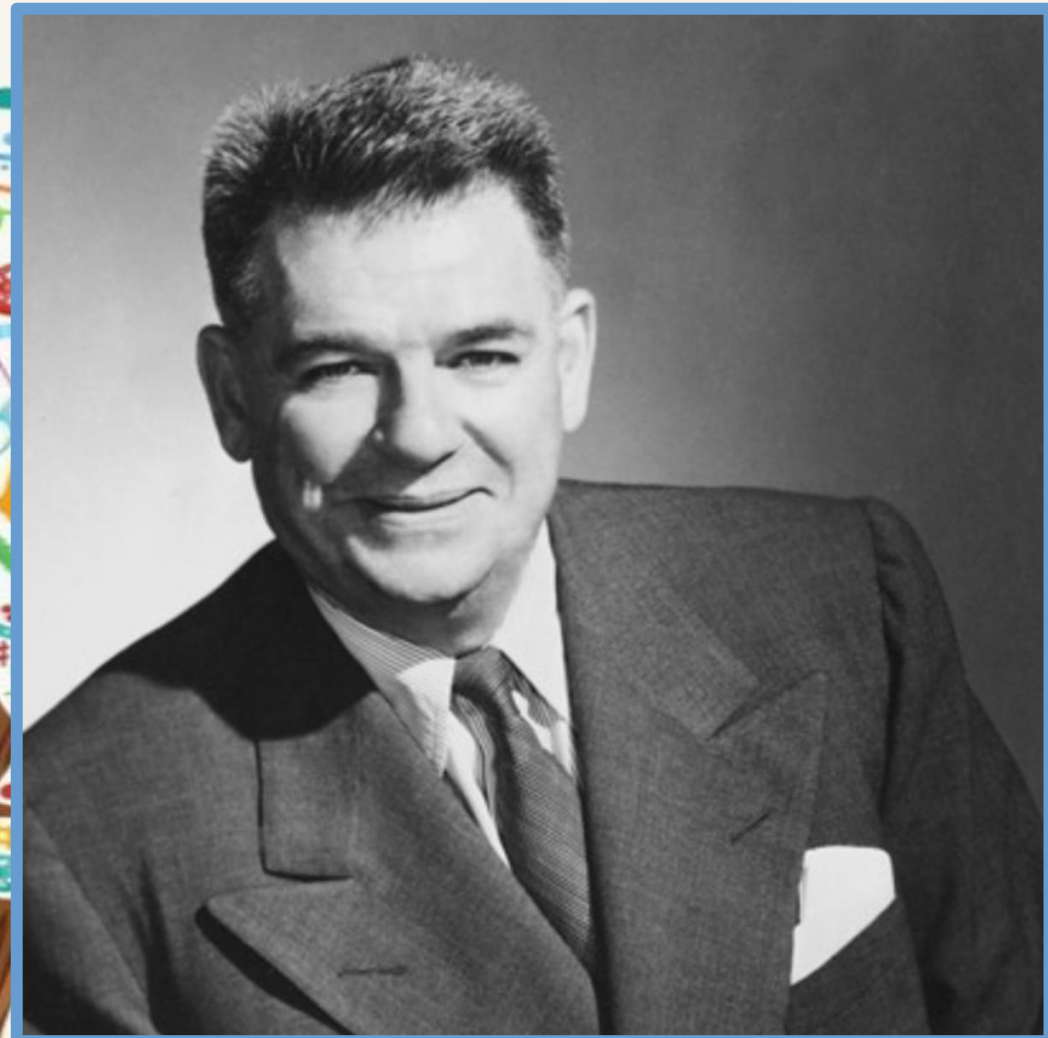
A background illustration featuring a large tree trunk at the bottom, with a dense canopy of colorful musical notes and instruments like a trumpet, saxophone, and harp. The notes are in various colors including green, blue, yellow, and red. The instruments are also colorful and scattered throughout the scene.

# Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II

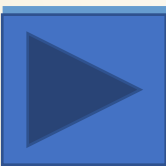
Composer of the Week

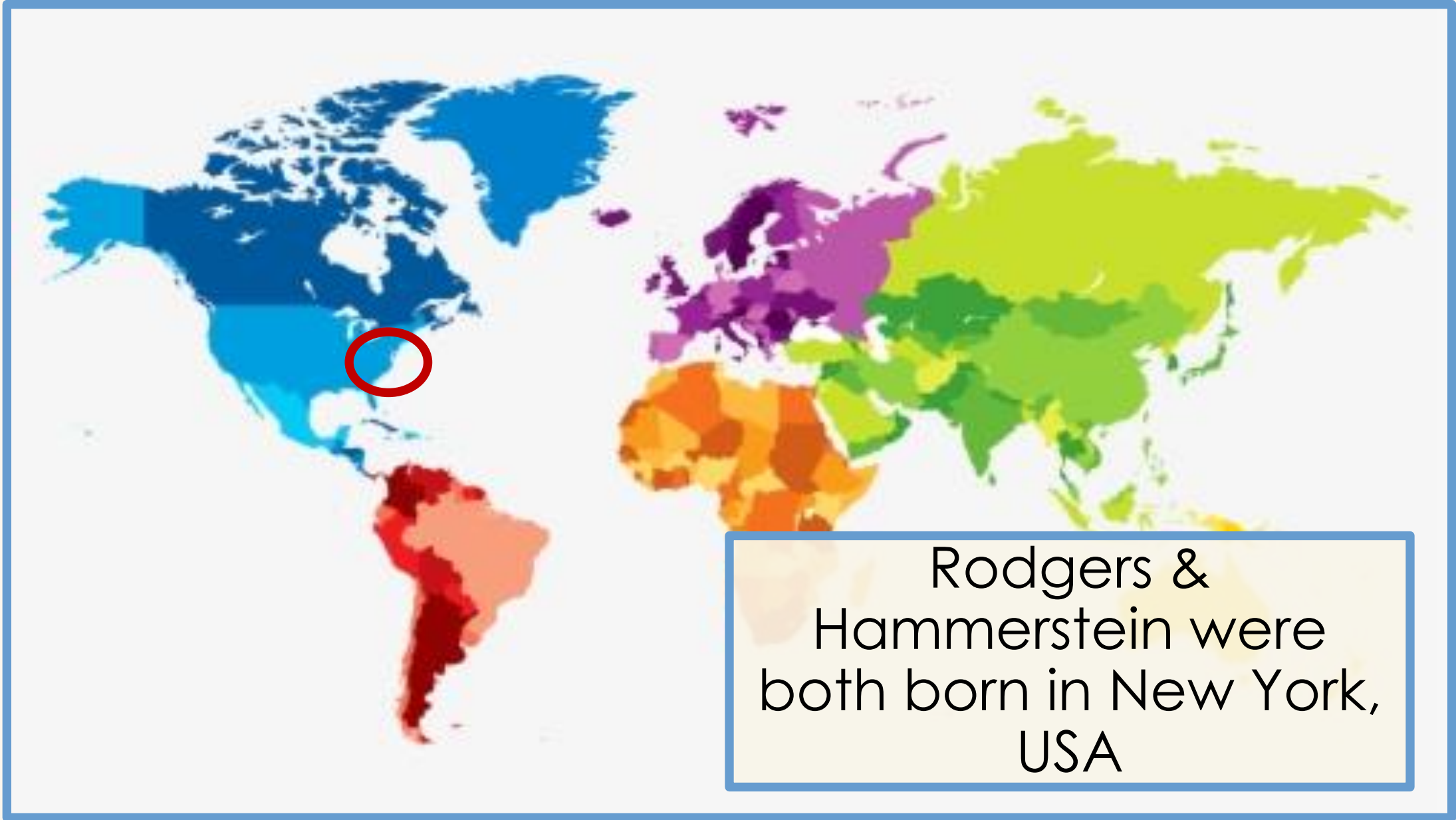


Richard Rodgers  
(1902-1979)



Oscar Hammerstein II  
(1895-1960)





Rodgers &  
Hammerstein were  
both born in New York,  
USA



Richard Rodgers is known for composing 43 Broadway Musicals and over 900 songs. He is one of the most significant American composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and revolutionised the **Musical**.

**Musicals** are plays with songs. They were originally simple stories, sometimes comic, used as a basis to link wonderful songs together. Rodgers and Hammerstein changed that and used stories with real characters and real people with real emotions.

Richard Rodgers composed the music and Oscar Hammerstein wrote the lyrics and the dialogue.

Together they wrote some of the most popular musicals and songs of all time.

They first met at Columbia University where they wrote two songs together for a student show.

After this, they both went their separate ways and worked with other people.

Richard Rodgers originally worked with **Lorenz Hart**, they worked together successfully for 24 years. One of their most famous musicals is called **Pal Joey**.

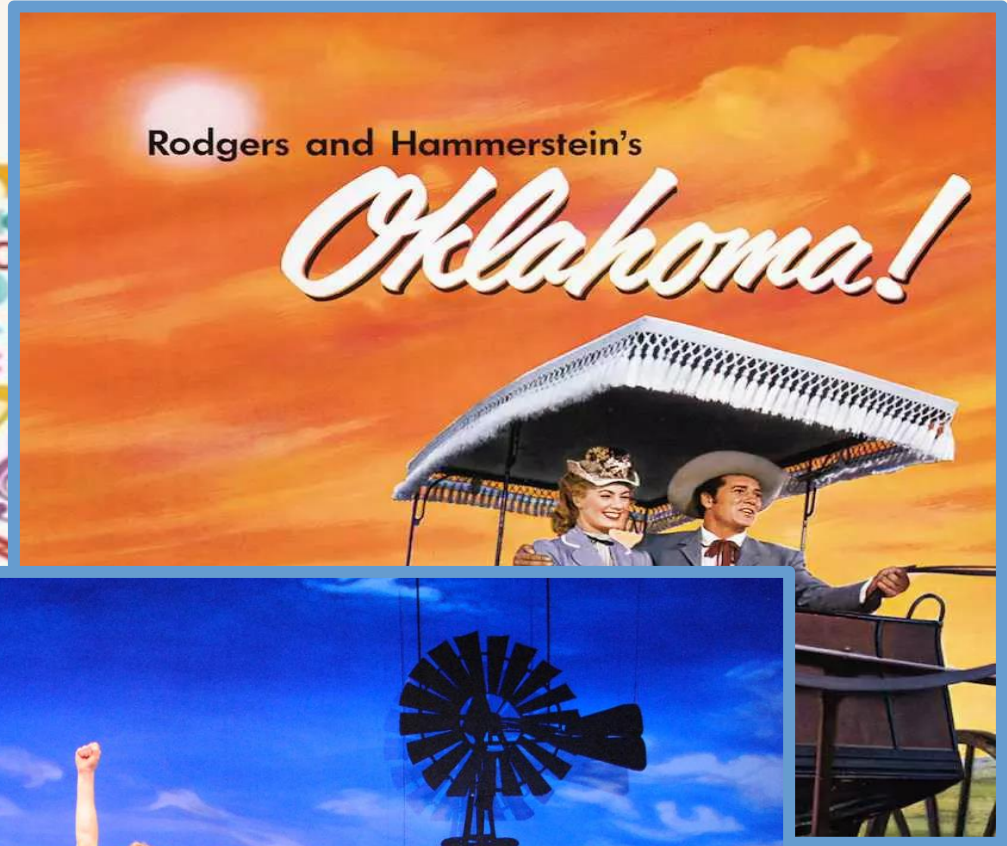


Lorenz Hart was quite ill so Richard Rodgers asked Oscar Hammerstein to work with him on a play called *Green Grow the Lilacs*. This became the musical **Oklahoma!** From the very beginning, it was revolutionary.

Before this, the opening scene in a Musical was always a loud chorus piece with dancing – to give latecomers time to get to their seats. **Oklahoma!** opens with a woman churning butter on stage and a cowboy singing a quiet song off stage, in the wings.



In some of the songs, Hammerstein incorporated the stage directions of the original play in the lyrics. In this song, the directions for the look of the set can be heard in the lyrics of **Oh What A Beautiful Morning.**





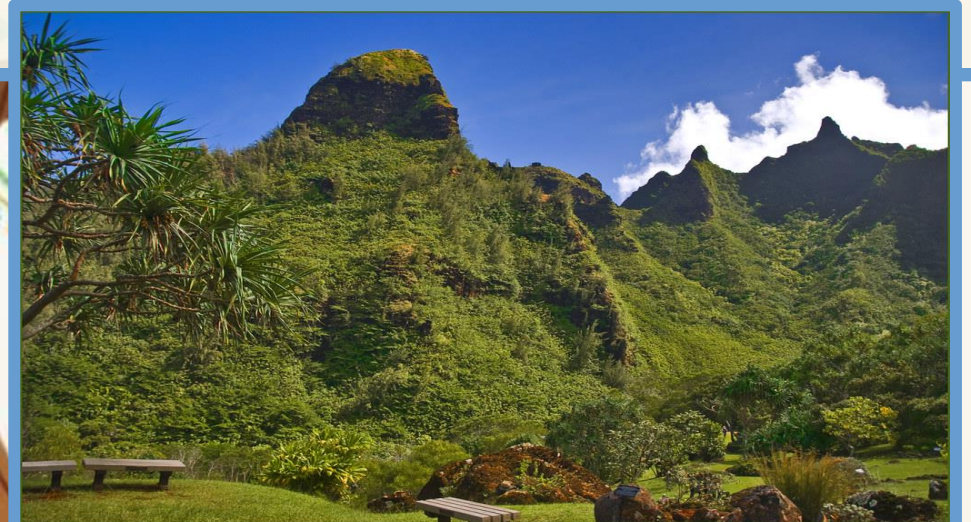


The second collaboration was also inventive. It is called **Carousel** and was the first musical where the story was sad and the main character was a person who had done bad things. It contains one of the most famous songs ever. It has since become the anthem of one of our Premier League clubs.



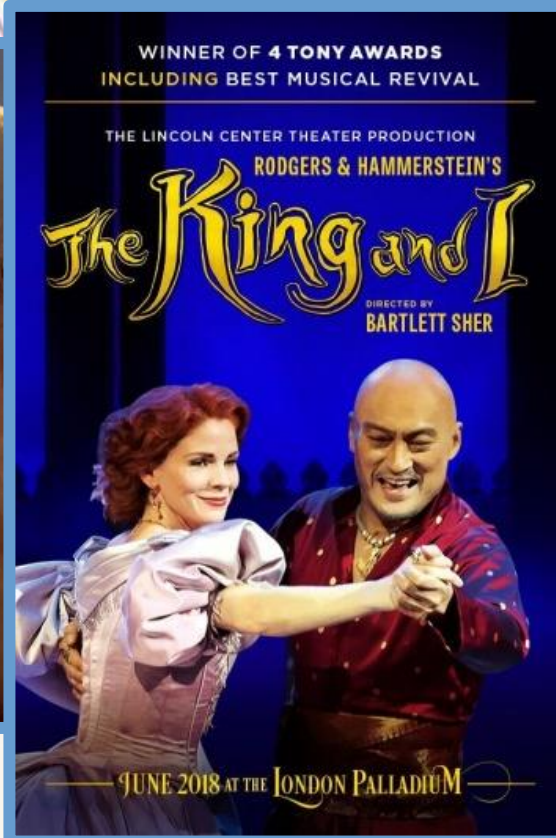
Before meeting Hammerstein, Richard Rodgers had written the tunes first and the lyrics were then written to fit. Hammerstein was such a poet, that Rodgers would write the tunes after the lyrics, making the music reflect the words and the drama much better.

It's said that he only took 5 minutes to write the music to the following song **Bali Ha'i** from **South Pacific**.





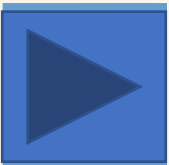
Another famous work is **The King And I**, based on the true story of Anna Leonowens, a British lady who became governess to the children of the King of Siam in the 1860's. It is full of amazing songs.





Rodgers and Hammerstein's last work is possibly their most famous. It is based on the true story of the Von Trapp family from Austria and their escape from the Nazis during WW2. The show was made into a film in 1965 and gained 5 Oscars.

**The Sound of Music** contains more hit songs than any other Rodgers and Hammerstein musical and the film version made more money than any other musical.









Richard Rodgers was the first person to win all the top awards in American theatre, film, recording and television.



**Emmy**



**Grammy**



**Oscar**



**Tony**

Known collectively as an:

**EGOT**

Oscar Hammerstein died before the film of **The Sound of Music** was finished. The last song Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote was **Edelweiss**. Because it was so well written, and evocative of the time and place, many people, even Austrians, think it is a traditional Austrian folk-song.

It is a tribute to this amazing duo that it is a completely original song.

