

Buju Banton

Mark Anthony Myrie (born 15 July 1973), professionally known by his stage name **Buju Banton**, is a Jamaican reggae dancehall recording artist. He is widely considered one of the most significant and well-regarded artists in Jamaican music. Banton has collaborated with many international artists, including those in the hip hop, Latin and punk rock genres, as well as the sons of Bob Marley.

Banton released a number of dancehall singles as early as 1987 but came to prominence in 1992 with two albums, *Stamina Daddy* and *Mr. Mention*, the latter becoming the best-selling album in Jamaican history upon its release. That year he also broke the record for No. 1 singles in Jamaica, previously held by Bob Marley and the Wailers. He signed with the major label Mercury Records and released *Voice of Jamaica* in 1993. By the mid-1990s, Banton's music became more influenced by his Rastafari faith, as heard on the seminal albums *'Til Shiloh* and *Inna Heights*.

In 2009, he was arrested on drug-related charges in the United States, his first trial resulting in a hung jury. His 2010 album *Before the Dawn* won a Grammy Award for Best Reggae Album at the 53rd Annual Grammy Awards. In 2011, he was convicted on the aforementioned criminal charge and was imprisoned in the U.S. until December 2018, whereupon he was deported home to

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Jamaica.

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Biography


Background

Buju Banton was born in Kingston, Jamaica in a poor neighbourhood known as Salt Lane. Buju is a nickname given to him by his mother as a child. Banton is a Jamaican word that refers to someone who is a respected storyteller, and it was adopted by Myrie in tribute to the deejay Burro Banton, whom he admired as a child. Buju emulated Burro's rough vocals and forceful delivery, developing his own distinctive style. Buju's mother was a higgler, or street vendor, while his father worked as a labourer at a tile factory. He was the youngest of fifteen children born into a family that was directly descended from the Maroons of Jamaica.

Banton has homes in Jamaica and Tamarac, Florida (United States). He also has 15 children.

Early career

As a youngster, Buju would often watch his favourite artists perform at outdoor shows and local dancehalls in Denham Town. At the age of 12, he picked up the microphone for himself and

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began toasting under the moniker of Gargamel, working with the Sweet Love and Rambo Mango sound systems. In 1986, he was introduced to producer Robert Ffrench by fellow deejay Clement Irie, and his first single, "The Ruler" was released not long afterward in 1987. This led to recording sessions with producers such as Patrick Roberts, Bunny Lee, Winston Riley, and Digital B.


1990s

In 1991, Buju joined Donovan Germain's Penthouse Records label and began a fruitful partnership with producer Dave Kelly who later launched his own Madhouse Records label. Buju is one of the most popular musicians in Jamaican history, having major chart success in 1992, with "Bogle" and "Love me Browning", both massive hits in Jamaica. Controversy erupted over "Love Me Browning" which spoke of Banton's penchant for lighter-skinned black women: "Mi love my car mi love my bike mi love mi money and ting, but most of all mi love mi browning." Some accused Banton of denigrating the beauty of darker-skinned black women. In response, he released "Love Black Woman," which spoke of his love for dark-skinned beauties: "Mi nuh Stop cry, fi all black women, respect all the girls dem with dark complexion". 1992 was an explosive year for Buju as he broke Bob Marley's record for the greatest number of #1 singles in a year. Buju's gruff voice dominated the Jamaican airwaves for the duration of the year. Banton's debut album,

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Mr. Mention, includes many of his greatest hits from that year including "Bonafide Love" featuring Wayne Wonder, the singer who first brought Buju out as a guest star on the annual Jamaican stage show Sting. 1992 also saw the unsanctioned re-release of "Boom Bye Bye," a controversial song recorded several years earlier when the artist was 19 years old, which resulted in a backlash that threatened to destroy his career. several years later, the song would later become the subject of outrage in the United States and Europe, leading to Banton being dropped from the line-up of the WOMAD festival as well as numerous other scheduled performances. Banton subsequently issued a public apology.

Now on the major Mercury/PolyGram label, Banton released the hard-hitting Voice of Jamaica in 1993. The album included a number of conscious tracks. These tracks included "Deportees", a song which criticises those Jamaicans who went abroad but never sent money home; "Tribal War" a collaboration with Tony Rebel, Brian & Tony Gold, and Terry Ganzie, a sharp condemnation of political violence that interpolates Little Roy's classic reggae song of the same name; and "Willy, Don't Be Silly", which promotes safe sex and the use of contraceptives, particularly the condom, profits from which were donated to a charity supporting children with AIDS. Banton was invited to meet Jamaican Prime Minister P. J. Patterson, and won several awards that year at the Caribbean Music Awards and the Canadian Music Awards.

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Some of Banton's lyrics dealt with violent themes, which he explained as reflecting the images that young Jamaicans were presented with by the news media. The reality of Kingston's violence was brought home in 1993 by the murders in separate incidents of three of his friends and fellow recording artists, the deejays Pan Head and Dirtsman and singer Mickey Simpson. His response was the single "Murderer", which condemned gun violence, going against the flow of the prevailing lyrical content in dancehall. The song inspired several clubs to stop playing songs with the excessively violent subject matter. Late in 1994, Buju was also affected by the death of his friend Garnett Silk. Buju's transformation continued, as he embraced the Rastafari movement and began growing dreadlocks. His performances and musical releases took on a more spiritual tone. Banton toured Europe and Japan, playing sold-out shows.

'Til Shiloh (1995) was a very influential album, incorporating live instrumentation as well as digital rhythms, and incorporating the sounds of roots reggae along with the harder-edged dancehall sounds that first made Banton famous. The artist was embracing his Rastafari faith and his new album reflected these beliefs. 'Til Shiloh successfully blended conscious lyrics with a hard-hitting dancehall vibe. The album included earlier singles such as "Murderer" along with instant classics like "Wanna Be Loved" and "Untold Stories". "Untold Stories" revealed an entirely different side of Buju Banton

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from the one that had stormed to dancehall stardom. It is regarded by many as one of his best works and has become a staple in the Banton performance repertoire. Reminiscent in mood and delivery to “Redemption Song” by Bob Marley, “Untold Stories” won Buju Banton many favorable comparisons to the late singer. This album had a profound impact on dancehall music and proved that dancehall audiences had not forgotten the message that Roots Reggae expounded with the use of “conscious lyrics”. Dancehall artists did not abandon slack and violent lyrics altogether, but the album did pave the way for a greater spirituality within the music. In the wake of Buju’s transformation to Rastafari, many artists, such as Capleton, embraced the faith and began to denounce violence in their music.

In 1996, Buju contributed “Wanna Be Loved (Desea ser Amado)” along with Los Pericos to the Red Hot Organization’s album *Silencio=Muerte: Red Hot + Latin for the Red Hot Benefit Series*. This series raises money to increase AIDS awareness.

That same year Buju Banton took control of his business by establishing his own Gargamel Music label, releasing the popular single “Love Sponge” on vinyl in Jamaica and overseas. In years to come Gargamel would expand into an outlet for Buju’s own productions and providing an outlet for fresh new talent.

Inna Heights (1997) substantially increased Banton’s

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international audience as Buju explored his singing ability and recorded a number of roots-tinged tracks, including the hugely popular “Destiny” and “Hills and Valleys”. The album also included collaborations with artists such as Beres Hammond and the legendary Toots Hibbert. The album was well received by fans at the time and critics praised Buju’s soaring vocals. The album has aged well and remains a highly regarded work over 20 years after its release.

In 1998, Buju met the punk band Rancid and recorded three tracks with them: “No More Misty Days”, “Hooligans” and “Life Won’t Wait”. The latter became the title track of Rancid’s 1998 album Life Won’t Wait.

2000s

Buju signed with Anti- Records, a subsidiary of Brett Gurewitz’s Epitaph Records, and released Unchained Spirit in 2000. The album showcased diverse musical styles, and featured guest appearances by Luciano, Morgan Heritage, Stephen Marley, and Rancid. It carried little of the roots feel heard on Til Shiloh and virtually none of the hardcore dancehall sound which had brought him to public acclaim early in his career.

Several singles followed in the start of the new decade, which was perceived as more mellow and introspective, as opposed to the dancehall approach of his early career. In March 2003, Banton released Friends for Life, which featured more sharply


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political songs, including “Mr. Nine”, an anti-gun song that was a hit in Jamaica’s dancehalls as well as internationally. The album focused on political messages regarding the African diaspora, featuring excerpts from a speech made by Marcus Garvey. “Paid Not Played”, also featured on the album, displayed a gradual return to the themes more popular in dancehall. The album also featured some hip hop influence with the inclusion of rapper Fat Joe.

2006 saw the release of the Too Bad, an album that was more dancehall-oriented in style. One of the slower tracks from the album, “Driver A”, went on to become a major hit, while at the same time reviving Sly and Robbie’s “Taxi” riddim.

Banton performed at the 2007 Cricket World Cup Opening Ceremony with Third World and Beres Hammond.

The album Rasta Got Soul was released on 21 April 2009, a date which marked the 43rd anniversary of Emperor Haile Selassie’s visit to Jamaica in 1966. Produced by Banton, with contributions from longtime collaborators Donovan Germain, Stephen Marsden and Wyclef Jean, Rasta Got Soul was a 100% roots reggae album recorded over a seven-year period before its release. It went on to earn Banton his fourth Grammy nomination for Best Reggae Album in 2010.

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2010s

On 13 February 2011, one day before the scheduled start of his second court trial in Tampa, Florida, Buju Banton's *Before the Dawn* album was announced as the winner of Best Reggae Album at the 53rd Annual Grammy Awards.

Upon his release from prison in the United States in December 2018, Banton started The Long Walk To Freedom tour and performed his first concert at National Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica in March 2019, the concert attracted over 30.000 people. During his tour, he continued putting out new music and new singles including *Bagga Mouth*, *False Pretense*, and *Country for Sale*.

In May 2019, Banton released *Country For Sale*, the song topped the iTunes Reggae Chart within minutes after the announcement of its release. The song was recorded at the Gargamel Music Studio, Donovan Germain's own recording studio in the Corporate Area. On 12 November of the same year, he released his first official music video entitled "Trust". The video marked the first anniversary of Banton's release from prison and was produced in collaboration with Dave Kelly and directed by Kieran Khan. The track peaked at number 1 on the Billboard Reggae Digital Song Sales chart.

Banton announced his partnership with Jay-Z's Roc Nation in November of that year, becoming the second Jamaican reggae

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artist be represented by the agency, which coincided with the release of his music video Steppa. He also announced that Island Records will be the distributor of the collaboration's new music.

2020s

In January 2020, Buju was featured on the Bad Boys for Life (soundtrack) which was produced by DJ Khaled. His song titled "Murda She Wrote" was a nod to a 1992 dancehall classic called "Murder She Wrote" by Jamaican reggae duo Chaka Demus & Pliers.


On 29 February 2020, Buju produced the Steppaz Riddim under this own Gargamel Music label. The riddim, released under Roc Nation, featured 11 tracks and included contributions from Vershon, Delly Ranx, Agent Sasco, Bling Dawg and General B.

Banton released his 13th studio album and his first in a decade, Upside Down 2020 on 26 June 2020. The album includes guest appearances from John Legend, Pharrell, Stefflon Don and Stephen Marley.

Controversies

Anti-gay controversy

Banton has been criticised for the lyrical content of his song

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“Boom Bye Bye”, which was released when he was 19 years old in 1992. The song has been interpreted as supporting the murder of gay men although others have argued that the song’s lyrics should be read as metaphorical, following in a long tradition of exaggerated rhetorical violence in Jamaican dancehall music. In 2009 gay-rights groups appealed to venues around the United States not to host Buju Banton.

In 2007 Banton was allegedly among a number of reggae artists who signed a pledge, called the Reggae Compassionate Act, created by the Stop Murder Music campaign, to refrain from performing homophobic songs or making homophobic statements. The Act stated that the signers “do not encourage nor minister to HATE but rather uphold a philosophy of LOVE, RESPECT, and UNDERSTANDING towards all human beings as the cornerstone of reggae music” and promised that the artists involved no longer believed in sexism, homophobia, or violence and that they would not perform music that went against these beliefs on stage. Banton later denied that he had made any such commitment, although he did refrain from performing “Boom Bye Bye” and other offensive songs at the 2007 Reggae Carifest concert. He did, however, continue to play such songs afterwards.


On 20 March 2019, Buju Banton and his team officially removed “Boom Bye Bye” from his catalog. Banton’s team pulled the song from streaming platforms such as Apple Music and Spotify, and Banton announced his intention to never perform the song

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again. Banton issued a statement in which he clarified the importance of tolerance and love, saying, "In recent days there has been a great deal of press coverage about the song 'Boom Bye Bye' from my past which I long ago stopped performing and removed from any platform that I control or have influence over. I recognize that the song has caused much pain to listeners, as well as to my fans, my family and myself. After all the adversity we've been through I am determined to put this song in the past and continue moving forward as an artist and as a man. I affirm once and for all that everyone has the right to live as they so choose. In the words of the great Dennis Brown, 'Love and hate can never be friends.' I welcome everyone to my shows in a spirit of peace and love. Please come join me in that same spirit."

U.S. drug charges

In December 2009 Drug Enforcement Administration agents remanded Banton to custody in Miami, where the U.S. Attorney charged him with conspiracy to distribute and possession of more than five kilograms of cocaine. Banton was then moved to the Pinellas County Jail where he remained until trial. A six-day trial in Tampa, Florida was declared a mistrial on 27 September 2010, after the jury was unable to reach a unanimous decision. During the trial, audio recordings were presented of Banton and a drug-dealer-turned-government-informant discussing drugs, drug prices and smuggling. Banton was also

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seen on a video recording meeting the informant in a police-controlled warehouse tasting cocaine from a kilogram bag. The informant was reportedly paid \$50,000 for his work on the case. The singer was released that November on bond.

He was allowed to perform one concert between trials, which was held on 16 January 2011 to a sold-out crowd in Miami. A few weeks after the performance he won the Grammy Award for Best Reggae Album but was not allowed to attend the ceremony.

On 22 February 2011, Banton was found guilty of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute five or more kilograms of cocaine, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking offense and using communication wires to facilitate a drug-trafficking offense. He was found not guilty on the charge of attempted possession of five kilograms or more of cocaine. Four months later, he was sentenced to ten years and one month in a federal prison for the cocaine trafficking conviction. His sentencing on a related firearms conviction (despite the fact that Banton was never found with a gun) was scheduled for 30 October 2012, and then postponed on his lawyer's request for an investigation of possible juror misconduct. Despite the fact that a juror was found guilty of misconduct, Buju Banton waived his right to an appeal. On 14 May 2015 federal prosecutors agreed to drop the firearms charge.

Banton was released on 7 December 2018 from McRae Correctional

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Institution.

Discography

- 1992: *Stamina Daddy* (later repackaged as *Quick*)
- 1992: *Mr. Mention*
- 1993: *Voice of Jamaica*
- 1995: *'Til Shiloh*
- 1997: *Inna Heights*
- 2000: *Unchained Spirit*
- 2003: *Friends for Life*
- 2006: *Too Bad*
- 2009: *Rasta Got Soul*
- 2010: *Before the Dawn*
- 2020: *Upside Down 2020*

Les Misérables

Les Misérables (/leɪ ˌmɪzəˈrɑːbəl, -blə/, French: [lə mizɛabl(ə)]) is a French historical novel by Victor Hugo, first published in 1862, that is considered one of the greatest novels of the 19th century.

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In the English-speaking world, the novel is usually referred to by its original French title. However, several alternatives have been used, including *The Miserables*, *The Wretched*, *The Miserable Ones*, *The Poor Ones*, *The Wretched Poor*, *The Victims* and *The Dispossessed*. Beginning in 1815 and culminating in the 1832 June Rebellion in Paris, the novel follows the lives and interactions of several characters, particularly the struggles of ex-convict Jean Valjean and his experience of redemption.

Examining the nature of law and grace, the novel elaborates upon the history of France, the architecture and urban design of Paris, politics, moral philosophy, antimonarchism, justice, religion, and the types and nature of romantic and familial love. *Les Misérables* has been popularized through numerous adaptations for film, television and the stage, including a musical.

Novel form

Upton Sinclair described the novel as “one of the half-dozen greatest novels of the world”, and remarked that Hugo set forth the purpose of *Les Misérables* in the *Preface*:

So long as there shall exist, by reason of law and custom, a social condemnation, which, in the face of civilization, artificially creates hells on earth, and complicates a destiny that is divine with human fatality; so long as the three problems of the age—the degradation of man by poverty,

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the ruin of women by starvation, and the dwarfing of childhood by physical and spiritual night—are not solved; so long as, in certain regions, social asphyxia shall be possible; in other words, and from a yet more extended point of view, so long as ignorance and misery remain on earth, books like this cannot be useless.

Towards the end of the novel, Hugo explains the work's overarching structure:

The book which the reader has before him at this moment is, from one end to the other, in its entirety and details ... a progress from evil to good, from injustice to justice, from falsehood to truth, from night to day, from appetite to conscience, from corruption to life; from bestiality to duty, from hell to heaven, from nothingness to God. The starting point: matter, destination: the soul. The hydra at the beginning, the angel at the end.

The novel contains various subplots, but the main thread is the story of ex-convict Jean Valjean, who becomes a force for good in the world but cannot escape his criminal past. The novel is divided into five volumes, each volume divided into several books, and subdivided into chapters, for a total of 48 books and 365 chapters. Each chapter is relatively short, commonly no longer than a few pages.

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The novel as a whole is one of the longest ever written, with 655,478 words in the original French. Hugo explained his ambitions for the novel to his Italian publisher:

I don't know whether it will be read by everyone, but it is meant for everyone. It addresses England as well as Spain, Italy as well as France, Germany as well as Ireland, the republics that harbour slaves as well as empires that have serfs. Social problems go beyond frontiers. Humankind's wounds, those huge sores that litter the world, do not stop at the blue and red lines drawn on maps. Wherever men go in ignorance or despair, wherever women sell themselves for bread, wherever children lack a book to learn from or a warm hearth, Les Misérables knocks at the door and says: "open up, I am here for you".

Digressions

More than a quarter of the novel—by one count 955 of 2,783 pages—is devoted to essays that argue a moral point or display Hugo's encyclopedic knowledge but do not advance the plot, nor even a subplot, a method Hugo used in such other works as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Toilers of the Sea*. One biographer noted that "the digressions of genius are easily pardoned". The topics Hugo addresses include cloistered religious orders, the construction of the Paris sewers, argot, and the street urchins of Paris. The one about convents he titles

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“Parenthesis” to alert the reader to its irrelevance to the story line.

Hugo devotes another 19 chapters (Volume II, Book I) to an account of—and a meditation on the place in history of—the Battle of Waterloo, the battlefield which Hugo visited in 1861 and where he finished writing the novel. It opens volume 2 with such a change of subject as to seem the beginning of an entirely different work. The fact that this ‘digression’ occupies such a large part of the text demands that it be read in the context of the ‘overarching structure’ discussed above. Hugo draws his own personal conclusions, taking Waterloo to be a pivot-point in history, but definitely not a victory for the forces of reaction.

Waterloo, by cutting short the demolition of European thrones by the sword, had no other effect than to cause the revolutionary work to be continued in another direction. The slashers have finished; it was the turn of the thinkers. The century that Waterloo was intended to arrest has pursued its march. That sinister victory was vanquished by liberty.

One critic has called this “the spiritual gateway” to the novel, as its chance encounter of Thénardier and Colonel Pontmercy foreshadows so many of the novel’s encounters “blending chance and necessity”, a “confrontation of heroism and villainy”.

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Even when not turning to other subjects outside his narrative, Hugo sometimes interrupts the straightforward recitation of events, his voice and control of the story line unconstrained by time and sequence. The novel opens with a statement about the bishop of Digne in 1815 and immediately shifts: "Although these details in no way essentially concern that which we have to tell..." Only after 14 chapters does Hugo pick up the opening thread again, "In the early days of the month of October, 1815...", to introduce Jean Valjean.

Hugo's sources

An incident Hugo witnessed in 1829 involved three strangers and a police officer. One of the strangers was a man who had stolen a loaf of bread, similar to Jean Valjean. The officer was taking him to the coach. The thief also saw the mother and daughter playing with each other which would be an inspiration for Fantine and Cosette. Hugo imagined the life of the man in jail and the mother and daughter taken away from each other.

Valjean's character is loosely based on the life of the ex-convict Eugène François Vidocq. Vidocq became the head of an undercover police unit and later founded France's first private detective agency. He was also a businessman and was widely noted for his social engagement and philanthropy. Vidocq also inspired Hugo's "Claude Gueux" and *Le Dernier jour d'un condamné* (The Last Day of a Condemned Man).


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In 1828, Vidocq, already pardoned, saved one of the workers in his paper factory by lifting a heavy cart on his shoulders as Valjean does. Hugo's description of Valjean rescuing a sailor on the Orion drew almost word for word on a Baron La Roncière's letter describing such an incident. Hugo used Bienvenu de Miollis (1753–1843), the Bishop of Digne during the time in which Valjean encounters Myriel, as the model for Myriel.

Hugo had used the departure of prisoners from the Bagne of Toulon in one of his early stories, *Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamné*. He went to Toulon to visit the Bagne in 1839 and took extensive notes, though he did not start writing the book until 1845. On one of the pages of his notes about the prison, he wrote in large block letters a possible name for his hero: "JEAN TRÉJEAN". When the book was finally written, Tréjean became Valjean.

In 1841, Hugo saved a prostitute from arrest for a*sault. He used a short part of his dialogue with the police when recounting Valjean's rescue of Fantine in the novel. On 22 February 1846, when he had begun work on the novel, Hugo witnessed the arrest of a bread thief while a duchess and her child watched the scene pitilessly from their coach. He spent several vacations in Montreuil-sur-Mer.

During the 1832 revolt, Hugo walked the streets of Paris, saw the barricades blocking his way at points, and had to take

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shelter from gunfire. He participated more directly in the 1848 Paris insurrection, helping to smash barricades and suppress both the popular revolt and its monarchist allies.

Victor Hugo drew his inspiration from everything he heard and saw, writing it down in his diary. In December 1846, he witnessed an altercation between an old woman scavenging through rubbish and a street urchin who might have been Gavroche. He also informed himself by personal inspection of the Paris Conciergerie in 1846 and Waterloo in 1861, by gathering information on some industries, and on working-class people's wages and living standards. He asked his mistresses, Léonie d'Aunet and Juliette Drouet, to tell him about life in convents. He also slipped personal anecdotes into the plot. For instance Marius and Cosette's wedding night (Part V, Book 6, Chapter 1) takes place on 16 February 1833, which is also the date when Hugo and his lifelong mistress Juliette Drouet made love for the first time.

Plot

Volume I: Fantine

The story begins in 1815 in Digne, as the peasant Jean Valjean, just released from 19 years' imprisonment in the Bagne of Toulon—five for stealing bread for his starving sister and her family and fourteen more for numerous escape


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attempts—is turned away by innkeepers because his yellow passport marks him as a former convict. He sleeps on the street, angry and bitter.

Digne's benevolent Bishop Myriel gives him shelter. At night, Valjean runs off with Myriel's silverware. When the police capture Valjean, Myriel pretends that he has given the silverware to Valjean and presses him to take two silver candlesticks as well, as if he had forgotten to take them. The police accept his explanation and leave. Myriel tells Valjean that his life has been spared for God, and that he should use money from the silver candlesticks to make an honest man of himself.

Valjean broods over Myriel's words. When opportunity presents itself, purely out of habit, he steals a 40-sous coin from 12-year-old Petit Gervais and chases the boy away. He quickly repents and searches the city in panic for Gervais. At the same time, his theft is reported to the authorities. Valjean hides as they search for him, because if apprehended he will be returned to the galleys for life as a repeat offender.

Six years pass and Valjean, using the alias Monsieur Madeleine, has become a wealthy factory owner and is appointed mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer. Walking down the street, he sees a man named Fauchelevent pinned under the wheels of a cart. When no one volunteers to lift the cart, even for pay, he decides to rescue Fauchelevent himself. He crawls underneath the cart,


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manages to lift it, and frees him. The town's police inspector, Inspector Javert, who was an adjutant guard at the Bagne of Toulon during Valjean's incarceration, becomes suspicious of the mayor after witnessing this remarkable feat of strength. He has known only one other man, a convict named Jean Valjean, who could accomplish it.

Years earlier in Paris, a grisette named Fantine was very much in love with Félix Tholomyès. His friends, Listolier, Fameuil, and Blachevelle were also paired with Fantine's friends Dahlia, Zéphine, and Favourite. The men abandon the women, treating their relationships as youthful amusements. Fantine must draw on her own resources to care for her and Tholomyès' daughter, Cosette. When Fantine arrives at Montfermeil, she leaves Cosette in the care of the Thénardiens, a corrupt innkeeper and his selfish, cruel wife.

Fantine is unaware that they are abusing her daughter and using her as forced labor for their inn, and continues to try to meet their growing, extortionate and fictitious demands. She is later fired from her job at Jean Valjean's factory, because of the discovery of her daughter, who was born out of wedlock. Meanwhile, the Thénardiens' monetary demands continue to grow. In desperation, Fantine sells her hair and two front teeth, and she resorts to prostitution to pay the Thénardiens. Fantine is slowly dying from an unspecified disease.

A dandy named Bamatabois harasses Fantine in the street, and

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she reacts by striking him. Javert arrests Fantine. She begs to be released so that she can provide for her daughter, but Javert sentences her to six months in prison. Valjean (Mayor Madeleine) intervenes and orders Javert to release her. Javert resists but Valjean prevails. Valjean, feeling responsible because his factory turned her away, promises Fantine that he will bring Cosette to her. He takes her to a hospital.

Javert comes to see Valjean again. Javert admits that after being forced to free Fantine, he reported him as Valjean to the French authorities. He tells Valjean he realizes he was wrong, because the authorities have identified someone else as the real Jean Valjean, have him in custody, and plan to try him the next day. Valjean is torn, but decides to reveal himself to save the innocent man, whose real name is Champmathieu. He travels to attend the trial and there reveals his true identity. Valjean returns to Montreuil to see Fantine, followed by Javert, who confronts him in her hospital room.

After Javert grabs Valjean, Valjean asks for three days to bring Cosette to Fantine, but Javert refuses. Fantine discovers that Cosette is not at the hospital and fretfully asks where she is. Javert orders her to be quiet, and then reveals to her Valjean's real identity. Weakened by the severity of her illness, she falls back in shock and dies. Valjean goes to Fantine, speaks to her in an inaudible whisper, kisses her hand, and then leaves with Javert. Later,

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Fantine's body is unceremoniously thrown into a public grave.

Volume II: Cosette

Valjean escapes, is recaptured, and is sentenced to death. The king commutes his sentence to penal servitude for life. While imprisoned in the Bagne of Toulon, Valjean, at great personal risk, rescues a sailor caught in the ship's rigging. Spectators call for his release. Valjean fakes his own death by allowing himself to fall into the ocean. Authorities report him dead and his body lost.

Valjean arrives at Montfermeil on Christmas Eve. He finds Cosette fetching water in the woods alone and walks with her to the inn. He orders a meal and observes how the Thénardiens abuse her, while pampering their own daughters Éponine and Azelma, who mistreat Cosette for playing with their doll. Valjean leaves and returns to make Cosette a present of an expensive new doll which, after some hesitation, she happily accepts. Éponine and Azelma are envious. Madame Thénardier is furious with Valjean, while her husband makes light of Valjean's behaviour, caring only that he pay for his food and lodging.

The next morning, Valjean informs the Thénardiens that he wants to take Cosette with him. Madame Thénardier immediately accepts, while Thénardier pretends to love Cosette and be concerned for her welfare, reluctant to give her up. Valjean

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pays the Thénardiers 1,500 francs, and he and Cosette leave the inn. Thénardier, hoping to swindle more out of Valjean, runs after them, holding the 1,500 francs, and tells Valjean he wants Cosette back. He informs Valjean that he cannot release Cosette without a note from the child's mother. Valjean hands Thénardier Fantine's letter authorizing the bearer to take Cosette. Thénardier then demands that Valjean pay a thousand crowns, but Valjean and Cosette leave. Thénardier regrets that he did not bring his gun and turns back toward home.

Valjean and Cosette flee to Paris. Valjean rents new lodgings at Gorbeau House, where he and Cosette live happily. However, Javert discovers Valjean's lodgings there a few months later. Valjean takes Cosette and they try to escape from Javert. They soon find shelter in the Petit-Picpus convent with the help of Fauchelevent, the man whom Valjean once rescued from being crushed under a cart and who has become the convent's gardener. Valjean also becomes a gardener and Cosette becomes a student at the convent school.

Volume III: Marius

Eight years later, the Friends of the ABC, led by Enjolras, are preparing an act of anti-Orléanist civil unrest (i.e. the Paris uprising on 5–6 June 1832, following the death of General Lamarque, the only French leader who had sympathy towards the working class. Lamarque was a victim of a major

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cholera epidemic that had ravaged the city, particularly its poor neighborhoods, arousing suspicion that the government had been poisoning wells). The Friends of the ABC are joined by the poor of the Cour des miracles, including the Thénardiens' eldest son Gavroche, who is a street urchin.

One of the students, Marius Pontmercy, has become alienated from his family (especially his royalist grandfather M. Gillenormand) because of his Bonapartism views. After the death of his father, Colonel Georges Pontmercy, Marius discovers a note from him instructing his son to provide help to a sergeant named Thénardier who saved his life at Waterloo—in reality Thénardier was looting corpses and only saved Pontmercy's life by accident; he had called himself a sergeant under Napoleon to avoid exposing himself as a robber.

At the Luxembourg Garden, Marius falls in love with the now grown and beautiful Cosette. The Thénardiens have also moved to Paris and now live in poverty after losing their inn. They live under the surname "Jondrette" at Gorbeau House (coincidentally, the same building Valjean and Cosette briefly lived in after leaving the Thénardiens' inn). Marius lives there as well, next door to the Thénardiens.

Éponine, now ragged and emaciated, visits Marius at his apartment to beg for money. To impress him, she tries to prove her literacy by reading aloud from a book and by writing "The Cops Are Here" on a sheet of paper. Marius pities her and

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gives her some money. After Éponine leaves, Marius observes the “Jondrettes” in their apartment through a crack in the wall. Éponine comes in and announces that a philanthropist and his daughter are arriving to visit them. In order to look poorer, Thénardier puts out the fire and breaks a chair. He also orders Azelma to punch out a window pane, which she does, resulting in cutting her hand (as Thénardier had hoped).

The philanthropist and his daughter enter—actually Valjean and Cosette. Marius immediately recognizes Cosette. After seeing them, Valjean promises them he will return with rent money for them. After he and Cosette leave, Marius asks Éponine to retrieve her address for him. Éponine, who is in love with Marius herself, reluctantly agrees to do so. The Thénardiers have also recognized Valjean and Cosette, and vow their revenge. Thénardier enlists the aid of the Patron-Minette, a well-known and feared gang of murderers and robbers.


Marius overhears Thénardier’s plan and goes to Javert to report the crime. Javert gives Marius two pistols and instructs him to fire one into the air if things get dangerous. Marius returns home and waits for Javert and the police to arrive. Thénardier sends Éponine and Azelma outside to look out for the police. When Valjean returns with rent money, Thénardier, with Patron-Minette, ambushes him and he reveals his real identity to Valjean. Marius recognizes Thénardier as the man who saved his father’s life at Waterloo and is caught in a dilemma.

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He tries to find a way to save Valjean while not betraying Thénardier. Valjean denies knowing Thénardier and tells him that they have never met. Valjean tries to escape through a window but is subdued and tied up. Thénardier orders Valjean to pay him 200,000 francs. He also orders Valjean to write a letter to Cosette to return to the apartment, and they would keep her with them until he delivers the money. After Valjean writes the letter and informs Thénardier of his address, Thénardier sends out Mme. Thénardier to get Cosette. Mme. Thénardier comes back alone, and announces the address is a fake.

It is during this time that Valjean manages to free himself. Thénardier decides to kill Valjean. While he and Patron-Minette are about to do so, Marius remembers the scrap of paper that Éponine wrote on earlier. He throws it into the Thénardiers' apartment through the wall crack. Thénardier reads it and thinks Éponine threw it inside. He, Mme. Thénardier and Patron-Minette try to escape, only to be stopped by Javert.


He arrests all the Thénardiers and Patron-Minette (except Claquesous, who escapes during his transportation to prison, and Montparnasse, who stops to run off with Éponine instead of joining in on the robbery). Valjean manages to escape the scene before Javert sees him.

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Volume IV: The Idyll in the Rue Plumet and the Epic in the Rue St. Denis

After Éponine's release from prison, she finds Marius at "The Field of the Lark" and sadly tells him that she found Cosette's address. She leads him to Valjean's and Cosette's house on Rue Plumet, and Marius watches the house for a few days. He and Cosette then finally meet and declare their love for one another. Thénardier, Patron-Minette and Brujon manage to escape from prison with the aid of Gavroche (a rare case of Gavroche helping his family in their criminal activities). One night, during one of Marius's visits with Cosette, the six men attempt to raid Valjean's and Cosette's house. However, Éponine, who has been sitting by the gates of the house, threatens to scream and awaken the whole neighbourhood if the thieves do not leave. Hearing this, they reluctantly retire. Meanwhile, Cosette informs Marius that she and Valjean will be leaving for England in a week's time, which greatly troubles the pair.

The next day, Valjean is sitting in the Champ de Mars. He is feeling troubled about seeing Thénardier in the neighbourhood several times. Unexpectedly, a note lands in his lap, which says "Move Out." He sees a figure running away in the dim light. He goes back to his house, tells Cosette they will be staying at their other house on Rue de l'Homme Arme, and reconfirms to her that they will be moving to England. Marius

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tries to get permission from M. Gillenormand to marry Cosette. His grandfather seems stern and angry, but has been longing for Marius's return. When tempers flare, he refuses his a*sent to the marriage, telling Marius to make Cosette his mistress instead. Insulted, Marius leaves.

The following day, the students revolt and erect barricades in the narrow streets of Paris. Gavroche spots Javert and informs Enjolras that Javert is a spy. When Enjolras confronts him about this, he admits his identity and his orders to spy on the students. Enjolras and the other students tie him up to a pole in the Corinth restaurant. Later that evening, Marius goes back to Valjean's and Cosette's house on Rue Plumet, but finds the house no longer occupied. He then hears a voice telling him that his friends are waiting for him at the barricade. Distraught to find Cosette gone, he heeds the voice and goes.


When Marius arrives at the barricade, the revolution has already started. When he stoops down to pick up a powder keg, a soldier comes up to shoot Marius. However, a man covers the muzzle of the soldier's gun with his hand. The soldier fires, fatally wounding the man, while missing Marius. Meanwhile, the soldiers are closing in. Marius climbs to the top of the barricade, holding a torch in one hand, a powder keg in the other, and threatens to the soldiers that he will blow up the barricade. After confirming this, the soldiers retreat from the barricade.

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Marius decides to go to the smaller barricade, which he finds empty. As he turns back, the man who took the fatal shot for Marius earlier calls Marius by his name. Marius discovers this man is Éponine, dressed in men's clothes. As she lies dying on his knees, she confesses that she was the one who told him to go to the barricade, hoping they would die together. She also confesses to saving his life because she wanted to die before he did.

The author also states to the reader that Éponine anonymously threw the note to Valjean. Éponine then tells Marius that she has a letter for him. She also confesses to have obtained the letter the day before, originally not planning to give it to him, but decides to do so in fear he would be angry at her about it in the afterlife. After Marius takes the letter, Éponine then asks him to kiss her on the forehead when she is dead, which he promises to do. With her last breath, she confesses that she was "a little bit in love" with him, and dies.

Marius fulfills her request and goes into a tavern to read the letter. It is written by Cosette. He learns Cosette's whereabouts and he writes a farewell letter to her. He sends Gavroche to deliver it to her, but Gavroche leaves it with Valjean. Valjean, learning that Cosette's lover is fighting, is at first relieved, but an hour later, he puts on a National Guard uniform, arms himself with a gun and ammunition, and leaves his home.


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Volume V: Jean Valjean

Valjean arrives at the barricade and immediately saves a man's life. He is still not certain if he wants to protect Marius or kill him. Marius recognizes Valjean at first sight. Enjolras announces that they are almost out of cartridges. When Gavroche goes outside the barricade to collect more ammunition from the dead National Guardsmen, he is shot dead.

Valjean volunteers to execute Javert himself, and Enjolras grants permission. Valjean takes Javert out of sight, and then shoots into the air while letting him go. Marius mistakenly believes that Valjean has killed Javert. As the barricade falls, Valjean carries off the injured and unconscious Marius. All the other students are killed. Valjean escapes through the sewers, carrying Marius's body. He evades a police patrol, and reaches an exit gate but finds it locked. Thénardier emerges from the darkness. Valjean recognizes Thénardier, but Thénardier does not recognize Valjean. Thinking Valjean a murderer lugging his victim's corpse, Thénardier offers to open the gate for money. As he searches Valjean and Marius's pockets, he surreptitiously tears off a piece of Marius's coat so he can later find out his identity. Thénardier takes the thirty francs he finds, opens the gate, and allows Valjean to leave, expecting Valjean's emergence from the sewer will distract the police who have been pursuing him.


Upon exiting, Valjean encounters Javert and requests time to

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return Marius to his family before surrendering to him. Surprisingly Javert agrees, assuming that Marius will be dead within minutes. After leaving Marius at his grandfather's house, Valjean asks to be allowed a brief visit to his own home, and Javert agrees. There, Javert tells Valjean he will wait for him in the street, but when Valjean scans the street from the landing window he finds Javert has gone. Javert walks down the street, realizing that he is caught between his strict belief in the law and the mercy Valjean has shown him. He feels he can no longer give Valjean up to the authorities but also cannot ignore his duty to the law. Unable to cope with this dilemma, Javert commits suicide by throwing himself into the Seine.

Marius slowly recovers from his injuries. As he and Cosette make wedding preparations, Valjean endows them with a fortune of nearly 600,000 francs. As their wedding party winds through Paris during Mardi Gras festivities, Valjean is spotted by Thénardier, who then orders Azelma to follow him. After the wedding, Valjean confesses to Marius that he is an ex-convict. Marius is horrified, assumes the worst about Valjean's moral character, and contrives to limit Valjean's time with Cosette. Valjean accedes to Marius' judgment and his separation from Cosette. Valjean loses the will to live and retires to his bed.

Thénardier approaches Marius in disguise, but Marius recognizes him. Thénardier attempts to blackmail Marius with

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what he knows of Valjean, but in doing so, he inadvertently corrects Marius's misconceptions about Valjean and reveals all of the good he has done. He tries to convince Marius that Valjean is actually a murderer, and presents the piece of coat he tore off as evidence. Stunned, Marius recognizes the fabric as part of his own coat and realizes that it was Valjean who rescued him from the barricade. Marius pulls out a fistful of notes and flings it at Thénardier's face. He then confronts Thénardier with his crimes and offers him an immense sum to depart and never return. Thénardier accepts the offer, and he and Azelma travel to America where he becomes a slave trader.

As they rush to Valjean's house, Marius tells Cosette that Valjean saved his life at the barricade. They arrive to find Valjean near death and reconcile with him. Valjean tells Cosette her mother's story and name. He dies content and is buried beneath a blank slab in Père Lachaise Cemetery.


Characters

Major

- **Jean Valjean** (also known as Monsieur Madeleine, Ultime Fauchelevent, Monsieur Leblanc, and Urbain Fabre) – The protagonist of the novel. Convicted for stealing a loaf of bread to feed his sister's seven starving children and sent to prison for five years, he is paroled from

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prison nineteen years later (after four unsuccessful escape attempts added twelve years and fighting back during the second escape attempt added two extra years). Rejected by society for being a former convict, he encounters Bishop Myriel, who turns his life around by showing him mercy and encouraging him to become a new man. While sitting and pondering what Bishop Myriel had said, he puts his shoe on a forty-sou piece dropped by a young wanderer. Valjean threatens the boy with his stick when the boy attempts to rouse Valjean from his reverie and recover his money. He tells a passing priest his name, and the name of the boy, and this allows the police to charge him with armed robbery – a sentence that, if he were caught again, would return him to prison for life. He assumes a new identity (Monsieur Madeleine) in order to pursue an honest life. He introduces new manufacturing techniques and eventually builds two factories and becomes one of the richest men in the area. By popular acclaim, he is made mayor. He confronts Javert over Fantine's punishment, turns himself in to the police to save another man from prison for life, and rescues Cosette from the Thénardiens. Discovered by Javert in Paris because of his generosity to the poor, he evades capture for the next several years in a convent. He saves Marius from imprisonment and probable death at the barricade, reveals his true identity to Marius and Cosette after their wedding, and

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is reunited with them just before his death, having kept his promise to the bishop and to Fantine, the image of whom is the last thing he sees before dying.

- **Javert** – A fanatic police inspector in pursuit to recapture Valjean. Born in the prisons to a convict father and a fortune teller mother, he renounces both of them and starts working as a guard in the prison, including one stint as the overseer for the chain gang of which Valjean is part (and here witnesses firsthand Valjean's enormous strength and just what he looks like). Eventually he joins the police force in Montreuil-sur-Mer. He arrests Fantine and comes into conflict with Valjean/Madeleine, who orders him to release Fantine. Valjean dismisses Javert in front of his squad and Javert, seeking revenge, reports to the Police Inspector that he has discovered Jean Valjean. He is told that he must be incorrect, as a man mistakenly believed to be Jean Valjean was just arrested. He requests of M. Madeline that he be dismissed in disgrace, for he cannot be less harsh on himself than on others. When the real Jean Valjean turns himself in, Javert is promoted to the Paris police force where he arrests Valjean and sends him back to prison. After Valjean escapes again, Javert attempts one more arrest in vain. He then almost recaptures Valjean at Gorbeau house when he arrests the Thénardiens and Patron-Minette. Later, while working undercover behind the

barricade, his identity is discovered. Valjean pretends to execute Javert, but releases him. When Javert next encounters Valjean emerging from the sewers, he allows him to make a brief visit home and then walks off instead of arresting him. Javert cannot reconcile his devotion to the law with his recognition that the lawful course is immoral. After composing a letter to the prefect of police outlining the squalid conditions that occur in prisons and the abuses that prisoners are subjected to, he takes his own life by jumping into the Seine.

- **Fantine** – A beautiful Parisian grisette abandoned with a small child by her lover Félix Tholomyès. Fantine leaves her daughter Cosette in the care of the Thénardiers, innkeepers in the village of Montfermeil. Mme. Thénardier spoils her own daughters and abuses Cosette. Fantine finds work at Monsieur Madeleine's factory. Illiterate, she has others write letters to the Thénardiers on her behalf. A female supervisor discovers that she is an unwed mother and dismisses her. To meet the Thénardiers' repeated demands for money, she sells her hair and two front teeth, and turns to prostitution. She becomes ill. Valjean learns of her plight when Javert arrests her for attacking a man who called her insulting names and threw snow down her back, and sends her to a hospital. As Javert confronts Valjean in her hospital room, because her illness has made her so weak,

she dies of shock after Javert reveals that Valjean is a convict and hasn't brought her daughter Cosette to her (after the doctor encouraged that incorrect belief that Jean Valjean's recent absence was because he was bringing her daughter to her).

- **Cosette** (formally Euphrasie, also known as "the Lark", Mademoiselle Lanoire, Ursula) – The illegitimate daughter of Fantine and Tholomyès. From approximately the age of three to the age of eight, she is beaten and forced to work as a drudge for the Thénardiers. After her mother Fantine dies, Valjean ransoms Cosette from the Thénardiers and cares for her as if she were his daughter. Nuns in a Paris convent educate her. She grows up to become very beautiful. She falls in love with Marius Pontmercy and marries him near the novel's conclusion.
- **Marius Pontmercy** – A young law student loosely associated with the Friends of the ABC. He shares the political principles of his father and has a tempestuous relationship with his royalist grandfather, Monsieur Gillenormand. He falls in love with Cosette and fights on the barricades when he believes Valjean has taken her to London. After he and Cosette marry, he recognizes Thénardier as a swindler and pays him to leave France.
- **Éponine** (the Jondrette girl) – The Thénardiers' elder daughter. As a child, she is pampered and spoiled by her parents, but ends up a street urchin when she reaches

adolescence. She participates in her father's crimes and begging schemes to obtain money. She is blindly in love with Marius. At Marius' request, she finds Valjean and Cosette's house for him and sadly leads him there. She also prevents her father, Patron-Minette, and Brujon from robbing the house during one of Marius' visits there to see Cosette. After disguising herself as a boy, she manipulates Marius into going to the barricades, hoping that she and Marius will die there together. Wanting to die before Marius, she reaches out her hand to stop a soldier from shooting at him; she is mortally wounded as the bullet goes through her hand and her back. As she is dying, she confesses all this to Marius, and gives him a letter from Cosette. Her final request to Marius is that once she has passed, he will kiss her on the forehead. He fulfills her request not because of romantic feelings on his part, but out of pity for her hard life.

- **Monsieur Thénardier and Madame Thénardier** (also known as the Jondrettes, M. Fabantou, M. Thénard. Some translations identify her as *the Thenardiess*) – Husband and wife, parents of five children: two daughters, Éponine and Azelma, and three sons, Gavroche and two unnamed younger sons. As innkeepers, they abuse Cosette as a child and extort payment from Fantine for her support, until Valjean takes Cosette away. They become bankrupt and relocate under the name Jondrette to a

house in Paris called the Gorbeau house, living in the room next to Marius. The husband associates with a criminal group called “the Patron-Minette”, and conspires to rob Valjean until he is thwarted by Marius. Javert arrests the couple. The wife dies in prison. Her husband attempts to blackmail Marius with his knowledge of Valjean’s past, but Marius pays him to leave the country and he becomes a slave trader in the United States.

- **Enjolras** – The leader of *Les Amis de l’ABC* (Friends of the ABC) in the Paris uprising. He is passionately committed to republican principles and the idea of progress. He and Grantaire are executed by the National Guards after the barricade falls.
- **Gavroche** – The unloved middle child and eldest son of the Thénardiens. He lives on his own as a street urchin and sleeps inside an elephant statue outside the Bastille. He briefly takes care of his two younger brothers, unaware they are related to him. He takes part in the barricades and is killed while collecting bullets from dead National Guardsmen.
- **Bishop Myriel** – The Bishop of Digne (full name Charles-François-Bienvenu Myriel, also called Monseigneur Bienvenu) – A kindly old priest promoted to bishop after a chance encounter with Napoleon. After Valjean steals some silver from him, he saves Valjean from being arrested and inspires Valjean to change his ways.

- **Grantaire** – Grantaire (Also known as “R”) was a student revolutionary with little interest in the cause. He reveres Enjolras, and his admiration is the main reason that Grantaire spends time with *Les Amis de l’ABC* (Friends of the ABC), despite Enjolras’s occasional scorn for him. Grantaire is often drunk and is unconscious for the majority of the June Rebellion. He and Enjolras are executed by the National Guards after the barricade falls.

Friends of the ABC

A revolutionary student club. In French, the letters “ABC” are pronounced identically to the French word *abaissés*, “the abased”.

- **Bahorel** – A dandy and an idler from a peasant background, who is known well around the student cafés of Paris.
- **Combeferre** – A medical student who is described as representing the philosophy of the revolution.
- **Courfeyrac** – A law student who is described as the centre of the group of Friends. He is honorable and warm and is Marius’ closest companion.
- **Enjolras** – The leader of the Friends. A resolute and charismatic youth, devoted to progress.
- **Feuilly** – An orphaned fan maker and passionate Polonophile who taught himself to read and write. He is

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the only member of the Friends who is not a student.

- **Grantaire** – A drunk with little interest in revolution. Despite his pessimism, he eventually declares himself a believer in the Republic, and dies alongside Enjolras.
- **Jean Prouvaire** (also Jehan) – A Romantic with knowledge of Italian, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and an interest in the Middle Ages.
- **Joly** – A medical student who has unusual theories about health. He is a hypochondriac and is described as the happiest of the Friends.
- **Lesgle** (also Lègle, Laigle, L'Aigle [*The Eagle*] or Bossuet) – The oldest member of the group. Considered notoriously unlucky, Lesgle begins balding at the age of twenty-five. It is Lesgle who introduces Marius to the Friends.

Minor

- **Azelma** – The younger daughter of the Thénardiers. Like her sister Éponine, she is spoiled as a child, impoverished when older. She abets her father's failed robbery of Valjean. On Marius and Cosette's wedding day, she tails Valjean on her father's orders. She travels to America with her father at the end of the novel.
- **Bamatambois** – An idler who harasses Fantine. Later a juror at Champmathieu's trial.
- **(Mlle) Baptistine Myriel** – Bishop Myriel's sister. She

loves and venerates her brother.

- **Blachevelle** – A wealthy student in Paris originally from Montauban. He is a friend of Félix Tholomyès and becomes romantically involved with Fantine's friend Favourite.
- **Bougon, Madame** (called Ma'am Burgon) – Housekeeper of Gorbeau House.
- **Brevet** – An ex-convict from Toulon who knew Valjean there; released one year after Valjean. In 1823, he is serving time in the prison in Arras for an unknown crime. He is the first to claim that Champmathieu is really Valjean. He used to wear knitted, checkered suspenders.
- **Brujon** – A robber and criminal. He participates in crimes with M. Thénardier and the Patron-Minette gang (such as the Gorbeau Robbery and the attempted robbery at the Rue Plumet). The author describes Brujon as being "a sprightly young fellow, very cunning and very adroit, with a flurried and plaintive appearance."
- **Champmathieu** – A vagabond who is misidentified as Valjean after being caught stealing apples.
- **Chenildieu** – A lifer from Toulon. He and Valjean were chain mates for five years. He once tried to unsuccessfully remove his lifer's brand TFP ("travaux forcés à perpétuité", "forced labour for life") by putting his shoulder on a chafing dish full of embers. He is described as a small, wiry but energetic man.
- **Cochepaille** – Another lifer from Toulon. He used to be a

shepherd from the Pyrenees who became a smuggler. He is described as stupid and has a tattoo on his arm, *1 Mars 1815*.

- **Colonel Georges Pontmercy** – Marius's father and an officer in Napoleon's army. Wounded at Waterloo, Pontmercy erroneously believes M. Thénardier saved his life. He tells Marius of this great debt. He loves Marius and although M. Gillenormand does not allow him to visit, he continually hid behind a pillar in the church on Sunday so that he could at least look at Marius from a distance. Napoleon made him a baron, but the next regime refused to recognize his barony or his status as a colonel, instead referring to him only as a commandant. The book usually calls him "The colonel".
- **Dahlia** – A young grisette in Paris and member of Fantine's group of seamstress friends along with Favourite and Zéphine. She becomes romantically involved with Félix Tholomyès' friend Listolier.
- **Fameuil** – A wealthy student in Paris originally from Limoges. He is a friend of Félix Tholomyès and becomes romantically involved with Fantine's friend Zéphine.
- **Fauchelevant** – A failed businessman whom Valjean (as M. Madeleine) saves from being crushed under a carriage. Valjean gets him a position as gardener at a Paris convent, where Fauchelevant later provides sanctuary for Valjean and Cosette and allows Valjean to pose as his brother.

- **Favourite** – A young grisette in Paris and leader of Fantine's group of seamstress friends (including Zéphine and Dahlia). She is independent and well versed in the ways of the world and had previously been in England. Although she cannot stand Félix Tholomyès' friend Blachevelle and is in love with someone else, she endures a relationship with him so she can enjoy the perks of courting a wealthy man.
- **Listolier** – A wealthy student in Paris originally from Cahors. He is a friend of Félix Tholomyès and becomes romantically involved with Fantine's friend Dahlia.
- **Mabeuf** – An elderly churchwarden, friend of Colonel Pontmercy, who after the Colonel's death befriends his son Marius and helps Marius realize his father loved him. Mabeuf loves plants and books, but sells his books and prints in order to pay for a friend's medical care. When Mabeuf finds a purse in his yard, he takes it to the police. After selling his last book, he joins the students in the insurrection. He is shot dead raising the flag atop the barricade.
- **Mademoiselle Gillenormand** – Daughter of M. Gillenormand, with whom she lives. Her late half-sister (M. Gillenormand's daughter from another marriage), was Marius' mother.
- **Madame Magloire** – Domestic servant to Bishop Myriel and his sister.
- **Magnon** – Former servant of M. Gillenormand and friend of

the Thénardiers. She had been receiving child support payments from M. Gillenormand for her two illegitimate sons, who she claimed were fathered by him. When her sons died in an epidemic, she had them replaced with the Thénardiers' two youngest sons so that she could protect her income. The Thénardiers get a portion of the payments. She is incorrectly arrested for involvement in the Gorbeau robbery.

- **Monsieur Gillenormand** – Marius' grandfather. A monarchist, he disagrees sharply with Marius on political issues, and they have several arguments. He attempts to keep Marius from being influenced by his father, Colonel Georges Pontmercy. While in perpetual conflict over ideas, he holds his grandson in affection.
- **Mother Innocente** (a.k.a. Marguerite de Blemeur) – The prioress of the Petit-Picpus convent.
- **Patron-Minette** – A quartet of bandits who assist in the Thénardiers' ambush of Valjean at Gorbeau House and the attempted robbery at the Rue Plumet. The gang consists of Montparnasse, Claquesous, Babet, and Gueulemer. Claquesous, who escaped from the carriage transporting him to prison after the Gorbeau Robbery, joins the revolution under the guise of "Le Cabuc" and is executed by Enjolras for firing on civilians.
- **Petit Gervais** – A travelling Savoyard boy who drops a coin. Valjean, still a man of criminal mind, places his foot on the coin and refuses to return it.


- **Sister Simplice** – A famously truthful nun who cares for Fantine on her sickbed and lies to Javert to protect Valjean.
- **Félix Tholomyès** – Fantine's lover and Cosette's biological father. A wealthy, self-centered student in Paris originally from Toulouse, he eventually abandons Fantine when their daughter is two years old.
- **Toussaint** – Valjean and Cosette's servant in Paris. She has a slight stutter.
- **Two little boys** – The two unnamed youngest sons of the Thénardiers, whom they send to Magnon to replace her two dead sons. Living on the streets, they encounter Gavroche, who is unaware they are his siblings but treats them like they are his brothers. After Gavroche's death, they retrieve bread tossed by a bourgeois man to geese in a fountain at the Luxembourg Garden.
- **Zéphine** – A young grisette in Paris and member of Fantine's group of seamstress friends along with Favourite and Dahlia. She becomes romantically involved with Félix Tholomyès' friend Fameuil.

The narrator

Hugo does not give the narrator a name and allows the reader to identify the narrator with the novel's author. The narrator occasionally injects himself into the narrative or reports facts outside the time of the narrative to emphasize that he

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is recounting historical events, not entirely fiction. He introduces his recounting of Waterloo with several paragraphs describing the narrator's recent approach to the battlefield: "Last year (1861), on a beautiful May morning, a traveller, the person who is telling this story, was coming from Nivelles ..." The narrator describes how "[a]n observer, a dreamer, the author of this book" during the 1832 street fighting was caught in crossfire: "All that he had to protect him from the bullets was the swell of the two half columns which separate the shops; he remained in this delicate situation for nearly half an hour." At one point he apologizes for intruding—"The author of this book, who regrets the necessity of mentioning himself"—to ask the reader's understanding when he describes "the Paris of his youth ... as though it still existed." This introduces a meditation on memories of past places that his contemporary readers would recognize as a self-portrait written from exile: "you have left a part of your heart, of your blood, of your soul, in those pavements." He describes another occasion when a bullet shot "pierced a brass shaving-dish suspended ... over a hairdresser's shop. This pierced shaving-dish was still to be seen in 1848, in the Rue du Contrat-Social, at the corner of the pillars of the market." As evidence of police double agents at the barricades, he writes: "The author of this book had in his hands, in 1848, the special report on this subject made to the Prefect of Police in 1832."

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Contemporary reception

The appearance of the novel was a highly anticipated event as Victor Hugo was considered one of France's foremost poets in the middle of the nineteenth century. The New York Times announced its forthcoming publication as early as April 1860. Hugo forbade his publishers from summarizing his story and refused to authorize the publication of excerpts in advance of publication. He instructed them to build on his earlier success and suggested this approach: "What Victor H. did for the Gothic world in Notre-Dame of Paris [The Hunchback of Notre Dame], he accomplishes for the modern world in Les Misérables". A massive advertising campaign preceded the release of the first two volumes of Les Misérables in Brussels on 30 or 31 March and in Paris on 3 April 1862. The remaining volumes appeared on 15 May 1862.

Critical reactions were wide-ranging and often negative. Some critics found the subject matter immoral, others complained of its excessive sentimentality, and others were disquieted by its apparent sympathy with the revolutionaries. L. Gauthier wrote in Le Monde of 17 August 1862: "One cannot read without an unconquerable disgust all the details Monsieur Hugo gives regarding the successful planning of riots." The Goncourt brothers judged the novel artificial and disappointing. Flaubert found "neither truth nor greatness" in it. He complained that the characters were crude stereotypes who all


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“speak very well – but all in the same way”. He deemed it an “infantile” effort and brought an end to Hugo’s career like “the fall of a god”. In a newspaper review, Charles Baudelaire praised Hugo’s success in focusing public attention on social problems, though he believed that such propaganda was the opposite of art. In private he castigated it as “repulsive and inept” (“immonde et inepte”). The Catholic Church placed it on the Index Librorum Prohibitorum.

The work was a commercial success and has been a popular book ever since it was published. Translated the same year it appeared into several foreign languages, including Italian, Greek, and Portuguese, it proved popular not only in France, but across Europe and abroad.


English translations

- Charles E. Wilbour. New York: Carleton Publishing Company, June 1862. The first English translation. The first volume was available for purchase in New York beginning 7 June 1862.[39] Also New York and London: George Routledge and Sons, 1879.
- Lascelles Wraxall. London: Hurst and Blackett, October 1862. The first British translation.
- Translator identified as “A.F.” Richmond, Virginia, 1863. Published by West and Johnston publishers. The Editor’s Preface announces its intention of correcting

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errors in Wilbour's translation. It said that some passages "exclusively intended for the French readers of the book" were being omitted, as well as "[a] few scattered sentences reflecting on slavery" because "the absence of a few antislavery paragraphs will hardly be complained of by Southern readers." Because of paper shortages in wartime, the passages omitted became longer with each successive volume.

- Isabel Florence Hapgood. Published 1887, this translation is available at Project Gutenberg.
- Norman Denny. Folio Press, 1976. A modern British translation later re-published in paperback by Penguin Books, ISBN 0-14-044430-0. The translator explains in an introduction that he has placed two of the novel's longer digressive passages into appendices and made some minor abridgements in the text.
- Lee Fahnestock and Norman McAfee. Signet Classics. 3 March 1987. An unabridged edition based on the Wilbour translation with its language modernized. Paperback ISBN 0-451-52526-4
- Julie Rose. 2007. Vintage Classics, 3 July 2008. A new translation of the full work, with a detailed biographical sketch of Victor Hugo's life, a chronology, and notes. ISBN 978-0-09-951113-7
- Christine Donougher. Penguin Classics, 7 November 2013. A new translation of the full work, with a detailed biographical sketch of Victor Hugo's life, a chronology,

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and notes. ISBN 978-0141393599

Adaptations

Since its original publication, *Les Misérables* has been the subject of a large number of adaptations in numerous types of media, such as books, films, musicals, plays and games.

Notable examples of these adaptations include:

- The 1934 film, 4½-hour French version directed by Raymond Bernard and starring Harry Baur, Charles Vanel, Florelle, Josseline Gaël and Jean Servais.
- The 1935 film directed by Richard Boleslawski, starring Fredric March and Charles Laughton, nominated for Best Picture, Best Film Editing, Best Assistant Director at 8th Academy Awards.
- The 1937 radio adaptation by Orson Welles.
- The 1952 film adaptation directed by Lewis Milestone, starring Michael Rennie and Robert Newton.
- The 1958 film adaptation directed by Jean-Paul Le Chanois, with an international cast starring Jean Gabin, Bernard Blier, and Bourvil. Called “the most memorable film version”, it was filmed in East Germany and was overtly political.
- The 1978 television film adaptation, starring Richard Jordan and Anthony Perkins.
- The 1980 musical, by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel


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Schönberg.

- The 1982 film adaptation, directed by Robert Hossein, starring Lino Ventura and Michel Bouquet.
- The 1995 film, by Claude Lelouch, starring Jean-Paul Belmondo
- The 1998 film, starring Liam Neeson and Geoffrey Rush.
- The 2000 TV miniseries, starring Gérard Depardieu and John Malkovich.
- The 2007 TV anime adaptation, by Studio Nippon Animation.
- The 2012 film of the musical, starring Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe, Anne Hathaway and Amanda Seyfried.
- A 2018 TV miniseries by Andrew Davies, starring Dominic West, David Oyelowo and Lily Collins.

Sequels

- Laura Kalpakian's *Cosette: The Sequel to Les Misérables* was published in 1995. It continues the story of Cosette and Marius, but is more a sequel to the musical than to the original novel.
- In 2001, two French novels by François Cérésa [fr] that continue Hugo's story appeared: *Cosette ou le temps des illusions* and *Marius ou le fugitif*. The former has been published in an English translation. Javert appears as a hero who survived his suicide attempt and becomes religious; Thénardier returns from America; Marius is

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unjustly imprisoned. The works were the subject of an unsuccessful lawsuit, *Société Plon et autres v. Pierre Hugo et autres* brought by Hugo's great-great-grandson.

Don Gibson


Donald Eugene Gibson (April 3, 1928 – November 17, 2003) was an American songwriter and country musician. A Country Music Hall of Fame inductee, Gibson wrote such country standards as "Sweet Dreams" and "I Can't Stop Loving You", and enjoyed a string of country hits ("Oh Lonesome Me") from 1957 into the mid-1970s.

Gibson was nicknamed "The Sad Poet" because he frequently wrote songs that told of loneliness and lost love.

[toc]

Early days

Don Gibson was born in Shelby, North Carolina into a poor working-class family. He dropped out of school in the second grade.


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Career

His first band was called Sons of the Soil, with whom he made his first recording for Mercury Records in 1949. In 1957, he journeyed to Nashville to work with producer Chet Atkins and record his self-penned songs "Oh Lonesome Me" and "I Can't Stop Loving You" for RCA Victor. The afternoon session resulted in a double-sided hit on both the country and pop charts. "Oh Lonesome Me" set the pattern for a long series of other RCA hits. "Blue Blue Day", recorded prior to "Oh, Lonesome Me" was a number 1 hit in 1958. Later singles included "Look Who's Blue" (1958), "Don't Tell Me Your Troubles" (1959), "Sea of Heartbreak" (1961); "Lonesome No. 1", "I Can Mend Your Broken Heart" (1962), and "Woman (Sensuous Woman)", a number one country hit in 1972.

Gibson recorded a series of successful duets with Dottie West in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the most successful of which were the Number two country hit "Rings of Gold" (1969) and the top 10 hit "There's a Story Goin' Round" (1970). West and Gibson released an album together in 1969, titled Dottie and Don. He also recorded several duets with Sue Thompson, among these being the Top 40 hits, "I Think They Call It Love" (1972), "Good Old Fashioned Country Love" (1974) and "Oh, How Love Changes" (1975).

His song "I Can't Stop Loving You", has been recorded by over 700 artists, most notably by Ray Charles in 1962. He also

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wrote and recorded "Sweet Dreams", a song that would become a major 1963 crossover hit for Patsy Cline. Roy Orbison was a fan of Gibson's songwriting, and in 1967, he recorded an album of his songs simply titled Roy Orbison Sings Don Gibson. Gibson's wide appeal was also shown in Neil Young's recorded version of "Oh Lonesome Me" on his 1970 album After the Gold Rush, which is one of the few songs Young has recorded that he did not write.

Personal life

Gibson was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1973. In 2001 he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame, and the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame in 2010.

The Don Gibson Theater

located in Cleveland County, North Carolina, **The Don Gibson Theater** opened on November 2009 in historic uptown Shelby. Originally constructed in 1939, the renovated art deco gem features an exhibit of the life and accomplishments of singer-songwriter Don Gibson, an intimate 400-seat music hall, and adjoining function space that can accommodate up to 275 people. The theater showcases a busy schedule of premier musical performances. Past performers have included Marty Stuart, Pam Tillis, Tom Paxton, Ralph Stanley, Vince Gill,


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Ricky Skaggs, John Oates and Gene Watson.

Discography

Albums


Year	Album	Chart Positions		Label
		US Country	US	

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1958	<i>Songs by Don Gibson</i>	—	—	Lion
	<i>Oh Lonesome Me</i>	—	—	RCA
1959	<i>No One Stands Alone</i>	—	—	
	<i>That Gibson Boy</i>	—	—	

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1960	<i>Look Who's Blue</i>	—	—
	<i>Sweet Dreams</i>	—	—

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1961	<i>Girls, Guitars and Gibson</i>	—	—
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1962	<i>Some Favorites of Mine</i>	—	—
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1964	<i>I Wrote a Song</i>	14	134	Hickory
	<i>God Walks These Hills</i>	—	—	
1965	<i>A Blue Million Tears</i>	—	—	
	<i>The Best of Don Gibson</i>	—	—	
	<i>Too Much Hurt</i>	13	—	
1966	<i>Don Gibson with Spanish Guitars</i>	4	—	
	<i>Great Country Songs</i>	14	—	
1967	<i>All My Love</i>	19	—	
1968	<i>The King of Country Soul</i>	21	—	
	<i>More Country Soul</i>	26	—	
1969	<i>Dottie and Don</i> (with Dottie West)	21	—	
	<i>Don Gibson Sings All-Time Country Gold</i>	17	—	
1970	<i>The Best of Don Gibson 2</i>	—	—	
	<i>Hits, The Don Gibson Way</i>	39	—	
	<i>A Perfect Mountain</i>	—	—	
1971	<i>Hank Williams as Sung by Don Gibson</i>	—	—	
	<i>Country Green</i>	17	—	
1972	<i>Woman (Sensuous Woman)</i>	16	—	
	<i>The Two of Us Together</i> (with Sue Thompson)	—	—	

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1973	<i>Touch the Morning / That's What I'll Do</i>	26	—	Hickory/MGM
1974	<i>Snap Your Fingers</i>	21	—	
	<i>The Very Best of Don Gibson</i>	30	—	
	<i>Bring Back Your Love to Me</i>	38	—	
1975	<i>I'm the Loneliest Man</i>	47	—	
	<i>Oh, How Love Changes</i> (with Sue Thompson)	43	—	
	<i>Don't Stop Loving Me</i>	—	—	
1977	<i>I'm All Wrapped Up in You</i>	—	—	
	<i>If You Ever Get to Houston</i>	—	—	
1978	<i>Starting All Over Again</i>	—	—	
	<i>Look Who's Blue</i>	—	—	

Singles

Year	Single	Chart Positions			Album
		US Country	US	CAN Country	
1956	"Sweet Dreams"	9	—	—	single only

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1958	"Oh Lonesome Me"	1	7	—	<i>Oh Lonesome Me</i>
	"I Can't Stop Lovin' You"	7	81	—	
	"Blue Blue Day"	1	20	—	
	"Give Myself a Party"	5	46	—	<i>I Wrote a Song</i>
	"Look Who's Blue"	8	58	—	singles only
1959	"Who Cares"	3	43	—	
	"A Stranger to Me"	27	—	—	
	"Lonesome Old House"	11	71	—	
	"Don't Tell Me Your Troubles"	5	85	—	<i>I Wrote a Song</i>
	"Heartbreak Avenue"	—	—	—	<i>Oh, Lonesome Me</i>
	"I'm Movin' On"	14	—	—	single only

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1960	"Big Hearted Me"	29	–	–	<i>Look Who's Blue</i>
	"Just One Time"	2	29	–	
	"Far, Far Away"	11	72	–	<i>Sweet Dreams</i>
	"Sweet Dreams" (re-recording)	6	93	–	

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1961	"What About Me"	22	100	—	<i>The Best of Don Gibson</i> <i>Girls, Guitars and Gibson</i> <i>I Wrote a Song</i> singles only
	"The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise"	—	108	—	
	"Sea of Heartbreak"	2	21	—	
	"I Think It's Best"	—	—	—	
	"Lonesome Number One"	2	59	—	
	"The Same Old Trouble"	—	—	—	

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1962	"I Can Mend Your Broken Heart"	5	105	—	
	"So How Come (No One Loves Me)"	22	—	—	
1963	"Head Over Heels in Love with You"	12	—	—	
	"It Was Worth It"	—	—	—	
	"Anything New Gets Old (Except My Love for You)"	22	—	—	<i>I Wrote a Song</i>
1964	"Oh Such a Stranger"	—	—	—	
	"Cause I Believe in You"	23	—	—	singles only
1965	"Again"	19	—	—	
	"Watch Where You're Going"	10	—	—	
1966	"A Born Loser"	12	—	—	<i>Great Country Songs</i>
	"(Yes) I'm Hurting"	6	—	—	
	"Funny, Familiar, Forgotten, Feelings"	8	—	—	<i>More Country Soul</i>
1967	"A Lost Highway"	51	—	—	<i>Great Country Songs</i>
	"All My Love"	23	—	—	<i>All My Love</i>

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1968	"Ashes of Love"	37	–	–	<i>The King of Country Soul</i>
	"Good Morning, Dear"	71	–	–	
	"It's a Long, Long Way to Georgia"	12	–	20	<i>More Country Soul</i>
	"Ever Changing Mind"	30	–	–	<i>The King of Country Soul</i>
1969	"Solitary"	28	–	–	<i>The Best of Don Gibson 2</i>
	"I Will Always"	21	–	–	singles only
	"There's a Story (Goin' 'Round)" (with Dottie West)	7	–	–	
1970	"Don't Take All Your Loving"	17	–	31	<i>A Perfect Mountain</i>
	"A Perfect Mountain"	16	–	–	
	"Someway"	37	–	31	<i>Country Green</i>
1971	"Guess Away the Blues"	19	–	4	
	"(I Heard That) Lonesome Whistle"	29	–	29	<i>Hank Williams as Sung by Don Gibson</i>
	"Country Green"	5	–	7	<i>Country Green</i>

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1972	"Far, Far Away" (re-recording)	12	–	6	<i>Woman (Sensuous Woman)</i>
	"Woman (Sensuous Woman)"	1	–	1	
	"Is This the Best I'm Gonna Feel"	11	–	3	

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1973	"If You're Goin' Girl"	26	—	9	<i>Touch the Morning / That's What I'll Do</i>
	"Touch the Morning"	6	—	5	
	"That's What I'll Do"	30	—	83	
	"Snap Your Fingers"	12	—	23	<i>Snap Your Fingers</i>
1974	"One Day at a Time"	8	—	30	single only
	"Good Old Fashioned Country Love" (with Sue Thompson)	31	—	29	
	"Bring Back Your Love to Me"	9	—	14	
1975	"I'll Sing for You"	27	—	—	<i>Bring Back Your Love to Me</i>
	"(There She Goes) I Wish Her Well"	24	—	48	
	"Don't Stop Loving Me"	43	—	—	<i>Don't Stop Loving Me</i>
	"I Don't Think I'll Ever (Get Over You)"	76	—	—	
1976	"You've Got to Stop Hurting Me Darling"	79	—	—	<i>I'm All Wrapped Up in You</i>
	"Doing My Time"	39	—	—	
	"I'm All Wrapped Up in You"	23	—	—	

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1977	"Fan the Flame, Feed the Fire"	30	—	—	<i>If You Ever Get to Houston</i>
	"If You Ever Get to Houston (Look Me Down)"	16	—	—	
	"When Do We Stop Starting Over"	67	—	—	
1978	"Starting All Over Again"	16	—	—	<i>Starting All Over Again</i>
	"The Fool"	22	—	—	
	"Oh, Such a Stranger"	61	—	—	<i>Look Who's Blue</i>
	"I Love You Because"	flip	—	—	
	"Any Day Now"	26	—	31	
1979	"Forever One Day at a Time"	37	—	33	singles only
1980	"Sweet Sensuous Sensations"	42	—	—	
	"I'd Be Crazy Over You"	—	—	—	
	"Love Fires"	80	—	—	

Singles from collaboration albums

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Year	Single	Artist	Chart Positions		Album
			US Country	CAN Country	
1969	"Rings of Gold"	Dottie West	2	1	<i>Dottie & Don</i>
	"Sweet Memories"		32	—	
1970	"Till I Can't Take It Anymore"		46	—	
1971	"The Two of Us Together"	Sue Thompson	50	—	<i>The Two of Us Together</i>

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1972	"Did You Ever Think"
	"I Think They Call It Love"
	"Cause I Love You"
1973	"Go with Me"
	"Warm Love"
1975	"No One Will Ever Know"
	"Oh, How Love Changes"
	"Maybe Tomorrow"
1976	"Get Ready-Here I Come"
	"Let's Get Together"

71	—	<i>Oh, How Love Changes</i>
37	—	
64	—	
52	49	
53	52	
—	—	
36	—	
—	—	
98	—	
—	—	

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Tommy Steele

Sir Thomas Hicks, OBE (born 17 December 1936), known professionally as **Tommy Steele**, is an English entertainer, regarded as Britain's first teen idol and rock and roll star. He reached number one with "Singing the Blues" in 1957, and *The Tommy Steele Story* was the first album by a UK act to reach number one in his native country.

Steele's film credits include *Half a Sixpence*, *The Happiest Millionaire* and *Finian's Rainbow* (musical) and he has made many stage tours in the UK. He is also a songwriter, author, and sculptor.


In 2012, Steele was among the cultural icons selected by pop-artist Sir Peter Blake to appear in "Vintage Blake", a montage to celebrate Blake's 80th birthday.

[toc]

Biography

Early life

Steele was born in Bermondsey, London, England in 1936. His father Darbo was a racing tipster and his mother Betty worked in a factory.

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Singer

Steele worked in various jobs, including a brief period as a merchant seaman. He was not eligible for national service because, at eighteen years old, he was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy. In his autobiography, *Bermondsey Boy: Memories of a Forgotten World*, he reports that he failed the medical because he had flat feet. Whenever not working, he played guitar and banjo and sang in two coffee houses in Soho, the 2i's Coffee Bar and the Cat's Whisker, both as a solo performer and with Wally Whyton's Vipers Skiffle Group.

When a ship Steele was serving on docked in Norfolk, Virginia, U.S., he heard Buddy Holly[citation needed] and fell in love with rock and roll, turning his back on the British skiffle craze. He was discovered by freelance photographer John Kennedy, who believed Steele could be Britain's answer to Elvis Presley. Later co-manager Larry Parnes was incorrectly credited with creating the stage name 'Tommy Steele'. It was Steele who adapted the surname of his Scandinavian paternal grandfather, Thomas Stil-Hicks (pronounced Steel-Hicks), adding another E to the spelling.

Steele became famous in the UK as the frontman for a rock and roll band, the Steelmen, after their first single, "Rock With the Caveman", reached number 13 in the UK Singles Chart in 1956. Steele and other British singers would pick known hit records from the United States, record their cover versions of

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these songs, and release them in the UK before the American versions could enter the charts. Most of Steele's 1950s recordings were covers of American hits, such as "Singing the Blues" and "Knee Deep in the Blues". Although Steele never proved a serious threat to Presley's popularity in the UK, he did well on the 1950s UK chart and "Singing the Blues" got to Number 1 in the UK before Presley did so. Guy Mitchell was number 1 with "Singing the Blues" on 4 January 1957 and Tommy Steele on 11 January 1957. Steele's 1957 album, *The Tommy Steele Story*, was the first by a UK-based act to reach No. 1 in the UK.

Only four months after his first chart presence, he was filming his life story. To do so, Steele and his songwriting collaborators, Lionel Bart and Mike Pratt, wrote twelve songs in seven days. His first three single releases were issued at a rate of one every three weeks. In 1957 Steele bought a four-bedroomed house in South London for his parents. In August 1959, Steele undertook a three-day concert visit to Moscow.

In 1958, Steele had the opportunity to work with his younger brother, Colin Hicks, during a tour in which the latter replaced one of the other performers, Terry Dene, who had withdrawn for psychiatric reasons.

In late 2009 his greatest hits collection, *The Very Best of Tommy Steele*, reached the Top 40 in the UK Albums Chart. This

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was the first UK chart entry, of any kind, that Steele had enjoyed for over 46 years.

Actor

The increase in home-grown musical talent during the 1950s and 1960s allowed Steele to progress to a career in stage and film musicals, leaving behind his pop-idol identity. In 1957, he was voted the seventh-most-popular actor at the British box office.

In 1960, a tour of Australia had not been particularly successful, and on his return to England he received two offers, one to star in the play *Billy Liar*, the other to join the Old Vic Company. He chose the latter.

In the West End, he appeared in *She Stoops to Conquer*, and played the title role of Hans Christian Andersen. On film, he recreated his London and Broadway stage role in *Half a Sixpence*, and played character roles in *The Happiest Millionaire* and *Finian's Rainbow*, although many critics[who?] found his personality to be somewhat overwhelming on screen. In this latter film, probably his best known appearance in the films, he played Og, the leprechaun turning human, and co-starred with Petula Clark and Fred Astaire. In 1968, British exhibitors voted him the fourth most popular star at the local box office.[16] The following year, he starred with Stanley Baker in the period drama *Where's Jack?*.

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In April 1971, Steele starred in his own show Meet Me in London at London's Adelphi Theatre.


In 1978, Steele performed in a TV movie version of Gilbert and Sullivan's The Yeomen of the Guard (misspelt as "The Yeoman..."), singing the role of the hapless jester Jack Point.

In 1983, Steele directed and starred in the West End stage production of Singin' in the Rain at the London Palladium. In 1991 he toured with Some Like It Hot the stage version of the Jack Lemmon/Tony Curtis/Marilyn Monroe film. In 2003, after a decade-long hiatus, save his one-man shows An Evening With Tommy Steele and What A Show!, he toured as Ebenezer Scrooge in a production of Scrooge: The Musical, an adaptation of Scrooge. Following this return, he reprised his role at the Palace Theatre, Manchester over Christmas 2004, and brought the production to the London Palladium for Christmas 2005. In 2008, at the age of 71, Steele toured in the lead role of the stage musical Doctor Dolittle, and has reprised his role as Scrooge every Christmas season since 2009.

He was the subject of This Is Your Life in 1958 when he was surprised by Eamonn Andrews at the BBC Television Theatre.

Sculptor

Steele is a respected sculptor and four of his major works have been on public display. Bermondsey Boy at Rotherhithe

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Town Hall in London, was stolen in 1998: its current whereabouts is unknown. Eleanor Rigby, which he sculpted and donated to the City of Liverpool as a tribute to the Beatles, stands in Stanley Street, Liverpool, not far from the Cavern Club. Union, featuring two rugby players, is on display at Twickenham Stadium. Trinity, designed during the regeneration of the docklands area in Bermondsey, stood outside the Trinity building in Bermondsey. When Steele lived in Montrose House, Petersham, Surrey, his life-sized sculpture of Charlie Chaplin as "The Tramp" stood outside his front door. He is also an artist of some note and has exhibited at the Royal Academy.

Personal life and other talents

Steele was born in Bermondsey, London. His father was Thomas Walter Hicks, and his mother was Elizabeth Ellen Bennett; they had married in 1933, in Bermondsey. There is a London Borough of Southwark blue plaque on Nickleby House, in the Dickens Estate in Bermondsey, commemorating Steele.

Steele and [Winifred] Ann Donoughue married at St. Patrick's Church, Soho Square, London, in spring 1960. They have one daughter, Emma Elizabeth (1969).

In the 1980 New Year Honours, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his work as an entertainer and actor.

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In 1981, Steele wrote and published a novel titled *The Final Run* about World War II and the evacuation of Dunkirk.


He also wrote a children's novel, entitled *Quincy*, about a reject toy trying to save himself and his fellow rejects in the basement of a toy store from the furnace the day after Christmas. Released in 1983, it was based on his own television film, *Quincy's Quest*, from 1979, in which Steele played Quincy and Mel Martin played Quincy's girlfriend doll, Rebecca.

Steele is mentioned briefly in Ian Fleming's James Bond novel *Thunderball*.

Steele co-wrote many of his early songs with Lionel Bart and Mike Pratt, but he used the pseudonym of Jimmy Bennett from 1958 onwards.

On 7 November 2019, Steele was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the British Music Hall Society, at a Celebratory Luncheon in Mayfair's Lansdowne Club. Those paying tribute to his then 63 years and 2 days in show business included Sir Tim Rice, Wyn Calvin MBE and Bill Kenwright CBE.

In May 2020, Steele announced a new project which he had been working on titled '*Breakheart*,' which was available exclusively online throughout May. Announced via a specially recorded video during the Covid-19 lockdown, '*Breakheart*' was a seven-episode audio thriller, written by Steele and set

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during the Second World War. A new episode was released each day for a week.

He was knighted in the 2020 Birthday Honours for services to entertainment and charity.

Claimed meeting with Elvis Presley in Britain

For many years it was thought that Elvis Presley had never set foot in Britain, apart from spending a few minutes on the tarmac at Prestwick Airport in Scotland where his military plane, en route to the United States after completing his army service in West Germany, stopped to refuel. However, on 21 April 2008, in a BBC Radio 2 interview with theatre impresario Bill Kenwright, it was claimed that Presley, then 23, had visited Britain for a day, after a phone conversation with Steele in London in 1958.

According to Kenwright: "Elvis flew in for a day and Tommy showed him round London. He showed him the Houses of Parliament and spent the day with him". Kenwright admitted in 2008 that he was not sure whether he should have told the story. Steele said: "It was two young men sharing the same love of their music. I swore never to divulge publicly what took place and I regret that it has found some way of getting into the light. I only hope he can forgive me."

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Press officers employed by Stagecoach, the company that owns Prestwick Airport, rapidly issued a statement requesting proof, photographic or otherwise, of the said meeting. Until such proof is provided, they will continue to describe their property, Prestwick Airport, as being the only place in Britain where Elvis Presley ever set foot, and will not be removing the marker, photographs and special lounge at their airport which relate to their claim.[]

Lamar Fike, a former member of the Memphis Mafia, who lived with Presley at the time, has posted a claim that it was he, not Presley, who visited London and Steele for a day in 1958.


Discography

Partial discography:

Singles

With the Steelmen

- "Rock With the Caveman" / "Rock Around the Town" – UK No. 13 (Decca 1956)
- "Doomsday Rock" / "Elevator Rock" – (Decca 1956)
- "Singing the Blues" / "Rebel Rock" – UK No. 1 (Decca 1956)
- "Knee Deep in the Blues" / "Teenage Party" – UK No. 15


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(Decca 1957)


- "Butterfingers" / "Cannibal Pot" – UK No. 8 (Decca 1957)
- "Water, Water" / "A Handful of Songs" – UK No. 5 (Decca 1957) with lyrics partially based on *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*
- "Shiralee" / "Grandad's Rock" – UK No. 11 (Decca 1957)
- "Hey You!" / "Plant a Kiss" – UK No. 28 (Decca 1957)
- "Happy Guitar" / "Princess" – UK No. 20 (Decca 1958)
- "Nairobi" / "Neon Sign" – UK No. 3 (Decca 1958)
- "The Only Man on the Island" / "I Puts the Lightie On" – UK No. 16 (Decca 1958)
- " Princess" / "Happy Guitar" – (Decca 1958)

Solo

- "It's All Happening" / "What Do You Do?" – (Decca 1958)
- "Come On, Let's Go" / "Put a Ring on Her Finger" – UK No. 10 (Decca 1958)
- "A Lovely Night" / "Marriage Type Love" – (Decca 1958)
- "Hiawatha" / "The Trial" – (Decca 1959)
- "Tallahassee Lassie" / "Give! Give! Give!" – UK No. 16 (Decca 1959)
- "Give! Give! Give!" – UK No. 28 (Decca 1959)
- "You Were Mine" / "Young Ideas" – (Decca 1959)
- "Little White Bull" / "Singing Time" – UK No. 6 (Decca 1959)

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- "What a Mouth (What a North and South)" / "Kookaburra" – UK No. 5 (Decca 1960)
- "Happy Go Lucky Blues" / "Girl with the Long Black Hair" – (Decca 1960)
- "Must Be Santa" / "Boys and Girls" – UK No. 40 (Decca 1960)
- "My Big Best Shoes" / "The Dit Dit Song" – (Decca 1961)
- "The Writing on the Wall" / "Drunken Guitar" – UK No. 30 (Decca 1961)
- "Hit Record" / "What a Little Darling" – (Decca 1962)
- "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" / "Butter Wouldn't Melt in Your Mouth" – (Decca 1963)
- "He's Got Love" / "Green Eye" – (Decca 1963)
- "Flash Bang Wallop" / "She's Too Far Above Me" – (Decca 1963)
- "Egg and Chips" / "The Dream Maker" – (Columbia 1963)
- "Half a Sixpence" / "If the Rain's Got to Fall" – (RCA 1965)
- "Fortuosity" / "I'm a Brass Band" – (Vista 1967)
- "King's New Clothes" / "Wonderful Copenhagen" – (Pye 1974)
- "Half a Sixpence" / "If the Rain's Got to Fall" – (Safari 1984)
- "Singing the Blues" / "Come On, Let's Go" – (Old Gold 1985)


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Albums

- *Tommy Steele Stage Show* – UK No. 5 (Decca 1957)
- *The Tommy Steele Story* – UK No. 1 (Decca 1957)
- *The Duke Wore Jeans (Soundtrack)* – UK No. 1 (Decca 1958)
- *Tommy Steele Everything's Coming Up BROADWAY* – (Liberty 1965)
- *My Life, My Song* – (Pye 1974)
- *Hans Andersen* – Original London Cast 1974 (Pye 1974)
- *Hans Andersen* – Revival London Cast 1977 (Pye 1977)
- *Singin' in the Rain* – Original London Cast 1984 (Cast Masters 1995)
- *Some Like It Hot* – Original London Cast (First Night Records 1996)
- *Scrooge: The Musical* – Original London Cast (BK Records)
- *Half a Sixpence* – Original London Cast 1963 (Must Close Saturday 2006)
- *Cinderella* – Original London Cast 1958 (Hallmark 2011)

Filmography

- *Kill Me Tomorrow* (1957)
- *The Tommy Steele Story* (1957)
- *The Duke Wore Jeans* (1957)
- *Tommy the Toreador* (1959)
- *Light Up the Sky!* (1960) known as *Skywatch* in the US

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- *It's All Happening* (1963) known as *The Dream Maker* in the US
- *Half a Sixpence* (1967)
- *The Happiest Millionaire* (1967)
- *Finian's Rainbow* (1968)
- *Where's Jack?* (1969)
- *Twelfth Night* (1970) (made for TV)
- *Tommy Steele in Search of Charlie Chaplin* (1971) (TV special)
- *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1978) (made for TV)
- *Quincy's Quest* (1979)

Notes

1. his mother's maiden name
-

Jerome Kern

Jerome David Kern (January 27, 1885 – November 11, 1945) was an American composer of musical theatre and popular music. One of the most important American theatre composers of the early 20th century, he wrote more than 700 songs, used in over 100 stage works, including such classics as "Ol' Man River",


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“Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man”, “A Fine Romance”, “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes”, “The Song Is You”, “All the Things You Are”, “The Way You Look Tonight” and “Long Ago (and Far Away)”. He collaborated with many of the leading librettists and lyricists of his era, including George Grossmith Jr., Guy Bolton, P. G. Wodehouse, Otto Harbach, Oscar Hammerstein II, Dorothy Fields, Johnny Mercer, Ira Gershwin and Yip Harburg.

A native New Yorker, Kern created dozens of Broadway musicals and Hollywood films in a career that lasted for more than four decades. His musical innovations, such as 4/4 dance rhythms and the employment of syncopation and jazz progressions, built on, rather than rejected, earlier musical theatre tradition. He and his collaborators also employed his melodies to further the action or develop characterization to a greater extent than in the other musicals of his day, creating the model for later musicals. Although dozens of Kern’s musicals and musical films were hits, only *Show Boat* is now regularly revived. Songs from his other shows, however, are still frequently performed and adapted. Many of Kern’s songs have been adapted by jazz musicians to become standard tunes.

[toc]

Biography

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Early life

Kern was born in New York City, on Sutton Place, in what was then the city's brewery district.[1] His parents were Henry Kern (1842–1908), a Jewish German immigrant, and Fannie Kern née Kakeles (1852–1907), who was an American Jew of Bohemian parentage.[2] At the time of Kern's birth, his father ran a stable; later he became a successful merchant.[2] Kern grew up on East 56th Street in Manhattan, where he attended public schools. He showed an early aptitude for music and was taught to play the piano and organ by his mother, an accomplished player and teacher.

In 1897, the family moved to Newark, New Jersey, where Kern attended Newark High School (which became Barringer High School in 1907). He wrote songs for the school's first musical, a minstrel show, in 1901, and for an amateur musical adaptation of Uncle Tom's Cabin put on at the Newark Yacht Club in January 1902. Kern left high school before graduation in the spring of his senior year in 1902. In response, Kern's father insisted that his son work with him in business, instead of composing. Kern, however, failed miserably in one of his earliest tasks: he was supposed to purchase two pianos for the store, but instead he ordered 200. His father relented, and later in 1902, Kern became a student at the New York College of Music, studying the piano under Alexander Lambert and Paolo Gallico, and harmony under Dr. Austin Pierce. His first published composition, a piano piece, At the

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Casino, appeared in the same year. Between 1903 and 1905, he continued his musical training under private tutors in Heidelberg, Germany, returning to New York via London.

First compositions

For a time, Kern worked as a rehearsal pianist in Broadway theatres and as a song-plugger for Tin Pan Alley music publishers. While in London, he secured a contract from the American impresario Charles Frohman to provide songs for interpolation in Broadway versions of London shows. He began to provide these additions in 1904 to British scores for *An English Daisy*, by Seymour Hicks and Walter Slaughter, and *Mr. Wix of Wickham*, for which he wrote most of the songs.


In 1905, Kern contributed the song "How'd you like to spoon with me?" to Ivan Caryll's hit musical *The Earl and the Girl* when the show transferred to Chicago and New York in 1905. He also contributed to the New York production of *The Catch of the Season* (1905), *The Little Cherub* (1906) and *The Orchid* (1907), among other shows. From 1905 on, he spent long periods of time in London, contributing songs to West End shows like *The Beauty of Bath* (1906; with lyricist P. G. Wodehouse) and making valuable contacts, including George Grossmith Jr. and Seymour Hicks, who were the first to introduce Kern's songs to the London stage. In 1909 during one of his stays in England, Kern took a boat trip on the River Thames with some friends, and when the boat stopped at Walton-on-Thames, they went to an

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inn called the Swan for a drink. Kern was much taken with the proprietor's daughter, Eva Leale (1891–1959), who was working behind the bar. He wooed her, and they were married at the Anglican church of St. Mary's in Walton on October 25, 1910. The couple then lived at the Swan when Kern was in England.

Kern is believed to have composed music for silent films as early as 1912, but the earliest documented film music which he is known to have written was for a twenty-part serial, *Gloria's Romance* in 1916.[9] This was one of the first starring vehicles for Billie Burke, for whom Kern had earlier written the song "Mind the Paint", with lyrics by A. W. Pinero. The film is now considered lost, but Kern's music survives. Another score for the silent movies, *Jubilo*, followed in 1919. Kern was one of the founding members of ASCAP.

Kern's first complete score was Broadway's *The Red Petticoat* (1912), one of the first musical-comedy Westerns. The libretto was by Rida Johnson Young. By World War I, more than a hundred of Kern's songs had been used in about thirty productions, mostly Broadway adaptations of West End and European shows. Kern contributed two songs to *To-Night's the Night* (1914), another Rubens musical. It opened in New York and went on to become a hit in London. The best known of Kern's songs from this period is probably "They Didn't Believe Me", which was a hit in the New York version of the Paul Rubens and Sidney Jones musical, *The Girl from Utah* (1914), for which Kern wrote

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five songs. Kern's song, with four beats to a bar, departed from the customary waltz-rhythms of European influence and fitted the new American passion for modern dances such as the fox-trot. He was also able to use elements of American styles, such as ragtime, as well as syncopation, in his lively dance tunes. Theatre historian John Kenrick writes that the song put Kern in great demand on Broadway and established a pattern for musical comedy love songs that lasted through the 1960s.

In May 1915, Kern was due to sail with Charles Frohman from New York to London on board the RMS Lusitania, but Kern missed the boat, having overslept after staying up late playing poker. Frohman died in the sinking of the ship.

Princess Theatre musicals


Kern composed 16 Broadway scores between 1915 and 1920 and also contributed songs to the London hit Theodore & Co (1916; most of the songs are by the young Ivor Novello) and to revues like the Ziegfeld Follies. The most notable of his scores were those for a series of shows written for the Princess Theatre, a small (299-seat) house built by Ray Comstock. Theatrical agent Elisabeth Marbury asked Kern and librettist Guy Bolton to create a series of intimate and low-budget, yet smart, musicals.

The "Princess Theatre shows" were unique on Broadway not only for their small size, but their clever, coherent plots,

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integrated scores and naturalistic acting, which presented “a sharp contrast to the large-scale Ruritanian operettas then in vogue” or the star-studded revues and extravaganzas of producers like Florenz Ziegfeld. Earlier musical comedy had often been thinly plotted, gaudy pieces, marked by the insertion of songs into their scores with little regard to the plot. But Kern and Bolton followed the examples of Gilbert and Sullivan and French opéra bouffe in integrating song and story. “These shows built and polished the mold from which almost all later major musical comedies evolved. ... The characters and situations were, within the limitations of musical comedy license, believable and the humor came from the situations or the nature of the characters. Kern’s exquisitely flowing melodies were employed to further the action or develop characterization.” The shows featured modern American settings and simple scene changes to suit the small theatre.

The team’s first Princess Theatre show was an adaptation of Paul Rubens’ 1905 London show, Mr. Popple (of Ippleton), called Nobody Home (1915). The piece ran for 135 performances and was a modest financial success. However, it did little to fulfill the new team’s mission to innovate, except that Kern’s song, “The Magic Melody”, was the first Broadway showtune with a basic jazz progression. Kern and Bolton next created an original piece, Very Good Eddie, which was a surprise hit, running for 341 performances, with additional touring productions that went on into the 1918-19 season. The British


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humorist, lyricist and librettist P. G. Wodehouse joined the Princess team in 1917, adding his skill as a lyricist to the succeeding shows. Oh, Boy! (1917) ran for an extraordinary 463 performances. Other shows written for the theatre were Have a Heart (1917), Leave It to Jane (1917) and Oh, Lady! Lady!! (1918). The first opened at another theatre before Very Good Eddie closed. The second played elsewhere during the long run of Oh Boy! An anonymous admirer wrote a verse in their praise that begins:

*This is the trio of musical fame,
Bolton and Wodehouse and Kern.
Better than anyone else you can name
Bolton and Wodehouse and Kern.*

In February 1918, Dorothy Parker wrote in *Vanity Fair*:

Well, Bolton and Wodehouse and Kern have done it again. Every time these three gather together, the Princess Theatre is sold out for months in advance. You can get a seat for Oh, Lady! Lady!! somewhere around the middle of August for just about the price of one on the stock exchange. If you ask me, I will look you fearlessly in the eye and tell you in low, throbbing tones that it has it over any other musical comedy in town. But then Bolton and Wodehouse and Kern are my favorite indoor sport. I like the way they go about a musical comedy. ... I like the way the action slides casually into the


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songs. ... I like the deft rhyming of the song that is always sung in the last act by two comedians and a comedienne. And oh, how I do like Jerome Kern's music. And all these things are even more so in Oh, Lady! Lady!! than they were in Oh, Boy!

Oh, Lady! Lady!! was the last successful "Princess Theatre show". Kern and Wodehouse disagreed over money, and the composer decided to move on to other projects. Kern's importance to the partnership was illustrated by the fate of the last musical of the series, Oh, My Dear! (1918), to which he contributed only one song: "Go, Little Boat". The rest of the show was composed by Louis Hirsch and ran for 189 performances: "Despite a respectable run, everyone realized there was little point in continuing the series without Kern."

Early 1920s


The 1920s were an extremely productive period in American musical theatre, and Kern created at least one show every year for the entire decade. His first show of 1920 was The Night Boat, with book and lyrics by Anne Caldwell, which ran for more than 300 performances in New York and for three seasons on tour. Later in the same year, Kern wrote the score for Sally, with a book by Bolton and lyrics by Otto Harbach. This show, staged by Florenz Ziegfeld, ran for 570 performances, one of the longest runs of any Broadway show in the decade,

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and popularized the song “Look for the Silver Lining” (which had been written for an earlier show), performed by the rising star Marilyn Miller. It also had a long run in London in 1921, produced by George Grossmith Jr. Kern’s next shows were Good Morning, Dearie (1921, with Caldwell) which ran for 347 performances; followed in 1922 by a West End success, The Cabaret Girl in collaboration with Grossmith and Wodehouse; another modest success by the same team, The Beauty Prize (1923); and a Broadway flop, The Bunch and Judy, remembered, if at all, as the first time Kern and Fred Astaire worked together.

Stepping Stones (1923, with Caldwell) was a success, and in 1924 the Princess Theatre team of Bolton, Wodehouse and Kern reunited to write Sitting Pretty, but it did not recapture the popularity of the earlier collaborations. Its relative failure may have been partly due to Kern’s growing aversion to having individual songs from his shows performed out of context on radio, in cabaret, or on record, although his chief objection was to jazz interpretations of his songs.[citation needed] He called himself a “musical clothier – nothing more or less,” and said, “I write music to both the situations and the lyrics in plays.” When Sitting Pretty was produced, he forbade any broadcasting or recording of individual numbers from the show, which limited their chance to gain popularity.


1925 was a major turning point in Kern’s career when he met Oscar Hammerstein II, with whom he would entertain a lifelong

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friendship and collaboration. As a young man, Kern had been an easy companion with great charm and humor, but he became less outgoing in his middle years, sometimes difficult to work with: he once introduced himself to a producer by saying, “I hear you’re a son of a bitch. So am I.” He rarely collaborated with any one lyricist for long. With Hammerstein, however, he remained on close terms for the rest of his life. Their first show, written together with Harbach, was *Sunny*, which featured the song “Who (Stole My Heart Away)?” Marilyn Miller played the title role, as she had in *Sally*. The show ran for 517 performances on Broadway, and the following year ran for 363 performances in the West End, starring Binnie Hale and Jack Buchanan.

Show Boat

Because of the strong success of *Sally* and *Sunny* and consistent good results with his other shows, Ziegfeld was willing to gamble on Kern’s next project in 1927. Kern had been impressed by Edna Ferber’s novel *Show Boat* and wished to present a musical stage version. He persuaded Hammerstein to adapt it and Ziegfeld to produce it. The story, dealing with racism, marital strife and alcoholism, was unheard of in the escapist world of musical comedy. Despite his doubts, Ziegfeld spared no expense in staging the piece to give it its full epic grandeur. According to the theatre historian John Kenrick: “After the opening night audience filed out of the

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Ziegfeld Theatre in near silence, Ziegfeld thought his worst fears had been confirmed. He was pleasantly surprised when the next morning brought ecstatic reviews and long lines at the box office. In fact, Show Boat proved to be the most lasting accomplishment of Ziegfeld's career – the only one of his shows that is regularly performed today." The score is, arguably, Kern's greatest and includes the well-known songs "Ol' Man River" and "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" as well as "Make Believe", "You Are Love", "Life Upon the Wicked Stage", "Why Do I Love You", all with lyrics by Hammerstein, and "Bill", originally written for Oh, Lady! Lady!, with lyrics by P. G. Wodehouse.[28] The show ran for 572 performances on Broadway and was also a success in London. Although Ferber's novel was filmed unsuccessfully as a part-talkie in 1929 (using some songs from the Kern score), the musical itself was filmed twice, in 1936, and, with Technicolor, in 1951. In 1989, a stage version of the musical was presented on television for the first time, in a production from the Paper Mill Playhouse telecast by PBS on Great Performances.

While most Kern musicals have largely been forgotten, except for their songs, Show Boat remains well-remembered and frequently seen. It is a staple of stock productions and has been revived numerous times on Broadway and in London. A 1946 revival integrated choreography into the show, in the manner of a Rodgers and Hammerstein production, as did the 1994 Harold Prince–Susan Stroman revival, which was nominated for

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ten Tony Awards, winning five, including best revival. It was the first musical to enter a major opera company's repertory (New York City Opera, 1954), and the rediscovery of the 1927 score with Robert Russell Bennett's original orchestrations led to a large-scale EMI recording in 1987 and several opera-house productions.[In 1941, the conductor Artur Rodziński wished to commission a symphonic suite from the score, but Kern considered himself a songwriter and not a symphonist. He never orchestrated his own scores, leaving that to musical assistants, principally Frank Saddler (until 1921) and Russell Bennett (from 1923). In response to the commission, Kern oversaw an arrangement by Charles Miller and Emil Gerstenberger of numbers from the show into the orchestral work *Scenario for Orchestra: Themes from Show Boat*, premiered in 1941 by the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Rodziński.


Kern's last Broadway show in the 1920s was *Sweet Adeline* (1929), with a libretto by Hammerstein. It was a period piece, set in the Gay 90s, about a girl from Hoboken, New Jersey (near Kern's childhood home), who becomes a Broadway star. Opening just before the stock market crash, it received rave reviews, but the elaborate, old-fashioned piece was a step back from the innovations in *Show Boat*, or even the *Princess Theatre* shows. In January 1929, at the height of the Jazz Age, and with *Show Boat* still playing on Broadway, Kern made news on both sides of the Atlantic for reasons wholly unconnected with music. He sold at auction, at New York's Anderson

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Galleries, the collection of English and American literature that he had been building up for more than a decade. The collection, rich in inscribed first editions and manuscript material of eighteenth and nineteenth century authors, sold for a total of \$1,729,462.50 – a record for a single-owner sale that stood for over fifty years. Among the books he sold were first or early editions of poems by Robert Burns and Percy Bysshe Shelley, and works by Jonathan Swift, Henry Fielding and Charles Dickens, as well as manuscripts by Alexander Pope, John Keats, Shelley, Lord Byron, Thomas Hardy and others.


First films and later shows

In 1929 Kern made his first trip to Hollywood to supervise the 1929 film version of Sally, one of the first “all-talking” Technicolor films. The following year, he was there a second time to work on Men of the Sky, released in 1931 without his songs, and a 1930 film version of Sunny. There was a public reaction against the early glut of film musicals after the advent of film sound; Hollywood released more than 100 musical films in 1930, but only 14 in 1931. Warner Bros. bought out Kern’s contract, and he returned to the stage. He collaborated with Harbach on the Broadway musical The Cat and the Fiddle (1931), about a composer and an opera singer, featuring the songs “She Didn’t Say Yes” and “The Night Was Made for Love”. It ran for 395 performances, a remarkable success for the

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Depression years, and transferred to London the following year. It was filmed in 1934 with Jeanette MacDonald.

Music in the Air (1932) was another Kern-Hammerstein collaboration and another show-biz plot, best remembered today for "The Song Is You" and "I've Told Ev'ry Little Star". It was "undoubtedly an operetta", set in the German countryside, but without the Ruritanian trimmings of the operettas of Kern's youth. Roberta (1933) by Kern and Harbach included the songs "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes", "Let's Begin" and "Yesterdays" and featured, among others, Bob Hope, Fred MacMurray, George Murphy and Sydney Greenstreet all in the early stages of their careers. Kern's Three Sisters (1934), was his last West End show, with a libretto by Hammerstein. The musical, depicting horse-racing, the circus, and class distinctions, was a failure, running for only two months. Its song "I Won't Dance" was used in the film Roberta. Some British critics objected to American writers essaying a British story; James Agate, doyen of London theatre critics of the day, dismissed it as "American inanity," though both Kern and Hammerstein were strong and knowledgeable Anglophiles. Kern's last Broadway show (other than revivals) was Very Warm for May (1939), another show-biz story and another disappointment, although the score included the Kern and Hammerstein classic "All The Things You Are".

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Kern in Hollywood

In 1935, when musical films had become popular once again, thanks to Busby Berkeley, Kern returned to Hollywood, where he composed the scores to a dozen more films, although he also continued working on Broadway productions. He settled permanently in Hollywood in 1937. After suffering a heart attack in 1939, he was told by his doctors to concentrate on film scores, a less stressful task, as Hollywood songwriters were not as deeply involved with the production of their works as Broadway songwriters. This second phase of Kern's Hollywood career had considerably greater artistic and commercial success than the first. With Hammerstein, he wrote songs for the film versions of his recent Broadway shows *Music in the Air* (1934), which starred Gloria Swanson in a rare singing role, and *Sweet Adeline* (1935). With Dorothy Fields, he composed the new music for *I Dream Too Much* (1935), a musical melodrama about the opera world, starring the Metropolitan Opera diva Lily Pons. Kern and Fields interspersed the opera numbers with their songs, including "the swinging 'I Got Love,' the lullaby 'The Jockey on the Carousel,' and the entrancing title song." [45] Also with Fields, he wrote two new songs, "I Won't Dance" and "Lovely to Look At", for the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers film version of *Roberta* (1935), which was a hit. The show also included the song "I'll Be Hard to Handle". This was given a 1952 remake called *Lovely to Look At*.

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Their next film, *Swing Time* (1936) included the song “The Way You Look Tonight”, which won the Academy Award in 1936 for the best song. Other songs in *Swing Time* include “A Fine Romance”, “Pick Yourself Up” and “Never Gonna Dance”. The *Oxford Companion to the American Musical* calls *Swing Time* “a strong candidate for the best of the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers musicals” and says that, although the screenplay is contrived, it “left plenty of room for dance and all of it was superb. ... Although the movie is remembered as one of the great dance musicals, it also boasts one of the best film scores of the 1930s.” For the 1936 film version of *Show Boat*, Kern and Hammerstein wrote three new songs, including “I Have The Room Above Her” and “Ah Still Suits Me”. *High, Wide, and Handsome* (1937) was intentionally similar in plot and style to *Show Boat*, but it was a box-office failure. Kern songs were also used in the Cary Grant film, *When You’re in Love* (1937), and the first Abbott and Costello feature, *One Night in the Tropics* (1940). In 1940, Hammerstein wrote the lyric “The Last Time I Saw Paris”, in homage to the French capital, recently occupied by the Germans. Kern set it, the only time he set a pre-written lyric, and his only hit song not written as part of a musical. Originally a hit for Tony Martin and later for Noël Coward, the song was used in the film *Lady Be Good* (1941) and won Kern another Oscar for best song. Kern’s second and last symphonic work was his ‘Mark Twain Suite’ (1942).

In his last Hollywood musicals, Kern worked with several new

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and distinguished partners. With Johnny Mercer for *You Were Never Lovelier* (1942), he contributed “a set of memorable songs to entertain audiences until the plot came to its inevitable conclusion”.^[48] The film starred Astaire and Rita Hayworth and included the song “I’m Old Fashioned”. Kern’s next collaboration was with Ira Gershwin on *Cover Girl* starring Hayworth and Gene Kelly (1944) for which Kern composed “Sure Thing”, “Put Me to the Test,” “Make Way for Tomorrow” (lyric by E. Y. Harburg), and the hit ballad “Long Ago (and Far Away)”.^[49] For the Deanna Durbin Western musical, *Can’t Help Singing* (1944), with lyrics by Harburg, Kern “provided the best original score of Durbin’s career, mixing operetta and Broadway sounds in such songs as ‘Any Moment Now,’ ‘Swing Your Partner,’ ‘More and More,’ and the lilting title number.” “More and More” was nominated for an Oscar.^[50]

Kern composed his last film score, *Centennial Summer* (1946) in which “the songs were as resplendent as the story and characters were mediocre. ... Oscar Hammerstein, Leo Robin, and E. Y. Harburg contributed lyrics for Kern’s lovely music, resulting in the soulful ballad ‘All Through the Day,’ the rustic ‘Cinderella Sue,’ the cheerful ‘Up With the Lark,’ and the torchy ‘In Love in Vain.’” “All Through the Day” was another Oscar nominee. The music of Kern’s last two films is notable in the way it developed from his earlier work. Some of it was too advanced for the film companies; Kern’s biographer,


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Stephen Banfield, refers to “tonal experimentation ... outlandish enharmonics” that the studios insisted on cutting. At the same time, in some ways his music came full circle: having in his youth helped to end the reigns of the waltz and operetta, he now composed three of his finest waltzes (“Can’t Help Singing”, “Californ-i-ay” and “Up With the Lark”), the last having a distinctly operetta-like character.

Personal life and death

Kern and his wife, Eva, often vacationed on their yacht Show Boat. He collected rare books and enjoyed betting on horses. At the time of Kern’s death, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was filming a fictionalized version of his life, *Till the Clouds Roll By*, which was released in 1946 starring Robert Walker as Kern. In the film, Kern’s songs are sung by Judy Garland, Kathryn Grayson, June Allyson, Lena Horne, Dinah Shore, Frank Sinatra and Angela Lansbury, among others, and Gower Champion and Cyd Charisse appear as dancers. Many of the biographical facts are fictionalized.

In the fall of 1945, Kern returned to New York City to oversee auditions for a new revival of *Show Boat*, and began to work on the score for what would become the musical *Annie Get Your Gun*, to be produced by Rodgers and Hammerstein. On November 5, 1945, at 60 years of age, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage while walking at the corner of Park Avenue and 57th Street. Identifiable only by his ASCAP card, Kern was initially taken


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to the indigent ward at City Hospital, later being transferred to Doctors Hospital in Manhattan. Hammerstein was at his side when Kern's breathing stopped. Hammerstein hummed or sang the song "I've Told Ev'ry Little Star" from Music in the Air (a personal favorite of the composer's) into Kern's ear. Receiving no response, Hammerstein realized Kern had died. Rodgers and Hammerstein then assigned the task of writing the score for Annie Get Your Gun to the veteran Broadway composer Irving Berlin.

Kern is interred at Ferncliff Cemetery in Westchester County, New York. His daughter, Betty Jane (1913–1996) married Artie Shaw in 1942 and later Jack Cummings. Kern's wife eventually remarried, to a singer named George Byron.

Awards

Jerome Kern was nominated eight times for an Academy Award, and won twice. Seven nominations were for Best Original Song; these included a posthumous nomination in each of 1945 and 1946. One nomination was in 1945 for Best Original Music Score. Kern was not eligible for any Tony Awards, which were not created until 1947. In 1976, Very Good Eddie was nominated for a Drama Desk Award as Outstanding Revival, and the director and actors received various Tony, Drama Desk and other awards and nominations. Elisabeth Welsh was nominated for a Tony Award for her performance in Jerome Kern Goes to


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Hollywood in 1986, and *Show Boat* received Tony nominations in both 1983 and 1995, winning for best revival in 1995 (among numerous other awards and nominations), and won the Laurence Olivier Award for best revival in 2008. In 1986, *Big Deal* was nominated for the Tony for best musical, among other awards, and Bob Fosse won as best choreographer. In 2000, *Swing!*, featuring Kern's "I Won't Dance" was nominated for the Tony for Best Musical, among others. In 2002, *Elaine Stritch at Liberty*, featuring Kern's "All in Fun", won the Tony Award for Best Special Theatrical Event. In 2004, *Never Gonna Dance* received two Tony nominations.

Kern was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame posthumously, in 1970. In 1985, the U.S. Post Office issued a postage stamp (Scott #2110, 22¢), with an illustration of Kern holding sheet music.

Academy Award for Best Original Song

- 1935 – Nominated for "Lovely to Look At" (lyrics by Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh) from *Roberta*
- 1936 – **Won** for "The Way You Look Tonight" (lyrics by Dorothy Fields) from *Swing Time*
- 1941 – **Won** for "The Last Time I Saw Paris" (lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II) from *Lady Be Good*
- 1942 – Nominated for "Dearly Beloved" (lyrics by Johnny Mercer) from *You Were Never Lovelier*.
- 1944 – Nominated for "Long Ago (and Far Away)" (lyrics

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by Ira Gershwin) from *Cover Girl*

- 1945 – Posthumously nominated for “More and More” (lyrics by E. Y. Harburg) from *Can’t Help Singing*
- 1946 – Posthumously nominated for “All Through the Day” (lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II) from *Centennial Summer*.

Academy Award for Best Original Music Score


- 1945 – Posthumously nominated for *Can’t Help Singing* (with H. J. Salter).

Selected works

Note: All shows listed are musical comedies for which Kern was the sole composer unless otherwise specified.


During his first phase of work (1904–1911), Kern wrote songs for 22 Broadway productions, including songs interpolated into British musicals or featured in revues (sometimes writing lyrics as well as music), and he occasionally co-wrote musicals with one or two other composers. During visits to London beginning in 1905, he also composed songs that were first performed in several London shows. The following are some of the most notable such shows from this period:^[3]

- *Mr. Wix of Wickham* (1904) – contributed most of the


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songs for this musical's New York production

- *The Catch of the Season* (1905) – contributor to this Seymour Hicks musical's New York production
- *The Earl and the Girl* (1905) – contributor of music and lyrics to this Hicks and Ivan Caryll musical's American productions
- *The Little Cherub* (1906) – contributor to this Caryll and Owen Hall musical's New York production
- *The Rich Mr. Hoggenheimer* (1906) – contributor of eight songs
- *The Beauty of Bath* (1906) – contributor to the original London production of this Hicks musical, with lyricist P. G. Wodehouse
- *The Orchid* (1907) – contributor to this Caryll and Lionel Monckton musical's New York production
- *The Girls of Gottenberg* (1908) – contributor of "I Can't Say That You're The Only One" to this Caryll and Monckton musical's New York production
- *Fluffy Ruffles* (1908) – co-composer for eight out of ten songs
- *The Dollar Princess* (1909) – contributor of songs for American production
- *Our Miss Gibbs* (1910) – contributor of four songs and some lyrics to this Caryll and Monckton musical's New York production
- *La Belle Paree* (1911) – revue – co-composer for seven songs; the Broadway debut of Al Jolson

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From 1912 to 1924, the more-experienced Kern began to work on dramatically concerned shows, including incidental music for plays, and, for the first time since his college show *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, he wrote musicals as the sole composer. His regular lyricist collaborators for his more than 30 shows during this period were Bolton, Wodehouse, Caldwell, Harry B. Smith and Howard Dietz. Some of his most notable shows during this very productive period were as follows:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The "Mind-the-Paint" Girl</i> (1912 play; starring Billie Burke) – incidental music • <i>The Red Petticoat</i> (1912) – Kern's first complete score • <i>To-Night's the Night</i> (1914) – contributor of two songs to this Rubens musical • <i>The Girl from Utah</i> (1914) – added five songs to the American production of this Rubens musical • <i>Nobody Home</i> (1915) – the first "Princess Theatre show" • <i>Very Good Eddie</i> (1915; revived in 1975) • <i>Ziegfeld Follies of 1916</i> (1916; a revue; the first of many) – contributed four songs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Theodore & Co</i> (1916) – contributed four songs to young Ivor Novello's London hit. • <i>Miss 1917</i> – the musical comedy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Miss Springtime</i> (1917) – contributor of two songs to this Emmerich Kalman success • <i>Have a Heart</i> (1917) – composer and contributor of some lyrics^[61] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Love O' Mike</i> (1917) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Oh, Boy!</i> (1917) – the most successful Princess Theatre show <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ziegfeld Follies of 1917</i> (1917) – contributor of "Because You Are Just You (Just Because You're You)" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Leave It to Jane</i> (1917; revived in 1958 Off-Broadway) • <i>Oh, Lady! Lady!!</i> (1918) – the last Princess Theatre hit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Oh, My Dear" (1918) – contributed one song to this last "Princess Theatre show" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Night Boat</i> (1920) • <i>Hitchy-Koo of 1920</i> (1920) – revue • <i>Sally</i> (1920; revived in 1923 and 1948) – one of Kern's biggest hits • <i>The Cabaret Girl</i> (London 1922) • <i>The Bunch and Judy</i> (1922) – Kern's first show with Fred Astaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stepping Stones</i> (1923) |
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During the last phase of his theatrical composing career, Kern continued to work with his previous collaborators but also met Oscar Hammerstein II and Otto Harbach, with whom Kern wrote his most lasting, memorable, and well-known works. The most successful of these are as follows:

- *Sunny* (1925) – a follow-up to *Sally* and almost as big a hit; first collaboration with Hammerstein and Harbach
- *Criss Cross* (1926) – with Harbach
- *Show Boat* (1927; revived frequently) – with Hammerstein
- *Blue Eyes* (1928; London)
- *Sweet Adeline* (1929) – with Hammerstein
- *The Cat and the Fiddle* (1931) – Kern collaborated with Harbach the music, book and lyrics
- *Music in the Air* (1932; revived in 1951) – composer and co-director with Hammerstein
- *Roberta* (1933) – with Harbach (remade as *Lovely to Look At* (1952))^[62]
- *Three Sisters* (1934; London)
- *Mamba's Daughters* (1939; revived in 1940) – play – featured songwriter
- *Very Warm for May* (1939) – with Hammerstein; Kern's last stage musical, and a failure

In addition to revivals of his most popular shows, Kern's music has been posthumously featured in a variety of revues, musicals and concerts on and off Broadway.

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- *Jerome Kern Goes to Hollywood* (1986) – Broadway revue consisting solely of Kern songs with lyrics by twelve different writers
- *Big Deal* (1986) – a Bob Fosse dance revue; includes “Pick Yourself Up”
- *Something Wonderful* (1995) – concert celebrating Oscar Hammerstein II’s 100th birthday – featured composer
- *Dream* (1997) – revue – includes “You Were Never Lovelier”, “I’m Old Fashioned”, and “Dearly Beloved”
- *Swing!* (1999) – dance revue; includes “I Won’t Dance”
- *Elaine Stritch at Liberty* (2002) – one-woman show; included “All In Fun”
- *Never Gonna Dance* (2003) – musical consisting solely of songs composed by Kern, with lyrics by nine different writers
- *Jerome Kern: All the Things You Are* (2008) – K T Sullivan’s revue biography of Kern featuring Kern’s songs
- *Come Fly Away* – a Twyla Tharp dance revue; includes “Pick Yourself Up”

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Frank Loesser

Frank Henry Loesser (/ˈlɛsər/; June 29, 1910 – July 28, 1969) was an American songwriter who wrote the music and lyrics for the Broadway musicals *Guys and Dolls* and *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying*, among others. He won separate Tony Awards for the music and lyrics in both shows, as well as sharing the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for the latter. He also wrote songs for over 60 Hollywood films and for *Tin Pan Alley*, many of which have become standards, and was nominated for five Academy Awards for best song, winning once for “Baby, It’s Cold Outside”.

Early years

Loesser was born to a Jewish family^[1] in New York City to Henry Loesser, a pianist, and Julia Ehrlich. He grew up in a house on West 107th Street in Manhattan.

His father had moved to America to avoid Prussian military service and work in his family’s banking business. He married Bertha Ehrlich; their son, Arthur Loesser, was born on August 26, 1894. Bertha’s younger sister Julia arrived in America in 1898, marrying Henry in 1907 after Bertha died in childbirth. Grace, their first child, was born in December of that year. Their son Frank was born on June 29, 1910.

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Loesser's parents, secular German Jews, prized high intellect and culture, and educated him musically in the vein of European composers. But although Henry was a full-time piano teacher, he never taught his son. In a 1914 letter to Arthur, Henry wrote that the four-year-old Frank could play by ear "any tune he's heard and can spend an enormous amount of time at the piano." (Frank Loesser would later collaborate with musical secretaries to ensure that his written scores reflected the music as he conceived it.)

Loesser disliked his father's refined taste in music and resisted by writing his own music and taking up the harmonica. He was expelled from Townsend Harris High School, and from there went to City College of New York.[6] He was expelled from the CCNY in 1925 after one year for failing every subject except English and gym.

After his father died suddenly on July 20, 1926, Loesser was forced to seek work in order to support his family. His jobs included restaurant reviewer, process server, classified ad salesman for the New York Herald Tribune, political cartoonist for The Tuckahoe Record, sketch writer for Keith Vaudeville Circuit, knit-goods editor for Women's Wear Daily, press representative for a small movie company, and city editor for a short-lived newspaper in New Rochelle, New York, called New Rochelle News.


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Early career as lyricist

Loesser's first song credit was "In Love with the Memory of You", with music by William Schuman, published in 1931. Other early lyrical credits included two hit songs of 1934, "Junk Man" and "I Wish I Were Twins", both with music by Joe Meyer and the latter with co-lyric credit to Eddie DeLange. "Junk Man" was first recorded that year by Benny Goodman with singer Mildred Bailey on vocals.

In the mid-1930s he would sing for his supper at The Back Drop, a night spot on east 52nd Street, along with composer Irving Actman, while by day working on the staff of Leo Feist Inc. writing lyrics to Joseph Brandfon's music at \$100 a week. After a year, Feist had not published any of them. Loesser fared only slightly better collaborating with the future classical composer Schuman, selling their 1931 song to Feist that would flop. Loesser described his early days of learning the craft as having "a rendezvous with failure." But while he dabbled in other trades, he inevitably returned to the music business.

Loesser's work at the Back Drop led to his first Broadway musical, The Illustrator's Show, a 1936 revue written with Back Drop collaborator Irving Actman, which lasted only four nights. The year before while performing at the Back Drop, Loesser met an aspiring singer, Lynn Garland (born Mary Alice Blankenbaker). He proposed in a September 1936 letter that

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included funds for a railroad ticket to Los Angeles where Loesser's contract to Universal Pictures had just ended. The couple married in a judge's office. Loesser was subsequently offered a contract by Paramount Pictures. His first song credit there was "Moon of Manakoora", written with Alfred Newman for Dorothy Lamour in the film *The Hurricane*. He wrote the lyrics for many popular songs during this period, including "Two Sleepy People" and "Heart and Soul" with Hoagy Carmichael and "I Hear Music" with Burton Lane. He also collaborated with composers Arthur Schwartz and Joseph J. Lilley.

One of his notable efforts was "See What the Boys in the Back Room Will Have", with music by Friedrich Hollaender and sung by Marlene Dietrich in *Destry Rides Again*. In 1941, Loesser wrote "I Don't Want to Walk Without You" with Jule Styne, which was included in the 1942 film *Sweater Girl* and sung by Betty Jane Rhodes. Irving Berlin was a huge fan of the song and once played it repeatedly, telling Loesser why he believed it was the greatest song he wished he'd written.

Members of the Western Writers of America chose the 1942 song "Jingle Jangle Jingle", for which Loesser wrote the lyrics, as one of the Top 100 Western songs of all time.


He stayed in Hollywood until World War II, when he joined the Army Air Force.

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World War II era

During World War II, he enlisted into the Army Air Force and continued to write lyrics for films and single songs. Loesser created the popular war song “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition” (1942) inspired by words of navy chaplain Howell Forgry. Loesser wrote other songs at the request of the armed forces including “What Do You Do in the Infantry?” and “The Ballad of Rodger Young” (1943), among others. He also wrote “They’re Either Too Young or Too Old” for the 1943 film Thank Your Lucky Stars.

In 1944, Loesser worked as the lyricist on a little-known musical, Hi Yank!, to be performed by and for US soldiers abroad, with music by Alex North. Hi Yank! was produced by the U.S. Army Office of Special Services as a “blueprint special” to boost the morale of soldiers located where USO shows could not visit. The “blueprint” was a book containing a musical script with instructions for staging the show using materials locally available to deployed soldiers. According document at the US Army Centre for Military History, a touring company formed in Italy was slated to produce the musical.[16] Hi Yank! show was generally forgotten until 2008, when the PBS History Detectives researched the case of a long-saved radio transcription disc. The disc has two songs and a promotional announcement for the show’s Fort Dix premiere in August 1944, when the disc was broadcast there.

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Broadway and later film career

In 1948, Broadway producers Cy Feuer and Ernest H. Martin asked Loesser to write music and lyrics to George Abbott's book for an adaptation of the Brandon Thomas play Charley's Aunt. That musical, *Where's Charley?* (1948), starred Ray Bolger, and ran for 792 performances, with a film version released in 1952.

Also in 1948, Loesser sold the rights to "Baby, It's Cold Outside", a song he wrote in 1944 and performed informally at parties with his then wife Lynn to MGM. The studio included it in the 1949 movie *Neptune's Daughter*, and the song became a huge hit. While Garland was mad at Loesser for selling what she considered "their song", it won the Academy Award for Best Original Song.

His next musical, *Guys and Dolls* (1950), based on the stories of Damon Runyon, was again produced by Feuer and Martin. *Guys and Dolls* became a hit and earned Loesser a Tony Award. Bob Fosse called *Guys and Dolls* "the greatest American musical of all time." A film version was released in 1955, and starred Marlon Brando, Jean Simmons, Frank Sinatra, and Vivian Blaine.

In 1950, Loesser started his own publishing company, Frank Music Corporation. Initially created as a means of controlling

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and publishing his work, the company eventually supported other writers, including Richard Adler, Jerry Ross, and Meredith Willson. Loesser also started the theatrical licensing company Music Theatre International in 1952. Frank Music and MTI were sold to CBS Music in 1976. CBS in turn sold Frank Music to Paul McCartney's MPL Communications holding company in 1979.

In 1952, Loesser wrote the score for the film Hans Christian Andersen. The movie's songs included "Wonderful Copenhagen", "Anywhere I Wander", "Thumbelina", and "Inchworm".

He wrote the book, music, and lyrics for his next two musicals, The Most Happy Fella (1956) and Greenwillow (1960). Around the beginning of 1957, Garland and Loesser divorced, and Loesser began a relationship with Jo Sullivan, who had played the character of Rosabella in Fella. He wrote the music and lyrics for How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying (1961), which ran for 1,417 performances, won the 1962 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and received another Tony and a Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album.

Pleasures and Palaces (1965), the last Loesser musical produced during his lifetime, closed during out-of-town tryouts.

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Later life and death

Lynn Garland and Frank Loesser divorced around the beginning of 1957 after 21 years of marriage. They had two children together: John Loesser, who works in theatre administration, and Susan Loesser, an author who wrote her father's biography *A Most Remarkable Fella: Frank Loesser and the Guys and Dolls in His Life: A Portrait by His Daughter* (1993, 2000, ISBN 0634009273).

He married his second wife Jo Sullivan (born Elizabeth Josephine Sullivan) on April 29, 1959 after being introduced to her by Lynn. Jo Sullivan had played a lead in *The Most Happy Fella*. They had two children. Emily is a performer who is married to actor Don Stephenson.[29] Hannah was an artist in oils, pastels and mixed media; she died of cancer on January 25, 2007. Jo died on April 28, 2019, at age 91.


If You See Her, Say Hello

6 6 6 6 -5 5 5

If you see her, say hello,

5 -5 5 -4 4 5

she might be in Tangier

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6 6 6 6 -5 5 5

She left here last early spring,

5 -5 5 -4 4 -4

is livin' there, I hear

7 7 7 7 7 -8 7

Say for me that I'm all right

5 -5 5 -4 4 7

though things get kind of slow

6 -6 7 7 7 7 -8 7 7

She might think that I've forgotten her,

5 -5 4 -5 5 3 4

don't tell her it isn't so.

We had a falling-out,

like lovers often will

And to think of how she left that night,

it still brings me a chill

And though our separation,

it pierced me to the heart

She still lives inside of me,

we've never been apart.

If you get close to her,

kiss her once for me

I always have respected her

for busting out and gettin' free

Oh, whatever makes her happy,

I won't stand in the way

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Though the bitter taste still lingers on
from the night I tried to make her stay.

I see a lot of people
as I make the rounds
And I hear her name here and there
as I go from town to town
And I've never gotten used to it,
I've just learned to turn it off
Either I'm too sensitive
or else I'm gettin' soft.

Sundown, yellow moon,
I replay the past
I know every scene by heart,
they all went by so fast
If she's passin' back this way,
I'm not that hard to find
Tell her she can look me up
if she's got the time.