



Fascinating Rhythm: The Collaboration of George and Ira Gershwin

Penelope Hobhouse

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The 100th birthdays of George and Ira Gershwin (in 1898 and 1896, respectively) are being celebrated around the world. The centennials are the perfect occasion to reflect on the brothers' rich legacy to American theater music. "The Man I Love," "Fascinating Rhythm," "Someone to Watch Over Me," "A Foggy Day"--together they wrote 700 songs and dozens of shows that defined an age and revolutionized the musical theater. Essential to any consideration of their achievement is Deena Rosenberg's *Fascinating Rhythm*, the only book to closely examine the brothers' extraordinary collaboration.

First published in 1991, this pioneering work--which grew out of extensive interviews with Ira Gershwin and draws on much unpublished material from his archives--provides an interpretation and critical history of the Gershwin opus. Focusing on the major songs and shows and on the creative process that produced them, Rosenberg traces the development of the Gershwins' vocabulary, voice, subject, and viewpoint as they evolved from song to song. She illuminates how words and music work together in each song to create a small one-act play that encompasses a satisfying emotional and dramatic action.

Rosenberg also expertly places the Gershwins in their creative and social context, highlighting their innovations, their own growth as mature artists, and their relationship to their times. And she outlines Ira's productive career following the untimely death of his brother in 1937.

Filled with musical examples, lyrics, and photographs, this rich portrait will fascinate any musical theater lover.

"Packed with terrific insights that will delight those who care about this music." --*New York Times Book Review*

Deena Rosenberg is the founding chair of the Musical Theatre Program, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. A cultural and music historian, she is coauthor of *The Music Makers* and has written for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *High Fidelity*, and other publications.

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