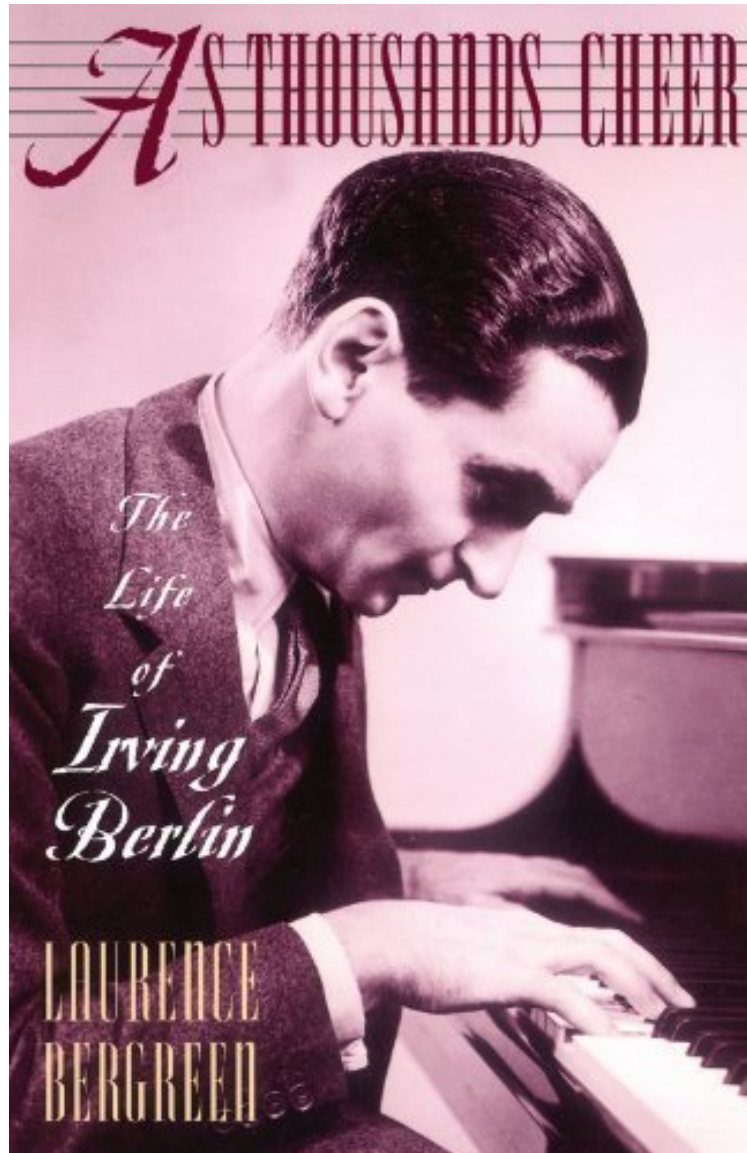


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## As Thousands Cheer: The Life Of Irving Berlin

*Laurence Bergreen*

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**Laurence Bergreen : As Thousands Cheer: The Life Of Irving Berlin** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised As Thousands Cheer: The Life Of Irving Berlin:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great biography of wonderful manBy Martha D. TruppThis is an excellent biography of an interesting, lively, and inspiring individual. I like biographies, for one reason, because you can always find something of yourself in the person and a good biography connects you to the man or woman and the times in which he or she lived. This one did that, plus it brought Irving Berlin into my home so that I cared about him. Irving Berlin was a truly great and driven man, with idiosyncrasies and character defects that made him human.This

book had it all. Although he wrote and sang almost 100 years ago, some of his songs live on as he meant them to. The book stayed with me after finishing it in three days. Great biography of a wonderful man. Now I must find a CD and some sheet music. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. a Complete musical adventure earns the most amount of stars! By J. P. M. Smita Very detailed book about the life and the stage works and musical productions, written down by Irving Berlin. The story tells us his beginning as a Russian-Jewish immigrant, coming into the New World, starting as a singing waiter in the Manhattan Bowery and China Town district, till his greatest Broadway and Hollywood stage productions with all the well known songs. Moreover he couldn't read any score, and learning playing piano by himself into F-major octave! Amazing! Also the longest living composer/ songwriter and often singer; One hundred and one years old, before he died! You'll see to do music with good health keeps you very young. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Big book, excellent read By Shelley S. Clark Very well written. This is one big book and you will learn just about everything you ever wanted to know about the man. I'd seen a one man play (Herschel Felder as Irving Berlin) and this prompted me to buy this book. It really fleshed out the play and considering the volume of information, is easily assimilated - not that you won't find yourself reading some of the sentences a couple of times. I also bought a book by Berlin's daughter which dovetailed nicely with this one. This book is so well written that I'm going to buy more of this author's books.

Irving Berlin (1888–1989) was unable to read or write music and could only play the piano in the key of F-sharp major; yet, for the first half of the twentieth century he was America's most successful and most representative songwriter, composing such hits as "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Cheek to Cheek," "Let's Face the Music and Dance," "Puttin' on the Ritz," "White Christmas," "Anything You Can Do," "There's No Business Like Show Business," and "God Bless America." As *Thousands Cheer*, winner of the Ralph J. Gleason Music Book Award, explores with precision and sensitivity Berlin's long, prolific career; his self-doubt and late-blooming misanthropy; and the tyrannical control he exerted over his legacy of song. From his immigrant beginnings through Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Hollywood to his reclusive and bitter final years, this definitive biography reveals the man who wrote 1500 songs but could never quash the fear that, for all his success, he wasn't quite good enough.

From *Publishers Weekly* The man Jerome Kern said was American music wrote 1500 songs (a list is included), had an unerring insight into popular taste, graduated with meteoric swiftness from singing for pennies in Manhattan's unsavory Lower East Side saloons to Broadway and Hollywood tycoondom, and lived to be 101. In this biography, widely researched and buttressed with a mass of interviews, Bergreen, author of the acclaimed *James Agee*, brings us the life of a man who, in addition to being an untrained tunesmith of genius--who pounded out such hits as "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "God Bless America," "This Is the Army" and "White Christmas," plus many show tunes, with quick-fire regularity--was reclusive, insecure and, toward the end of his life, paranoid. He died in 1989. Berlin's story, richly and skillfully told here, is not only the story of popular American music, studded with such names as Kern, Rodgers, Hart, Hammerstein, Gershwin, Cole Porter and Fred Astaire, but approaches being the story of 20th-century America. Photos. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Irving Berlin has long been recognized as one of this century's greatest popular composers, yet no book until this one has brought to life every level of this complicated man's personality. Bergreen, author of the acclaimed *James Agee: A Life* (LJ 6/15/84), begins with an evocative description of the 1893 immigration of Berlin's family from Russia to the lively Jewish neighborhood of New York's Lower East Side. Berlin went on to write some of the great anthems of his generation. Though Bergreen has tremendous admiration for his subject, he is hard-hitting and explicit about Berlin's failings. Indeed, some readers may be uncomfortable with the author's portrayal of the composer as the tormented show business near-equivalent of Howard Hughes. Yet Bergreen never loses sight of Berlin's basic genius. Recommended for most collections, this compelling book will remain the standard for many years. - Daniel J. Lombardo, Jones Lib., Inc., Amherst, Mass. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. From the Back Cover Irving Berlin (1888-1989) was unable to read or write music and could only play the piano in the key of F sharp major; yet, for the first half of the twentieth century he was America's most successful and most representative songwriter, composing such hits as "Alexander's Ragtime Band", "Cheek to Cheek", "Let's Face the Music and Dance", "Puttin' on the Ritz", "White Christmas", "Anything You Can Do", "There's No Business Like Show Business", and "God Bless America". As *Thousands Cheer*, winner of the Ralph J. Gleason Music Book Award, explores with precision and sensitivity Berlin's long, prolific career; his self-doubt and late-blooming misanthropy; and the tyrannical control he exerted over his legacy of song. From his immigrant beginnings through Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Hollywood to his reclusive and bitter final years, this definitive biography reveals the man who wrote 1500 songs but could never quash the fear that, for all his success, he wasn't quite good enough.