

Starr-Waterman

American Popular Music

Chapter 4: "I Got Rhythm": The Golden Age of Tin Pan Alley Song, 1920s and 1930s

Key People

Al Jolson (1886–1950): Billed himself as “The World’s Greatest Entertainer.” He was the most popular performer of his generation, and his career overlapped the era of vaudeville stage performance and the rise of new media in the 1920s.

Bing Crosby (1903–1977): A popular crooner known for a silky, gentle, nuanced voice that suggests intimacy.

Cole Porter (1891–1964): An influential Tin Pan Alley composer born into a wealthy family in Indiana who studied classical music at elite institutions such as Yale, Harvard, and the Scola Cantorum in Paris.

George Gershwin (1898–1937): Became the songwriter who did the most to bridge the gulf between art music and popular music.

Ira Gershwin (1896–1983): Lyricist and collaborator with his brother, George Gershwin, who helped create some of the most memorable American popular songs.

Irving Berlin (1888–1989): Generally recognized as the most productive, varied, and creative of the Tin Pan Alley songwriters.