

Ethel Merman: The Legendary Broadway Star



Ethel Merman: A Life by Brian Kellow

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Ethel Merman was one of the most successful Broadway stars of all time. Her powerful voice and electric personality made her a legend on the Great White Way.

Merman was born in Astoria, Queens, New York, in 1908. She began her career as a chorus girl in the early 1930s, but it wasn't until she starred in the musical "Anything Goes" in 1934 that she became a household name.

Merman went on to star in a number of other Broadway musicals, including "Annie Get Your Gun" (1946), "Call Me Madam" (1950), and "Gypsy" (1959). She also appeared in several films, including "Stage Door" (1937), "There's No Business Like Show Business" (1954), and "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World" (1963).

Merman was known for her powerful voice, which could fill a theater without a microphone. She was also a gifted comedienne, with a knack for

delivering a joke with impeccable timing.

Merman was a beloved figure on Broadway, and her fans adored her for her talent, her personality, and her larger-than-life persona. She was a true icon of the American musical theater, and her legacy continues to inspire performers and audiences alike.

Early Life and Career

Ethel Merman was born Ethel Agnes Zimmermann in Astoria, Queens, New York, on January 16, 1908. Her father, Edward Zimmermann, was a butcher, and her mother, Agnes (née Gibney), was a homemaker. Merman had one older brother, Edward Jr.

Merman began singing at an early age, and she won her first talent contest at the age of ten. She attended Julia Richman High School in Manhattan, but she dropped out at the age of sixteen to pursue a career in show business.

Merman began her career as a chorus girl in the early 1930s. She appeared in a number of Broadway shows, including "George White's Scandals" (1931), "Take a Chance" (1932), and "Roberta" (1933).

Breakthrough Role

Merman's breakthrough role came in 1934, when she starred in the musical "Anything Goes" by Cole Porter. Merman played the role of Reno Sweeney, a nightclub singer who falls in love with a wealthy Englishman. The show was a huge success, and it made Merman a star.

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Later Career and Legacy

Merman continued to perform on Broadway until the early 1970s. She made her final appearance in the musical "Hello, Dolly!" in 1970. Merman died of a brain tumor in 1984 at the age of seventy-six.

Merman was one of the most successful Broadway stars of all time. Her powerful voice and electric personality made her a legend on the Great White Way. She was a beloved figure in the American theater, and her legacy continues to inspire performers and audiences alike.

Personal Life

Merman was married four times. Her first marriage, to William Smith, lasted from 1930 to 1932. Her second marriage, to Ernest Borgnine, lasted from 1949 to 1955. Her third marriage, to Robert Six, lasted from 1956 to 1960. Her fourth marriage, to Stanley Donen, lasted from 1960 to 1963.

Merman had two children, a son named Robert Jr. and a daughter named Ethel Agnes Jr.

Awards and Honors

Merman won a number of awards and honors during her career, including:

- Two Tony Awards for Best Actress in a Musical (1950 and 1959)

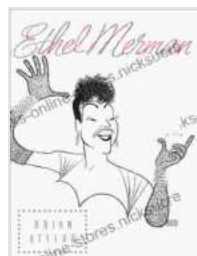
- A Grammy Award for Best Original Cast Album (1960)
- A Presidential Medal of Freedom (1968)
- A Kennedy Center Honor (1981)

Merman was also inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame in 1973.

Legacy

Ethel Merman was one of the most successful Broadway stars of all time. Her powerful voice and electric personality made her a legend on the Great White Way.

Merman's legacy continues to inspire performers and audiences alike. She was a true icon of the American musical theater, and her work will continue to be enjoyed for generations to come.



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