

CLICK

THE NATIONAL PICTURE MONTHLY

October, 1943: p. 56

Rodgers and Hammerstein Composers of Broadway's big hit, "Oklahoma!" head for Hollywood



"We write basic American music—in the American idiom. That's what made 'Oklahoma!' such fun to do. And that's why we like the new show we're working on now."

Ten minutes after CLICK's photographer-reporter took the above picture of Oscar Hammerstein II, and Richard Rodgers, the famous team was on its way to Hollywood to confer with Darryl Zanuck on "the new show"—a technicolor musical based on Phil Stong's novel *State Fair*. They like its "earthiness."

Hammerstein just finished writing a new set of lyrics to Bizet's *Carmen* which Billy Rose will produce on Broadway next season with an all Negro cast, under the title, *Carmen Jones*. Meanwhile Rodgers is planning a revival of *A Connecticut Yankee*.

Composer Rodgers, long teamed with lyricist Lorenz Hart, started to play the piano at the age of four, began to compose at 14. He has perfect pitch and a gift for translating character, situation or mood into melody at a moment's notice.

Oscar Hammerstein II, of the famous theatrical family, started out to be a lawyer, went to Columbia University where he first met Rodgers. As a graduate he picked music submitted for the Varsity Show by Rodgers, then a freshman. He did the lyrics for *Rose Marie*, *Sunny*, *Song of the Flame*, *The Desert Song*, *Show Boat*.

Starting with *Garrick Gaieties*, Rodgers wrote the music for such hits as *Peggy Ann*, *The Girl Friend*, *A Connecticut Yankee*, *On Your Toes*, *I Married an Angel* and *By Jupiter*.

"More good songs are written right at rehearsal than at any other time," Rodgers and Hammerstein claim. "You've got the people right there. Their voices, even their faces, help you find the right numbers for them."