

Sam Harris Introduction / Over There / George M. Cohan Speech / Life's A Funny Proposition After All / I Want To Hear A Yankee Doodle Tune
You Won't Do Any Business If You Haven't Got A Band / I'm Mighty Glad I'm Living / That's All / The Small Town Gal
The Phantom President Sound Track, with Jimmy Durante

A TRIBUTE TO **GEORGE M. COHAN**



GEORGE M. COHAN IN "THE LITTLE MILLIONAIRE"

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

A TRIBUTE TO **GEORGE M. COHAN**

SIDE ONE Total Time — 23:58

1. Sam Harris Intro/Over There
2. George M. Cohan Speech
3. Life's A Funny Proposition After All
4. I Want To Hear a Yankee Doodle Tune
5. You Won't Do Any Business If You Haven't Got a Band
6. I'm Mighty Glad I'm Living, That's All
7. The Small Town Gal

SIDE TWO Total Time — 28:06

The Phantom President Sound Track
w/Jimmy Durante

CREDITS

Programming & Annotation: David A. Jasen
Remastering: Carl Seltzer

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A TRIBUTE TO **GEORGE M. COHAN**

ANNOTATED BY DAVID A. JASEN

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

FOLKWAYS RECORDS RFS 604

A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE M. COHAN

ANNOTATED BY DAVID A. JASEN

George Michael Cohan was born in Providence, Rhode Island on July 4, 1878 into a family of vaudevillians. When he was seven years old, he became a full-fledged member of The Four Cohans. This consisted of his father Jerry, his mother Nellie, his sister Josie, and Georgie made the fourth. They were essentially road actors, spending most of their time touring the circuit in skits and specialty songs-and-dances. In the early nineties, George got bitten by writing songs and began that aspect of his career in earnest. From there to writing vaudeville skits and parodies was but a step. In time, he became famous not only as a song-and-dance man, but as a playwright, director, composer, lyricist, music publisher, dramatic actor and producer. The first complete man of the American theatre.

His own Broadway productions, starting with The Governor's Son in 1901 included twenty-two musicals and thirteen straight plays. His most impressive years as producer-performer-playwright occurred during the years 1904-1920 when he was partnered with Sam Harris, highly esteemed Broadway producer. Cohan scored a personal acting triumph in Eugene O'Neill's Ah Wilderness and later in Kaufman and Hart's I'd Rather Be Right.

His most famous musicals in which he also starred, featured his most famous songs during the first decade of this century. They included Little Johnny Jones from which came "The Yankee Doodle Boy," "Give My Regards to Broadway," and

"Life's a Funny Proposition After All"; Forty-Five Minutes From Broadway which sported his "Mary's a Grand Old Name"; George Washington, Jr. which included "You're a Grand Old Flag"; and Fifty Miles From Boston which featured his "Harrigan."

But his biggest song hit was not from any of his shows. It was a solitary number written as a patriotic number for the first world war. Cohan's "Over There" was the most popular and inspiring of all the World War I songs written. It was so inspiring, in fact, that Congress in 1940 issued a special medal of honor to Cohan for writing it.

His many theatrical talents encompassed the entire theatrical business and it is hard to realize how one man could dominate an entire musical production - doing everything himself. And this just wasn't for one production but he did it continuously for fifteen years!

A precocious youngster who had definite ideas, he set about changing musical comedies in America, giving them an American feeling - full of brashness, brightness, and with patriotic fervor. He wrote his autobiography, TWENTY YEARS ON BROADWAY in 1924. On his 60th birthday, the Catholic Actors Guild honored him with a dinner from which we feature him singing his most famous song OVER THERE and hear his practically extemporaneous speech, ending with his most famous curtain speech: "My father thanks you, my mother thanks you, my sister thanks you, and as for myself - that goes without saying."

Just before his death on November 5, 1942 in New York City, Warner Bros. completed a film biography called YANKEE DOODLE DANDY. It starred James Cagney as Cohan and won for Cagney an academy award. Cohan saw the movie and approved.

SIDE ONE

INTRODUCTION/OVER THERE. Sam Harris, Cohan's partner in producing Broadway shows for sixteen years, introduces Cohan at the Tribute Harris himself produced for the Catholic Actors Guild. Then, Cohan is called upon to sing his most famous song, OVER THERE, with an orchestra engaged especially for this dinner to celebrate Cohan's 60th birthday.

GEORGE M. COHAN SPEECH. This was the highlight of the dinner.

LIFE'S A FUNNY PROPOSITION AFTER ALL was the first of seven songs Cohan recorded on May 4, 1911. It was his only record session. These recordings were really dramatic readings, rather than singing, and they illustrate Cohan's brilliant vocal techniques. This Cohan original came from his 1904 show, Little Johnny Jones.

I WANT TO HEAR AND YANKEE DOODLE TUNE and YOU WON'T DO ANY BUSINESS IF YOU HAVEN'T GOT A BAND are typical Cohan numbers. The latter tune is quite comical, a rare commodity for a Cohan song.

I'M MIGHTY GLAD I'M LIVING, THAT'S ALL was another song from his Broadway show, Little Johnny Jones.

THE SMALL TOWN GAL came from his 1908 success, Fifty Miles From Boston.

SIDE TWO

THE PHANTOM PRESIDENT was Cohan's only starring motion picture. It was done at the Paramount Studio in 1932. Others in the cast were Jimmy Durante, Claudette Colbert, George Barbier, Sidney Toler, Jameson Thomas, Paul Hurst and Alan Mowbray. The songs were written by Richard Rodgers

and Larry Hart. While they were fine for the production, there were no outstanding hits. The best moment in song is provided by Jimmy Durante who scores with "Dr. Barney Will Cure You." He also had the snappiest dialog.

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Annotated by
DAVID A. JASEN

SIDE I

RF 604 A

1. SAM HARRIS INTRO / OVER THERE
2. GEORGE M. COHAN SPEECH
3. LIFE'S A FUNNY PROPOSITION AFTER ALL
4. I WANT TO HEAR A YANKEE DOODLE TUNE
5. YOU WON'T DO ANY BUSINESS IF YOU
HAVEN'T GOT A BAND
6. I'M MIGHTY GLAD I'M LIVING, THAT'S ALL
7. THE SMALL TOWN GAL

Total Time — 23:58

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SIDE II

RF 604 B

THE PHANTOM PRESIDENT
SOUND TRACK
with
Jimmy Durante

Total Time — 28:06

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