

## Topics

# Thou Swell; Thou Pretty

## Morning, Evening, Love

Business may be New York city's bedrock, but the musical theater is its glory and much of its magic. No one contributed more to that magic than Richard Rodgers, or touched more listeners with the beauty of a prairie morning, an enchanted evening or the moment of falling in love. The songs of Rodgers and Hart, and of Rodgers and Hammerstein, capture such moments and emotions. They are as moving now as the first time they were sung.

Richard Rodgers's life and work transformed the Broadway musical from simple froth into a way of writing about people and life that united the performing arts into a new kind of theater. His death leaves New York and Broadway much poorer — but his 55 years of production also leaves us much richer, by 43 musicals and 1,500 singable, danceable songs. More than

80 of these songs are considered "standards," which means that every time their themes are struck a great many people experience some marvelous memory, somehow peculiarly their own.

So the melodies linger on. Richard Rodgers' songs stay younger than springtime. There isn't a day when a Rodgers tune isn't being played, and it's said that there is always a performance, somewhere, of "South Pacific" or "Carousel" or another of his shows; a revival of "Oklahoma" is running on Broadway even now. That is a special kind of immortality.

## Equal Flights

For those whose most recent image of Chinese women is a stern warrior type dressed in a padded Mao uniform, the latest news from Peking may be

something of a surprise. China's Civil Aviation Administration is advertising for comely, "well-proportioned" young ladies to serve as hostesses on overseas flights.

It is clear that the new pragmatists, in their drive to gear up China's economy, have their eyes on the appearance of modernity — and on foreign exchange, too. But it is a little daunting to find them pandering to what has become the traditional, now slightly passé, image of the stewardess.

We don't doubt that the young applicants in Peking will measure up to the norm. They must be high school graduates, aged 17 to 20, between 5 feet 3 and 5 feet 6 inches tall, with "pleasant features" and some knowledge of a foreign language. All very cosmopolitan — but 50's and 60's style. If the Chinese mean to be truly modern, they'll hasten to advertise for another kind of flight attendants: men.