

# 'Little show' on Berlin born in prof's music-history class

By Kyle Lawson  
Staff writer

Jerome Kern once was asked to sum up Irving Berlin's role in American music.

"Irving Berlin is American music," Kern replied.

It's hard to argue with that evaluation. Not when you're dealing with a career that produced, among hundreds of other songs, *White Christmas*, *Easter Parade*, *God Bless America*, *A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody*, *What'll I Do?*, *Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee*, *Heat Wave*, *You're Just in Love* and, of course, that anthem of the entertainment industry, *There's No Business Like Show Business*.

There certainly was no business like it for Israel Baline, who was born May 11, 1888, in Temun, Russia, and emigrated to America with his parents as an infant.

When the former singing waiter died in 1989 at 101 years old, he was, in the words of critic Stanley Green, "unsurpassed in creating a body of songs that expressed the basic moods and emotions of his countrymen."

A singer, pianist, ukulele player and occasional tap dancer, Californian Glen Rose dips into the Berlin canon for his one-man show that he performs at 8 p.m. Saturday at Scottsdale's Kerr Cultural Center (965-5377).

It's one of three shows he tours under the tagline "Tin Pan Alley Days." The others feature the Gershwin brothers, George and Ira, and Cole Porter. A fourth, focusing on the songs of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, is in the works.

You can thank a frustrated college professor for these intimate, detailed looks into the lives and songs of some of our greatest tunesmiths. Rose was teaching music history and, in an effort to catch his students' attention, he developed "a little show" that he hoped would make the class more interesting.

Eventually, that took over his life to the point where he resigned his teaching position and took to the road, giving more than 100 performances annually in this country and Europe.

## THEATER HIGHLIGHTS



**Glen Rose will play the piano and ukulele, sing and dance in a tribute to Irving Berlin on Saturday at Kerr Cultural Center.**

Rose was born in Beverly Hills or the Fourth of July.

"I've got the birth certificate to prove it — none of that George M. Cohan stuff," he jokes.

The show centering on Berlin was his first effort at a one-man show.

"I love music from the '20s and '30s, and if you look at the song lists from that period, you will see that Berlin really dominated the era," Rose says.

His fondness for Berlin came naturally. Rose's father, Ernie Rose, was an orchestrator at 20th Century Fox when the studio was producing a number of Berlin musicals, including *Alexander's Ragtime Band*.

"He was a big fan of Berlin's, and the seed was planted," Rose says.

Rose's show includes the title song from the Alice Faye-Tyrone Power musical (which is screened

regularly on American Movie Classics). It's a salute to the composer and to Rose's father. It goes without saying that Berlin's songs are popular with audiences.

"His tunes aren't over-schooled, or too intellectual," Rose says. "He's the common man's musician, but that doesn't mean his songs are simple. Although he didn't read or write music, he had this innate musical sense that brought out the harmonics and melodies in his songs."

And the Berlin piece may be Rose's favorite, too.

"I just have a great time out there, especially with the dancing. I'm not a great dancer, but I come from good stock. My mom was West Coast swing champion back in the '50s. I love getting up on my feet and doing a little hoofing."