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# Some Enchanted Evenings: The Glittering Life And Times Of Mary Martin



## Synopsis

Mary Martin was one of the greatest stars of her day. Growing up in Texas, she was married early to Benjamin Hagman and gave birth to her first child, Larry Hagman. She was divorced even more quickly. Martin left little Larry with her parents and took off for Hollywood. She didn't make a dent in the movie industry and was lured to New York, where she found herself auditioning for Cole Porter and his new show *Leave It to Me!* After she sang the bawdy "My Heart Belongs to Daddy", she ended up on the cover of *Life* magazine. Six years later, she became the toast of Broadway when she starred in *South Pacific*. After that, she flew as Peter Pan, yodeled in *The Sound of Music*, took *Hello, Dolly!* on the road, and shared a four-poster with Robert Preston in *I Do! I Do!* Her personal life was just as interesting: in NYC, she met and married Richard Halliday, a closeted upper-class homosexual who adored her, Broadway, and interior decorating (though probably not in that order). They were a powerful twosome. There were rumors about Martin, too, being in a lesbian relationship with both Janet Gaynor and Jean Arthur. Peopled with legends like Ethel Merman, Ezio Pinza, Noël Coward, and a starry cast of thousands, David Kaufman's *Some Enchanted Evenings* is the delectable story of the one and only Mary Martin, a self-described chicken farmer from Texas who became Peter Pan and captured America's heart.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mary Martin was the grand dame of the American musical theatre. She originated the famous roles of Ensign Nellie Forbush in Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein's musical, "South Pacific," on

Broadway. She made her debut with the song, "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," in the Cole Porter musical, "Leave It To Me!," on Broadway. She became a Broadway darling overnight. She was a contract player in Hollywood to somewhat disappointment and returned to New York City. The book chronicles her early life in Texas as the daughter of a lawyer, Preston, and stage mother/music teacher Juanita. She was more of tomboy and enjoyed playing around with boys. She could sing and dance but acting was a challenge. She started a dance school and went to Hollywood and later to New York City. Mary Martin might be better known as the mother of Larry Hagman (J.R. Ewing's Dallas) but she was far better known as a Broadway darling of the musical. She was young and naive when she married and became a mother to Larry. Her own mother took over Larry's upbringing to his twelfth year. Larry understood that his parents were young at the time of his birth. Mary Martin became a household name for her performances on Broadway than her film career. Perhaps, it was destiny and she preferred the stage to screen anyway. She has played Annie Oakley in "Annie Get Your Gun;" Maria Von Trapp in "The Sound of Music;" the title role in "Peter Pan;" Ensign Nellie Forbush in "South Pacific;" and more. Whenever Mary played a role, it became solely hers. She enchanted and entertained the crowds with sheer delight, love, passion, and joy. Her personal life is as colorful as her professional life.

I remember seeing Mary Martin in the annual TV broadcast of "Peter Pan" when I was a child. Years later, I saw her in person in "I Do, I Do" on Broadway. And, of course, I've listened to the original Broadway cast recordings of "South Pacific" and "The Sound of Music" many times. So I was interested in learning more about this performer. Author Kaufman covers her long career starting with her Broadway debut in "Leave It to Me!," in which she introduced the song "My Heart Belongs to Daddy." He traces her non-spectacular stint in Hollywood musicals during the late 30s and 40s, several well-received television specials in the 1950s, and her later Broadway successes ("The Sound of Music") and failures ("Jennie"). The first couple of chapters deal with Martin's life in Texas before she entered show business, and are covered with just enough detail to set the stage for the meat of the book, which is Martin's stage career. I especially enjoyed reading about her lesser-known Broadway shows, such as "One Touch of Venus" and "Lute Song." Though she didn't originate the roles, she appeared in two other hits, "Annie Get Your Gun" and "Hello, Dolly!" Along with Ethel Merman, Mary Martin was one of the biggest stars of Broadway for decades. The section on her TV career was particularly informative. I knew about "Peter Pan," which she originally performed on Broadway. But she also did a 90-minute special with Noel Coward ("Together With Music"), sang a medley of

Broadway standards with Ethel Merman (â œThe Ford 50th Anniversary Showâ •), and hosted â ” along with Groucho Marx, Jack Benny, Ed Sullivan, and Edgar Bergen â ” â œA Salute to Rodgers and Hammerstein,â • broadcast on all four TV networks of the time, Dumont, CBS, NBC and ABC.

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