

Press Contacts

Michelle Perlin  
212.590.0311, mperlin@themorgan.org

Patrick Milliman  
212.590.0310, pmilliman@themorgan.org

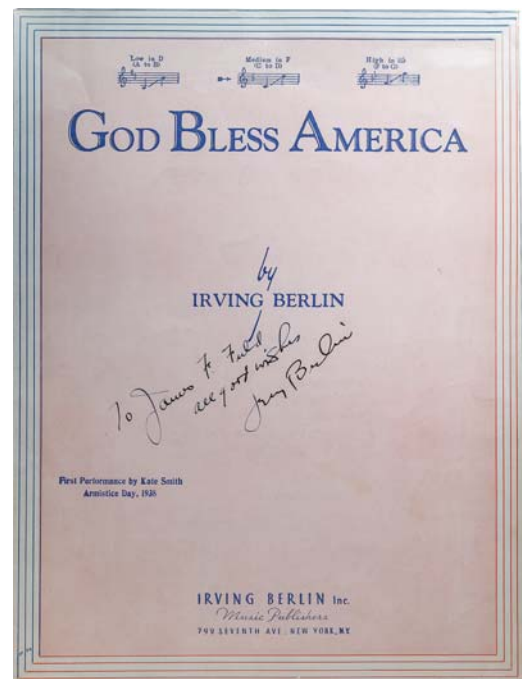
## THE MORGAN GETS PATRIOTIC WITH A FOURTH OF JULY DISPLAY OF AN INSCRIBED FIRST EDITION OF IRVING BERLIN'S "GOD BLESS AMERICA"

*Now through July 10*

**New York, NY, June 27, 2016** — Irving Berlin's "God Bless America" has been called the nation's unofficial anthem. In honor of the Independence Day holiday, the Morgan Library & Museum is exhibiting an inscribed first edition of Berlin's famous song, which was published in 1939.

The song resonates for its expression of emotion and love for a nation that promotes peace and affords opportunity. Berlin's own life story is nothing short of an American Dream. Born into a Jewish family in Siberia, he came to the United States at the age of five. His father – a cantor in a synagogue in Siberia – moved the family to America in 1893, as did thousands of other Jewish families that fled Russia during the brutal pogroms. The Yiddish-speaking family lived in a small apartment on the Lower East Side of New York on a modest income. Despite humble beginnings, Berlin reached legendary status before the age of thirty. His hit songs include "White Christmas" and "There's No Business Like Show Business."

"God Bless America" was originally composed by Berlin in 1918 as part of a musical revue from which it was cut. Years later, with the rise of Hitler, the composer revisited "God Bless America." He had the song introduced by Kate Smith as a ballad of peace on an Armistice Day broadcast in 1938. Smith, a popular radio star, became indelibly associated with the patriotic song. Both Berlin's and Smith's royalties were donated to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America.



Irving Berlin (1888-1989), *God Bless America*, New York: Irving Berlin Inc., 1939. The Morgan Library & Museum, James Fuld Music Collection, 2008.

The Morgan display features the first published edition of “God Bless America,” inscribed by Berlin to James Fuld, whose remarkable collection of first-edition scores came to the Morgan in 2008. Visitors to the Morgan can view this extraordinary work while listening to the patriotic tune: the Morgan’s audio guide, free with museum admission, features Smith’s recording of *God Bless America*, which was arranged and conducted by Nelson Riddle.

### **Organization and Sponsorship**



The programs of the Morgan Library & Museum are made possible with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

### **The Morgan Library & Museum**

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, the Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today it is a museum, independent research library, music venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. A century after its founding, the Morgan maintains a unique position in the cultural life of New York City and is considered one of its greatest treasures. With the 2006 reopening of its newly renovated campus, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, and the 2010 refurbishment of the original library, the Morgan reaffirmed its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 B.C. to the twenty-first century.

The Morgan Library & Museum  
225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405  
212.685.0008  
themorgan.org