

Columbo, Russ (1908-1934)

Encyclopedia Article

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Russ Columbo was a popular romantic crooner of the 1920s and early 1930s. Often referred to as "Radio's Valentino," Columbo was so popular he was immortalized in a song of the day, "Crosby, Columbo, and Vallee." Born Ruggerio de Rudolpho Columbo, he became a concert violinist, vocalist, songwriter, and bandleader. He wrote many popular songs, mainly with partner Con Conrad. One of his biggest hits also became his theme song, "You Call It Madness (But I Call it Love)."

Columbo appeared in a few films and had just signed with Universal Pictures for a series of musicals when he was tragically killed. While looking at the gun collection of friend Lansing Brown, one of the guns discharged, hitting Columbo in the eye. He died a short time later.

Further Reading:

Hemming, Roy, and David Hajdu. *Discovering Great Singers of Classic Pop*. New York, Newmarket Press, 1991.

Parish, James Robert, and Michael R. Pitts. *Hollywood Songsters: A Biographical Dictionary*. New York, Garland Publishing, 1991.