



Stardust Melodies: A Biography of 12 of America's Most Popular Songs

Will Friedwald

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This pop culture history takes 12 legendary songs and, with a staggering wealth of detail and unprecedented understanding, provides an extended history of each. The circumstances under which each was written and first performed are explained and their musical and lyric content are explored. Those who were responsible for making these songs famous and performers who have left their unique marks on them are also identified. Variations in style, classic and obscure versions, brilliantly original interpretations, and ghastly travesties in the performance lifetime of each song are discussed. Also included are revelations of facts, such as Herman Hupfeld, who wrote "As Time Goes By," had a much bigger hit with "When Yuba Plays the Rhumba on the Tuba"; Billy Strayhorn wrote about "a week in Paris" in "Lush Life" when he was a teenager and had never been to any city larger than Pittsburgh; and the first-ever public performance of "I Got Rhythm," sung by Ethel Merman, featured Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, Jimmy Dorsey, and Glenn Miller.

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