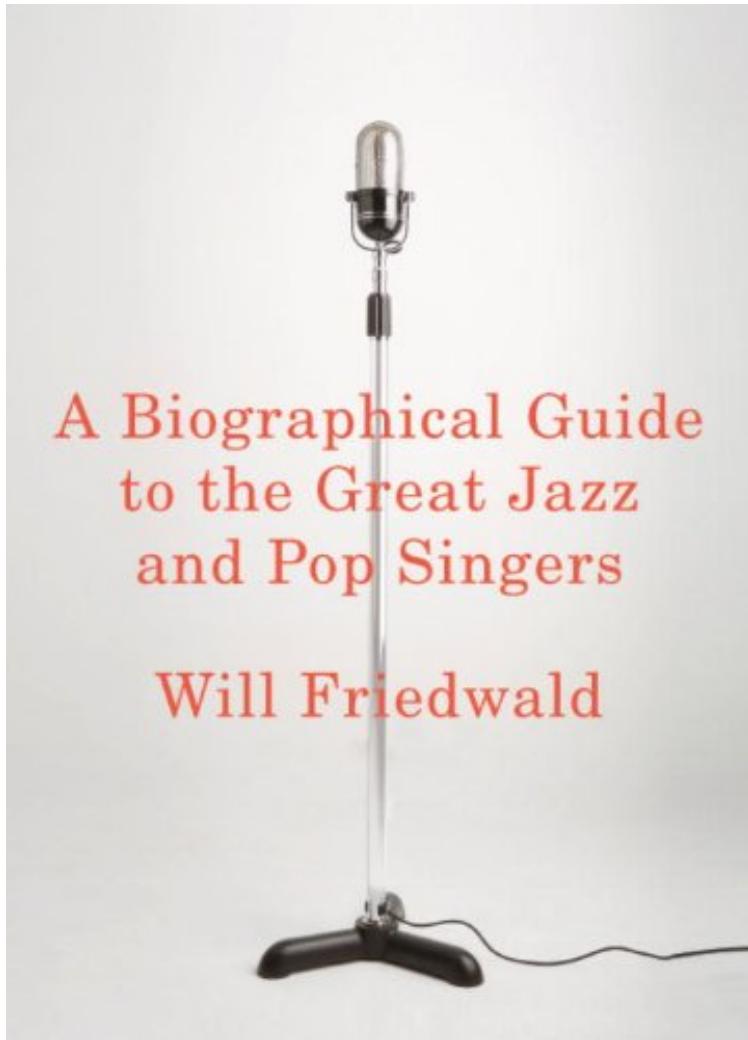


(Read now) A Biographical Guide to the Great Jazz and Pop Singers

## A Biographical Guide to the Great Jazz and Pop Singers

Will Friedwald

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**Will Friedwald : A Biographical Guide to the Great Jazz and Pop Singers** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Biographical Guide to the Great Jazz and Pop Singers:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. INDISPENSABLEBy William W. KerriganThis book is patterned after David Thomson's Biographical Dictionary of Film. The font and page layout is a dead ringer for the Thomson book. This proves to be a perfect model for Friedwald, a jazz journalist, and author of numerous liner notes for cds. He excels at the short essay. Whereas his 1990 book covering much the same ground, Jazz Singing, suffered from serious organization problems, here we are given focussed entries on jazz and pop singers from Jolson and Gene Austin to Peter Cincotti and Ann Callaway. In general, Friedwald's opinions have mellowed somewhat, and are presented in a more balanced, less autocratic manner. He still champions (and for heaven's sake, why not?) Louis Armstrong, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Mel Torme, Doris Day, Nat King Cole, Rosemary Clooney, and Tony Bennett, but without the

abrasive denigration of rival singers and differently minded pundits that marked his earlier work. He has also found room in his heart for artists such as Buddy Greco and Barbara Lea, mentioned only in passing in *Jazz Singing*, and even Bob Dylan, the subject of a loving entry toward the end of the book. As Friedwald notes, he is probably among the few people around who have been listening to Mel Torme for forty years and Bob Dylan for a mere five. Though light on the biography, like Thomson before him, the entries contain usefully detailed accounts of the performing and recording careers of well over 200 singers. The book is chock full of invitations to listening pleasure. Friedwald is bound to create music collectors, or reinspire established collectors. His luscious descriptions of rare items from the catalogues of Tony Bennett, Lee Wiley, and Doris Day, to name but a few, will kick off some interesting and probably costly treasure hunts. Even if Friedwald only convinces you to get a couple of readily available cds, he will have improved your ear--and one good thing leads to another.

**A Biographical Guide to the Great Jazz and Pop Singers** opens up the history of American popular music in a concise and yet engaging fashion. If you only have time for one book on the subject, this is the indispensable one. Not cheap, but worth every penny. It is to be hoped that the book, again like Thomson's, will be periodically updated. I am already wondering what Friedwald thinks of the new Doris Day release, *My Heart*.  
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. **A Monumental and Delightful Work**  
By Robert Campus

Will Friedwald's Encyclopedia is beyond belief. This book is filled with facts and information on each of the singers, yet is humorous and insightful. I can't begin to grasp the hours Mr. Friedwald spent on research on the biographies of each subject, and the hours spent listening to the musical output of each subject. It is an Encyclopedia that can be read as one would a novel, full of humor and "inside" puns and jokes that will delight the jazz and pop music lover. (Full disclosure: I have never met Mr. Friedwald, but have seen him at many Jazz venues here in New York. It seems that he goes out as much for pleasure as he does for his business of writing). I am reading this book with joy. I am only up to the D's, (Matt Dennis) and I just can't put it down. My leisure reading has been set aside as I devour this book. I delight in his humor, his turn of phrase, and the research in each biography. One would think in a work this comprehensive that he had countless contributors, but this work is filled with his personal feelings and personal opinions, all provocative. I have read Mr. Friedwald's book on Frank Sinatra's music and recording, which is the best on the subject, as well as his many CD liner notes. His extensive liner notes on the Mosaic Records' reissue of Mildred Bailey's music is exemplary. The book is over 800 pages in length, in small font. If the font was "normal" this would be a two volume work. All fans of the music must buy this book. If you do I know you will get as much pleasure as I have. (I recently bought it as a birthday gift for a friend and he loves it and raves about it as much as I have).  
Buy This Book.  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One of the best books on popular music written  
By Ian A. Dodds

For anyone who doesn't just enjoy popular music, but who likes to know how we came to be listening to the music we have now, this book is a must. Will Friedwald has extensively researched jazz and popular music singers of the 20th century (USA) and produced a book that is intelligently written and extensive. Of course, in a volume such as this, there will always be singers who a reader might believe should have been included, but saying that does not in any way reduce the value of this work. Considering that Mr. Friedwald was not alive when many of these singers made their names his research must have been a massive learning experience for him and he has put the results of his work on the page without undue criticism. He has written about each artist from the viewpoint of the times in which they lived an analised (successfully) how they achieved their popularity. It is a wonderful reference work but is also a great read!

Will Friedwald's illuminating, opinionated essays—provocative, funny, and personal—on the lives and careers of more than three hundred singers anatomize the work of the most important jazz and popular performers of the twentieth century. From giants like Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, and Judy Garland to lesser-known artists like Jeri Southern and Joe Mooney, they have created a body of work that continues to please and inspire. Here is the most extensive biographical and critical survey of these singers ever written, as well as an essential guide to the Great American Songbook and those who shaped the way it has been sung. The music crosses from jazz to pop and back again, from the songs of Irving Berlin and W. C. Handy through Stephen Sondheim and beyond, bringing together straightforward jazz and pop singers (Billie Holiday, Perry Como); hybrid artists who moved among genres and combined them (Peggy Lee, Mel Torme); the leading men and women of Broadway and Hollywood (Ethel Merman, Al Jolson); yesterday's vaudeville and radio stars (Sophie Tucker, Eddie Cantor); and today's cabaret artists and hit-makers (Diana Krall, Michael Bublé). Friedwald has also written extended pieces on the most representative artists of five significant genres that lie outside the songbook: Bessie Smith (blues), Mahalia Jackson (gospel), Hank Williams (country and western), Elvis Presley (rock 'n' roll), and Bob Dylan (folk-rock). Friedwald reconsiders the personal stories and professional successes and failures of all these artists, their songs, and their performances, appraising both the singers and their music by balancing his opinions with those of fellow musicians, listeners, and critics. This magisterial reference book—ten years in the making—will delight and inform anyone with a passion for the iconic music of America, which continues to

resonate throughout our popular culture. From the Hardcover edition.