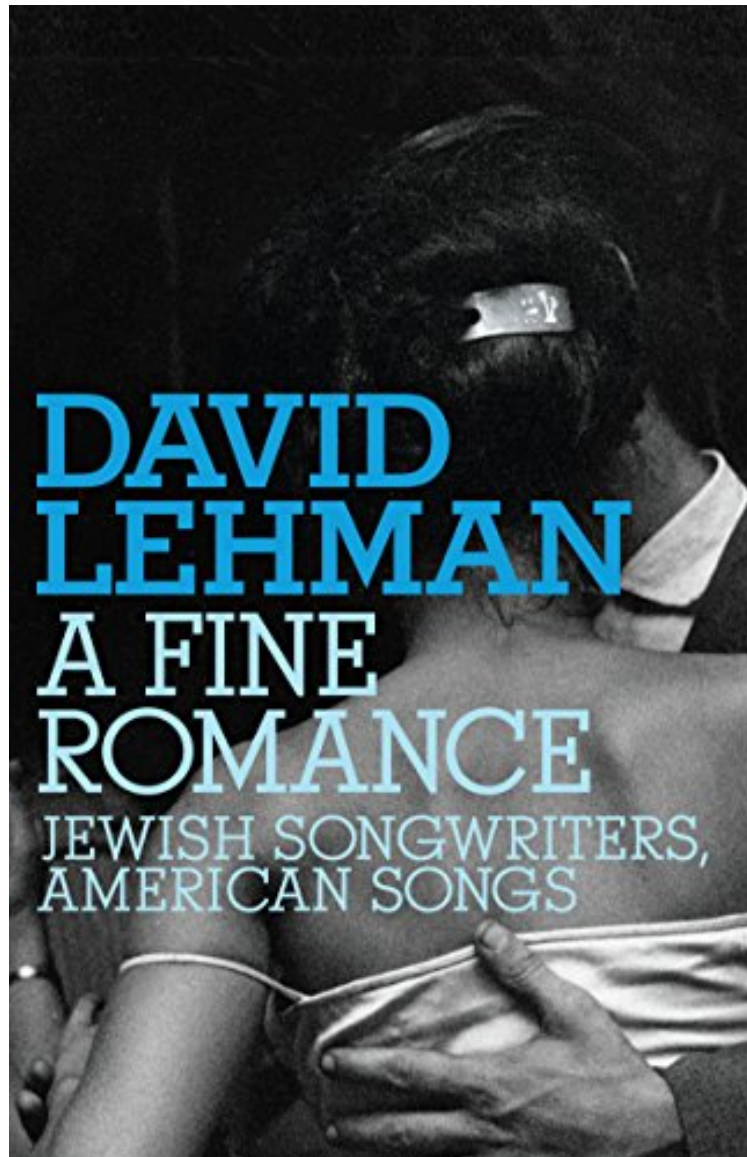



(Download) A Fine Romance: Jewish Songwriters, American Songs (Jewish Encounters Series)

A Fine Romance: Jewish Songwriters, American Songs (Jewish Encounters Series)

David Lehman

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David Lehman : A Fine Romance: Jewish Songwriters, American Songs (Jewish Encounters Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Fine Romance: Jewish Songwriters, American Songs (Jewish Encounters Series):

19 of 19 people found the following review helpful. A Remarkable Story. A Remarkable Book. By Lawrence J. Epstein In this very well-written, humorous, and affectionate homage to the American Songbook, David Lehman hears

the Jewish sounds in much of America's greatest popular music. All the great characters are here--Kern, the Gershwins, Berlin, Arlen, and so many others. I found the story of Larry Hart to be especially moving. Lehman seeks their appeal by examining the story of his own interest in the music, bringing us along by using enthusiasm and knowledge. I knew the book was so good because at the end I wanted to go hear the music. Indeed, the book's charms work so well you can hear the strains of some of the great songs in the rhythm of Lehman's extraordinary prose. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent history By Harvey A. Kaplan Wonderful insightful and well written 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. How a Jewish tune became part of a popular song By Barbara L. Favia The author points out his observations regarding the melodies of the songs which are familiar to all of us the minor chords suggestive of yiddish runs of ascending notes. It is a fascinating book for all music lovers of songs of the golden age by our favorite songwriters.

In *A Fine Romance*, David Lehman looks at the formation of the American songbook—the timeless numbers that became jazz standards, iconic love songs, and sound tracks to famous movies—and explores the extraordinary fact that this songbook was written almost exclusively by Jews. An acclaimed poet, editor, and cultural critic, David Lehman hears America singing—with a Yiddish accent. He guides us through America in the golden age of song, when “Embraceable You,” “White Christmas,” “Easter Parade,” “Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered,” “Can’t Help Lovin’ That Man,” “My Romance,” “Cheek to Cheek,” “Stormy Weather,” and countless others became nothing less than the American sound track. The stories behind these songs, the shows from which many of them came, and the shows from which many of them came, and the composers and lyricists who wrote them give voice to a specifically American saga of love, longing, assimilation, and transformation. Lehman’s analytical skills, wit, and exuberance infuse this book with an energy and a tone like no other: at once sharply observant, personally searching, and attuned to the songs that all of us love. He helps us understand how natural it should be that Wizard of Oz composer Harold Arlen was the son of a cantor who incorporated “Over the Rainbow” into his Sabbath liturgy, and why Cole Porter—the rare non-Jew in this pantheon of musicians who wrote these classic songs shaped America even as America was shaping them. (Part of the Jewish Encounter series)

From Publishers Weekly As part of the publisher's ongoing Jewish Encounters series, Lehman, poet, anthologist (*The Oxford Book of American Poetry*) and critic (*The Last Avant-Garde*), melds dreamy personal reflections with impressive archival excavation for a thorough look at the popular early-20th-century songwriters and what made their work quintessentially Jewish. Delving into the iconic hits of Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, the Gershwins, Harold Arlen, Larry Hart, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, among selective others, Lehman ponders how these Ashkenazi Jews, mostly raised speaking Yiddish in New York as cantors' sons, melded their particular wit, melancholy and sophistication with the rhythmic richness of African-American music—a blending of blues and jazz. In their many beloved seminal hits—e.g., Berlin's *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (1911), George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (1923), Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'* (1943)—these sons (Dorothy Fields being the female lyricist exception) of refugees from anti-Semitic rumblings in Europe were conducting a passionate romance with America, Lehman maintains. The author himself grew up in the Inwood section of New York City, under the warm spell of these songs; by the time he graduated from Stuyvesant High School and attended Columbia, where many of these songwriters had met, rock and roll was supplanting that old-time magic. Digressive, nostalgic and deeply moving, Lehman achieves a fine, lasting tribute to the American songbook. (Oct.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Digressive, nostalgic and deeply moving, Lehman achieves a fine, lasting tribute to the American songbook." —Publishers Weekly "David Lehman's *A Fine Romance* wittily explores the enormous contribution of Jewish writers and composers to the American musical scene. . . . Lehman finds Jewish influence, or what he calls 'a plaintive undertow,' even in such unlikely upbeat anthems as Gershwin's 'Love Walked In.' His love-struck history is itself a major entertainment." —John Ashbery, author of *Three Poems* "David Lehman's *A Fine Romance* is a spirited account and reminiscence of a time when Jewish plaintiveness and wit combined with Negro blues to give our American culture its way of singing. Everyone who hums the great old tunes will delight in this book and its wondrous lore." —Richard Wilbur, author of *Things of This World* "With brio and encyclopedic knowledge, David Lehman has penned a lovely valentine to the American songbook. Along the way, hard questions are asked, contradictions confronted and shrewd insights offered. The result is pure delight." —Phillip Lopate, author of *Two Marriages* "A wonderfully compelling and poetic analysis that re-envision[s] the American songbook." —Craig Morgan Teicher, *Publisher's Weekly* "What a lovely book this is . . . Lehman is a fine writer, in full command of his subject." —writerscast.com "A *Fine Romance* is thoroughly enjoyable, right down to the short, witty, and informative chronology at the end of the book. Whether one is familiar with this music and wants to rekindle its romance, or unfamiliar and wants to ignite such a passion, this book is just the ticket." —Rain Taxi of Books "Though there's lots of learning here, there's no heavy-handedness: this is a chrestomathy of loved tunes and musical moments,

evoked casually, but with wide authority and tact . . . song is for pleasure after all, if I can quote some non-Jewish jazz royalty in Duke Ellington, "it doesn't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing." Lehman has that swing. —Tikkun About the Author DAVID LEHMAN is the editor of The Oxford Book of American Poetry, the series editor of The Best American Poetry, and the author of seven books of poems, most recently When a Woman Loves a Man. He lives in New York City.