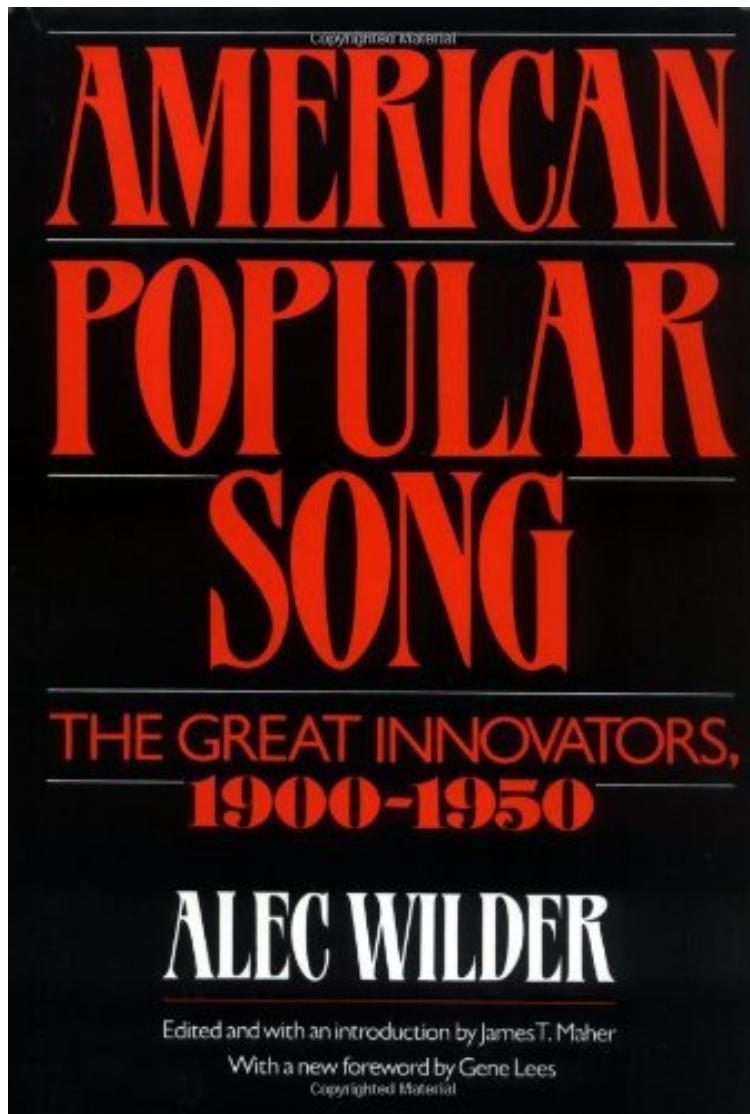


American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900-1950

Alec Wilder

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When Alec Wilder's *American Popular Song* first appeared, it was almost universally hailed--from *The New York Times* to *The New Yorker* to *Down Beat*--as the definitive account of the classic era of American popular music. It has since become the standard work of the great songwriters who dominated popular music in the United States for half a century. Now Wilder's classic is available again, with a new introduction by Gene Lees. Uniquely analytical yet engagingly informal, *American Popular Song* focuses on the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic qualities that distinguish American popular music and have made it an authentic art form. Wilder traces the roots of the American style to the ragtime music of the 1890s, shows how it was incorporated into mainstream popular music after 1900, and then surveys the careers of every major songwriter from World War I to 1950. Wilder devotes separate chapters to such greats as Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter, and Harold Arlen. Illustrated with over seven hundred musical examples, Wilder's sensitive analyses of the most distinctive, creative, and original songs of this period reveal unexpected beauties in songs long forgotten and delightful subtleties in many familiar standards. The result is a definitive treatment of a strangely unsung and uniquely American art.

"Remains today the best single examination of its subject." --The Washington Post Book World "Provocative, informative, opinionated, and never dull" --Down Beat "Wonderful" --The New York Times "A joy to anyone who really cares about American popular music....An invaluable reference" --Max Morath "A rewarding book, endowed with grace and wit" --Milton Babbitt "Invaluable and pioneering" --Whitney Balliett, *The New Yorker* "A singular book" --Studs Terkel From the Back Cover "The first serious and most valuable study of American popular music, the blood and bone of so much glorious jazz. The book is provocative, informative, opinionated, never dull." -Down Beat About the Author Alec Wilder was the composer of such famous songs as "I'll Be Around," "It's So Peaceful in the Country," and "While We're Young," as well as theater and film scores and chamber music for every instrument in the orchestra.