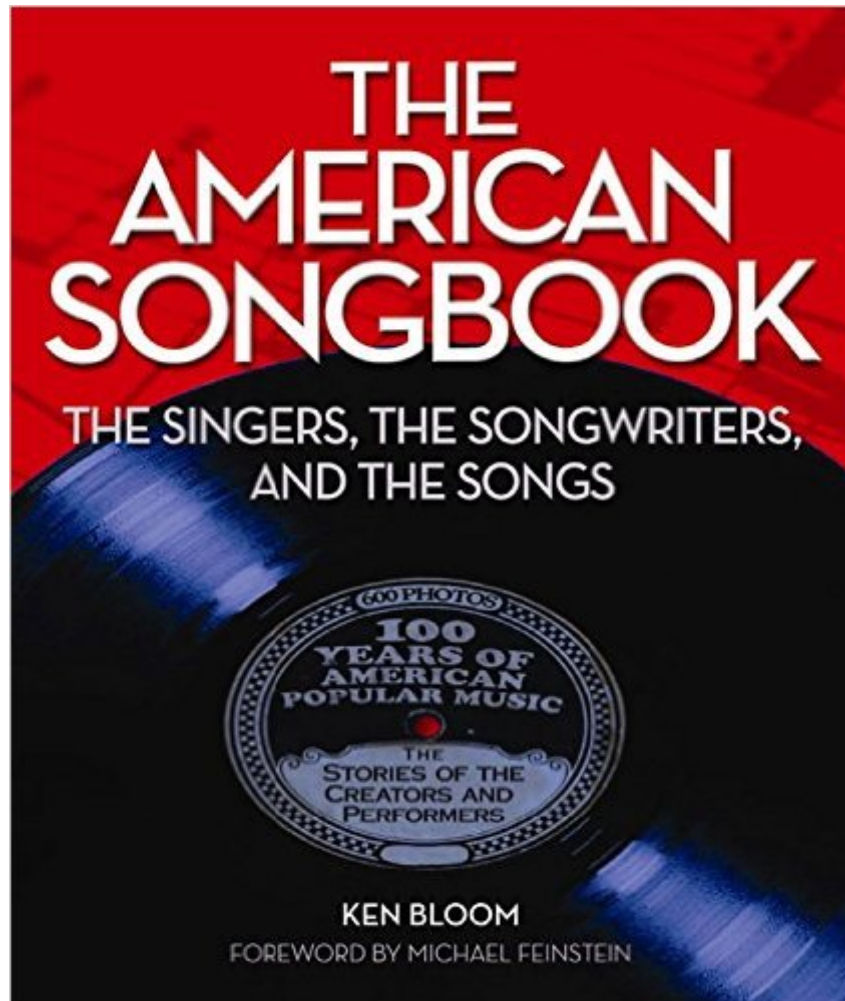


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# The American Songbook: The Singers, Songwriters & The Songs



## Synopsis

Presented in the striking format of Ken Bloom's successful Broadway Musicals, this rich visual history of popular song covers all of the prominent figures behind the music, in front of the bandstand, and on top of the piano. "The Singers" includes Louis Armstrong, Tony Bennett, Barbara Cook, Bing Crosby, Rosemary Clooney, Ella Fitzgerald, and dozens more; "The Songwriters" features Harold Arlen, Hoagy Carmichael, Dorothy Fields, Stephen Foster, Richard Rodgers, Duke Ellington, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, and a host of others; a lively section discusses the Big Bands; and a decade-by-decade insert puts the entire history of popular music in perspective through words and pictures. Each one of the more than 200 listings in the book features the artist's personal and professional history, great songs, and important contributions, plus photos (many rare), record covers, anecdotes, quotes, and more. Sidebars and features throughout cover topics of interest—everything from Arrangers, Vocal Groups, and Keepers of the Flame to Tin Pan Alley, Parodists, and Classical Crossovers—making this the most thorough survey of its kind. Throughout, all of the great songs are discussed—literally hundreds of songs, from "Stardust" to "My Funny Valentine" to "White Christmas." Illustrated biographies, discographies, chronologies, and indices make The American Songbook a full-fledged reference as well as a pictorial feast.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When I first picked up "The American Songbook" at my local B&N it was a thrilling experience. The

photographs and layout looked great and it seemed that the ground covered was extremely generous and, at first superficial glance, the text well written. But as it turned out after the book was purchased and I was able to sit down comfortably to really read it, things turned out to be much less than desired. As usual with modern published books the editing job is simply atrocious: mis-spelled words all over the place, repeated paragraphs, inconsistent dates for events, etc. While the author does warn that his opinions are just that, his opinions, it still grates the nerves to find such opinions so thoughtless and/or uninformed: "In the 1960s (writing about music on television, page 199) production values were deployed and rock-lite tunes were featured on NBC's Hullabaloo and its ABC clone, Shindig." Actually Shindig came before Hullabaloo and with performances from the likes of The Rolling Stones, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, etc. there was certainly nothing "rock-lite" about it. What is even more annoying is the author's condescending attitude towards rock music altogether. It is not that I feel that Mr. Bloom's book should have given any special consideration to rock music. He makes it clear at the beginning that his work will deal basically with the classic American songbook. Nothing wrong with that. But why is it so often in American art criticism that in order for something to be praised, something else has to be put down? What is the need for a statement like this, "In February 1964, the U.S. was invaded once again invaded by the British... If anyone doubted that rock-and-roll was here to stay, they were horribly, horribly mistaken".

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