



The Complete Lyrics of Irving Berlin

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Gathered together in one volume for the first time: all of the incomparable song lyrics of Irving Berlin, whose career and work are the most important and all-encompassing in the history of American popular music.

Berlin came from a poor immigrant family and began his career as a singing waiter, but by the time he was nineteen he was publishing his songs and quickly found fame with "Alexander's Ragtime Band" in 1911. In the extraordinary six decades that followed, Berlin wrote one popular hit after another: "Blue Skies," "Always," "Cheek to Cheek," "White Christmas," "God Bless America," "There's No Business Like Show Business," and many, many more. He also wrote a number of the classics of musical theater's Golden Age, climaxing with *Annie Get Your Gun*. He penned three Astaire and Rogers films--*Top Hat*, *Carefree*, and *Follow the Fleet*--as well as the scores of *Holiday Inn*, *Easter Parade*, and other movies. The breadth of his accomplishments is staggering.

Berlin's entire oeuvre is here--the lyrics of more than 1,200 songs (400 of which have never before appeared in print), along with anecdotal, historical, and musicological commentary and dozens of photographs.

This beautiful volume is an invaluable contribution to the understanding and enjoyment of popular music in our time.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

With "God Bless America" sung at every public event and Irving Berlin's name on the lips of every network anchor (Berlin wrote the anthem in 1938) there's bound to be new interest in *The Complete Works of Irving Berlin*. Editors Robert Kimball and Linda Emmet focus on Berlin's lyrics, of course, but also provide brief biographical vignettes in this oversized compendium. That the master of American music wrote alternative, humorous verses to what's now his most famous song ("God bless America/ Land I enjoy/ No discussions with the Russians/ Till they stop sending arms to Hanoi") is just one of the small but fascinating revelations. *Illus.*

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From Library Journal

Kimball, editor of the other volumes in the excellent "Complete Lyrics" series, and Emmet, Irving Berlin's second daughter, provide a valuable service by compiling all of Berlin's known lyrics to more than 1200 songs 400 of which have never before been printed. Especially welcome are the inclusion of this previously unpublished material, historical notes, and interspersed quotes from Berlin himself. One can trace Berlin's growth as a poet from his earliest teenage efforts through the glory years beginning with "Alexander's Ragtime Band" in 1911 to his last known writings shortly before his centenary. Musicals, revues, and movies featuring several songs get their own chapters within the chronological framework, while others are grouped within each year in copyright date order. The book also features attractive reproductions of sheet music covers and contemporary photographs as well as an index of titles and first lines (which would have been even more useful had the editors double-listed those beginning with a or the under the main first word). This title will provide hours of nostalgic browsing or reference help and is recommended for all collections. Barry Zaslow, Miami Univ. Libs., Oxford, OH

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From [Booklist](#)

Even with three-column text display on nearly foot-square pages, this lovely book needs 500-plus pages to accommodate the extant song lyrics--some 1,250 in all--of Irving Berlin. For about 400 of these songs, no music survives, which shows that, fountain of melody though he was, Berlin was an even more prolific rhymester. Although he generally wrote a song's words first, he always had a tune in mind, and meter and line length vary in each set of words as they follow the rhythms of expressive singing. Rife with cuteness, Berlin's verses are too corny to be good poetry and, divorced from their melodies, can be pretty cloying. But often enough, a melody does well up, sometimes fully scored, thanks to the many movies and musicals featuring Berlin's handiwork. Editors Kimball and Emmet (Berlin's daughter) present the lyrics chronologically, comment when it is appropriate, and preface clutches of songs from single shows with a publicity still or two and an introduction. Original sheet-music art and period photos grace the title pages of chapters of nontheatrical songs. *Ray Olson*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Harold Cole:

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Sharon Keller:

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Ernestine Biggs:

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