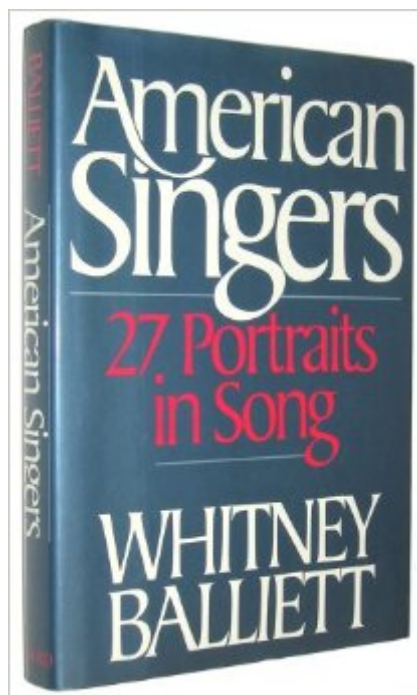


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# American Singers: Twenty-seven Portraits In Song



## Synopsis

When Whitney Balliett's *American Musicians* appeared in the Fall of 1986, the acclaim it received was universal. Leonard Feather, writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, said "no other writer now living can write with comparable grace and equal enthusiasm about everyone from Jack Teagarden and Art Tatum to Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman." And Bruce Cook in *The New Leader* called the book "the quintessential Whitney Balliett, the cream of the cream, a collection that leaves no doubt about his strength." That book gathered together all of Balliett's profiles of jazz instrumentalists. Here, in the revised edition of *American Singers*, Balliett has added thirteen new biographical profiles to double the size of the book and provide the perfect complement to *American Musicians*. It now contains all the profiles on singers that Balliett has written for *The New Yorker*. Alongside original chapters on such great vocalists as Ray Charles, Tony Bennett, Joe Turner and Alberta Hunter, Balliett has added fresh portraits of Mel Tormé, Julius La Rosa, George Shearing, and Peggy Lee. To his study of four masters of the cabaret (Hugh Shannon, Mabel Mercer, Bobby Short, and Blossom Dearie) he has joined a fifth, Julie Wilson. There are new chapters on singer-pianists Cleo Brown and Nellie Lutcher, as well as on Carol Sloane, Betty Carter, and David Frishberg. Perhaps most notable is his extended profile of Alec Wilder, one of America's most lyrical and moving songwriters and composers. In the three decades that he has written for *The New Yorker*, Whitney Balliett has earned the reputation as America's foremost jazz critic. The late Philip Larkin described him as a "writer who brings jazz journalism to the verge of poetry," and Gene Lees called him "one of the most graceful essayists in the English language on any subject." He has an unsurpassed ability to convey in words the sound of a singer's voice, and he makes readers feel, as one observer put it, that they are "sitting with Balliett and his subject and listening in."

## Book Information

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; Subsequent edition (October 6, 1988)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195046102

ISBN-13: 978-0195046106

Product Dimensions: 6.5 x 1 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #761,229 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #216 in [Books > Arts &](#)

Photography > Music > Biographies > Jazz #1000 inÂ Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Jazz #1318 inÂ Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Reference

## Customer Reviews

For the lover of American song and its interpreters, this superb volume is well worth hunting out. Balliett writes in a wonderfully poetic style that fully encapsulates the style and sound of each artist. The range of singers he explores is superb - those who love the art of cabaret will relish his stunning chapters on Mabel Mercer, Bobby Short, Julie Wilson; he also devotes space to such fine interpreters as Carol Sloane, Teddi King and Margaret Whiting. Balliett includes conversations with the singers alongside his own unique analysis and commentary. All in all, a completely indispensable book, the finest exploration of the art of singer popular song available.

American Singers: Twenty-seven Portraits in Song Whitney Balliett can write. you hear the music that he writes about....you meet many of the greats. you hear them tell their stories...in their words. a wonderful book. a delightfull educating book...as are all of mr ballietts books.READ THEM ALL.

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