



The Ziegfeld Follies: A History in Song

Ann Ommen van der Merwe

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The Ziegfeld Follies: A History in Song presents an account of the Follies through the musical productions contained in the show. Accessing primary sources such as magazines and extant programs, Ann Ommen van der Merwe has carefully researched the Follies, reconstructing the songs, dances, and content of each annual production from 1907 to 1931, providing detailed descriptions of song performances. In so doing, the book demonstrates the important role of song in facilitating the comedy and spectacle for which the Follies are better known.

Ommen van der Merwe takes a broad, chronological approach to the material, addressing such issues as musical style, lyrics, and staging of individual songs. In the process, she identifies the historical trajectory of the Ziegfeld Follies, delineating periods within its history like the development of the production values Ziegfeld was famous for, the success of his spectacles, his adaptation to changing times, and his legacy. She also considers the cultural and performance history of the Follies and its reflection of the society in which it developed. An appendix lists the composer, lyricist, publisher, and performer of each Follies song, as well as a library collection or archive where a copy may be found. The book also includes a collection of photographs, a select discography, bibliography, and two indexes, by song title and general subject.

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