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[Review of] Hit Songs, 1900-1955: American Popular Music of the Pre-rock Era

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Tyler, Don. **Hit songs, 1900-1955: American popular music of the pre-rock era.** McFarland, 2007. 546p bibl index afp ISBN 9780786429462 pbk, \$55.00

Tyler (emer., Central Florida Community College, Ocala) here revises and expands his *Hit Parade: An Encyclopedia of the Jazz, Depression, Swing, and Sing Eras* (1985), adding coverage of the 20th century's first two decades. Chronologically arranged, the 1,300 entries include composers, song histories, lyrics summaries and excerpts, performers of the songs throughout the century, and URLs to online lyrics, sheet music, and audio files. An additional section contains some 2,000 brief biographies of performers, lyricists, and composers. Indexing is by song title and name. Roger Kinkle's *The Complete Encyclopedia of Popular Music and Jazz, 1900-1950* (CH, Apr'75) and *Leading Musical Performers (Popular Music and Jazz) 1900-1950* (CH, Oct'98, 36-0687) cover 28,000 songs with no commentary but 2,150 biographies. Barbara Cohen-Stratynier's *Popular Music, 1900-1919* (1988) and *Popular Music, 1920-1979*, edited by Nat Shapiro and Bruce Pollock (1985), cover even more songs but include little description and no biographies. Tyler focuses on songs (not recordings) that have stood the test of time; many of his listings, particularly those from early in the century, are unique. Additional indexes (e.g., first lines) would be helpful, and an online version would make the lengthy URLs easier to use. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Lower-level undergraduates and above; general readers.

--R. A. Aken, University of Kentucky

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