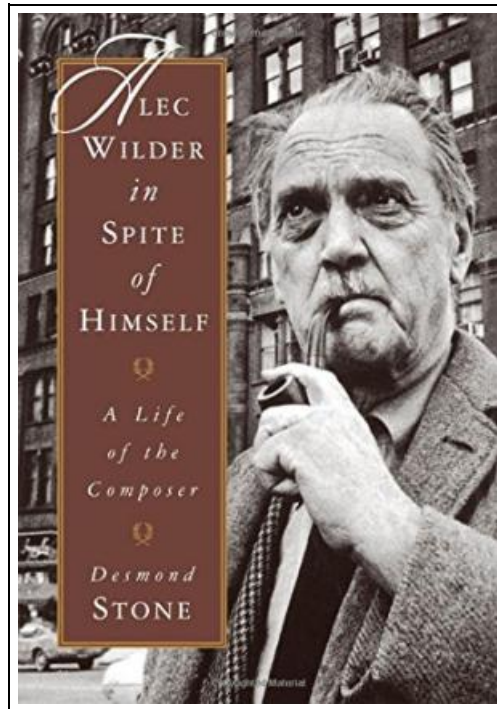


Alec Wilder in Spite of Himself: A Life of the Composer



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ALEC WILDER IN SPITE OF HIMSELF: A LIFE OF THE COMPOSER

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Oxford University Press. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Hardcover. 280 pages. Dimensions: 9.6in. x 6.5in. x 1.1in. Alec Wilder wrote songs and lyrics of unsurpassed beauty and originality, and his work won the respect and admiration of such important musical figures as Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, Mitch Miller, Gunther Schuller, and many others. Yet Wilder seemed almost to court obscurity. Both in the music he composed and in the way he lived his life, Wilder valued the unique and eccentric over the established and easily acceptable. And though he authored the definitive American Popular Song--which critics praised as singular (Studs Terkel), pioneering (Whitney Balliett), rewarding (Milton Babbitt), and a joy to anyone who really cares about American popular music (Max Morath)--his own contribution to that music has remained, until now, too little known and far too little appreciated. Desmond Stone's engaging and lively biography brings Alec Wilder's life and music into the spotlight where it belongs. Ranging from Wilder's childhood in Rochester, New York, to his rise as a major writer of popular songs in the 1940s, to his relationships with Frank Sinatra and the cabaret singer Mabel Mercer, Stone gives us rich insight into the creative process and profound influence of this highly unorthodox composer. We see the impulses and musical concerns that led to such standards as *Ill Be Around* and *Its So Peaceful in the Country*. We also get an inside view of how he wrote his monumental *American Popular Song*, which remains the most significant study of America's great songwriters. More important, we get a vivid sense of a haunting, incorruptible melodist whose unique personality was mirrored in his music. Man and composer dared to be different. When Wilder in the late 1930s wrote his famous *Octets*, the music world did not know what to make of these...

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