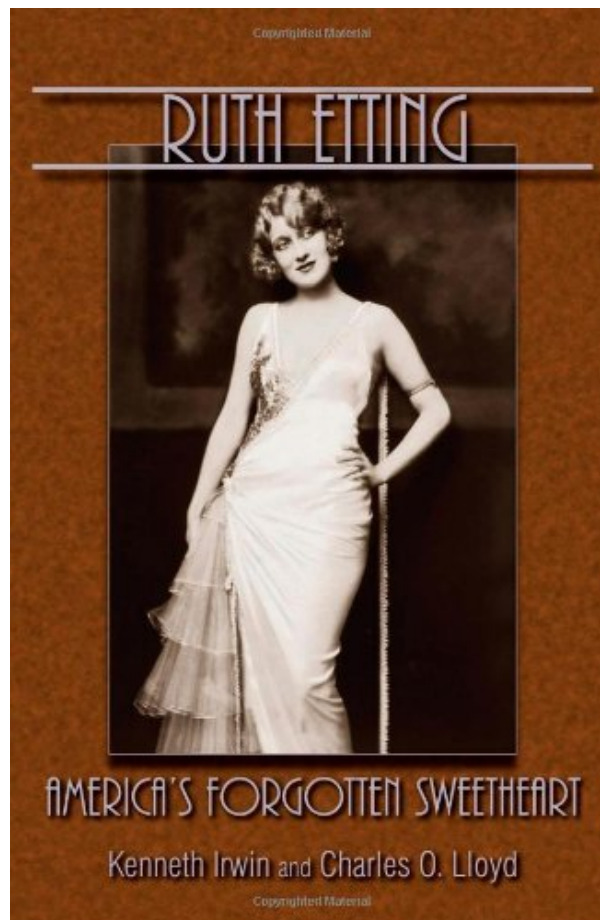


**RUTH ETTING: AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN  
SWEETHEART BY KENNETH IRWIN,  
CHARLES O. LLOYD**



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# RUTH ETTING



## AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN SWEETHEART

Kenneth Irwin and Charles O. Lloyd

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**Ruth Etting: America's Forgotten Sweetheart By Kenneth Irwin, Charles O. Lloyd.** In undergoing this life, lots of individuals consistently aim to do and also obtain the most effective. New knowledge, experience, lesson, and every little thing that can enhance the life will be done. However, lots of people occasionally feel perplexed to obtain those things. Really feeling the minimal of encounter and also sources to be better is one of the lacks to own. Nonetheless, there is a quite easy thing that can be done. This is just what your educator constantly manoeuvres you to do this one. Yeah, reading is the answer. Reviewing a book as this Ruth Etting: America's Forgotten Sweetheart By Kenneth Irwin, Charles O. Lloyd and other recommendations could improve your life top quality. Exactly how can it be?

## About the Author

Kenneth Irwin is a computer specialist who has spent more than 15 years researching the life and career of Ruth Etting. His writings include articles on Etting and the liner notes for the CD Ruth Etting: Glorifier of American Song (1997).

Charles O. Lloyd is professor emeritus at Marshall University where he is still an adjunct. He has published articles on the ancient Greek polis, Euripides, Vergil, and the teaching of writing, and edited the national online Latin pedagogical journal, CPL Online.

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# **RUTH ETTING: AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN SWEETHEART BY KENNETH IRWIN, CHARLES O. LLOYD PDF**

Ruth Etting (1897-1978) was among the most important performers of the early 20th century. Her influence extends from the Broadway stage to radio and film, and her successes included more than 60 popular recordings, such as her 1928 rendition of "Love Me or Leave Me," which was inducted in the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2005. Although her story was brought to the screen in the classic 1955 film of the same title with Doris Day and James Cagney, no serious treatment of her life has been written until now. In *Ruth Etting: America's Forgotten Sweetheart*, authors Kenneth Irwin and Charles O. Lloyd provide the first full-length biography of this ground-breaking artist.

This book recounts Etting's early years as a radio performer who quickly attained national celebrity, her recording career as "Sweetheart of Columbia Records," and her innovative work in film. The authors detail Etting's unhappy marriage to her husband manager, Martin (Moe "The Gimp") Snyder, her second marriage to pianist arranger Myrl Alderman, and her Colorado Springs retirement. The authors also examine Etting's place in the history of American entertainment, specifically her trend-setting vocal style and her pioneering work in phonograph recordings and radio, as well as her enormous popularity throughout the 1930s. The most in-depth treatment of this artist's life and career, *Ruth Etting: America's Forgotten Sweetheart* includes anecdotes, previously unavailable photos, and both a discography and filmography.

Here is a link to the author's website

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## Most helpful customer reviews

16 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Riveting Narrative, Extensively Footnoted--With Absurd Errors

By A. W. Senior

I appreciate that the authors of this tome are giving Ruth Etting her due as a vocalist and her day in the sun as a subject of a biography. Her best recordings are the sweet and clear work of a disciplined talent, with stellar accompaniments. She was a shrewd businesswoman who never succumbed to the same dissipations as her peers Lee Morse, Helen Morgan, and Lee Wiley. Her records deserve to live on and be played often despite some of the melodrama and dated mannerisms of her approach.

The authors have written a riveting narrative of her personal struggles with flawed men, most notably Martin "Moe the Gimp" Snyder. Their account of the disintegration of their relationship and its aftermath is commended to the reader's attention. Professors Irwin and Lloyd have done a great deal of painstaking research into the show business world of the 1920s and 1930s, and have supplied ample footnotes at the end of each chapter.

My problem is with the absurd errors that have crept into this rather expensive volume. One can footnote research where tangible documents are used, but one tends not to footnote an unchallenged assumption--and the mental armor of academia can prevent essential facts from entering into one's consciousness. Neither of the authors seems to have ever held a 78 RPM recording in their hands, nor do they evidence the most basic knowledge of the recording business or the recording technology of the early 20th century.

For example, they have Ruth making a test recording for RCA in 1924. The test was, of course, for the Victor Talking Machine Company. Victor and RCA did not merge until the end of the decade, and RCA Victor did not appear as the label brand until the late 1940s. To compound the absurdity, they make the assumption that she made a cylinder recording--and that cylinders were what Victrolas played.

(Yes, Edison made cylinders into the later 1920s--coextensive with its Diamond Discs. But disc records had been in regular production since the mid-1890s.)

At the end of the book the discography section (borrowed from Brian Rust's Complete Entertainment Discography) mentions the catalogue numbers as being "vinyl" numbers--except that all the 78s of the Ruth Etting era were shellac. They assume "Vic" is short for "Vocalion" (ostensibly because they didn't see "RCA").

Other blind spots and assumptions rankle as well. Eddie Lang, the brilliant guitarist who accompanied Etting on so many of her classic sides, rates only three brief mentions. How did Lang's death at age 30 affect her? We are never told. And at the end the authors maintain that Etting's legacy lives on while vocalists such as Helen Kane and Annette Hanshaw have been forgotten.

If anything, Annette Hanshaw has had an incredible surge in popularity of late, owing to Nina Paley's excellent *Sita Sings The Blues*. Hanshaw had a more natural style than Etting, and her recordings sound less dated. There's no need to make invidious comparisons here--both were excellent. But the machinations of Martin Snyder surely kept the equally talented Hanshaw on Columbia's subsidiary labels so his Ruth could have the spotlight on Columbia itself.

This book was written with a due reverence of Ruth Etting as a performer, and is worthy as an account of her life. I recommend it with this reservation: the wise reader should not take it as authoritative on anything

beyond the documented life of Ruth Etting.

10 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent biography!

By Caroline Perkins

Ruth Etting was a small town girl from a prosperous family, who left Nebraska in the late teens of last century and went to Chicago to make first a living and then a name for herself in the entertainment industry. She entered art school and began working and designing in a dress shop, but reasonably quickly she found work in one of Chicago's music gardens, and she rose, in due time, from the chorus to solo performance. From Chicago she went to New York, to the magnificent Ziegfeld follies. She added radio and short-subject films to her repertoire, and she became a star. She had her own radio show, toured the country, and eventually went to Hollywood, where she appeared in feature films. In 1938, at the age of 41, she retired for reasons that I will not explain here, except to say that reading that particular chapter is probably the first time a biography, any biography, has had me sitting on the edge of my seat.

The biography under consideration is *Ruth Etting: America's Forgotten Sweetheart* by Kenneth Irwin and Charles Lloyd, published by Scarecrow Press. It is the first complete biography of this star of the early 20th century, and it draws on Etting's own documents, including her scrapbooks, interviews with surviving family members, newspaper reports and reviews, and court transcripts. The book will appeal to music aficionados and general audiences alike. For the former, the authors detail in exquisite detail each of her live and recorded performances, sometimes including the costume she wore, more often discussing the style and cadence of her singing. Additionally, there are a complete discography and filmography.

For the general reader, the biography is enormously accessible. I read biographies of individuals I know and about whom I am curious; and generally, I find that, even with my interest, reading the biography can be a slog. I knew very little about Ruth Etting when I opened the book, yet I found it difficult to put the book down. The introduction begins with Chicago's notorious St. Valentine's Day Massacre in February, 1929 and extends to the world-altering events of that year, finally to locate Ruth Etting, now in New York, in that context. What a contrast it is to the last years of her life, spent in quiet retirement in Colorado Springs. The pages in between are exceptionally readable. Irwin and Lloyd imbue the details of her life and career with the contexts in which they were enacted, and their book is as much a sociological study of early musical theatre as it is the story of one of its stars. Thus we read about exactly what it takes to stage a production in one of Chicago's musical gardens or on the greatest stage in New York, how radio worked in the early days, and how short subjects were filmed on Long island and in New York before Hollywood became the center of the film industry. All of this comes to us in an exceptionally pleasant and easy style, almost, I dare say, akin to Etting's own music.

To those of us interested in the early 20th century, particularly popular culture, will find this book a great addition our knowledge. To anyone interested in Ruth Etting, whose signature songs were "Love Me or Leave Me," and "Shine On, Harvest Moon," this book is invaluable. She defined an era as much as it defined her. Thanks to this groundbreaking biography, she will be forgotten no more.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

ruth etting biography

By Robert Collier

enjoyed reading about the life of ruth etting,my favorite songstress.i especially enjoyed the biography of her early years and family background and also her rise to stardom.i found the last chapter of her life describing her loss of fame and fortune somewhat depressing,and suprisingly detailed. the very thorough discography and filmography of her life's work was a welcome addition to the biography.

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