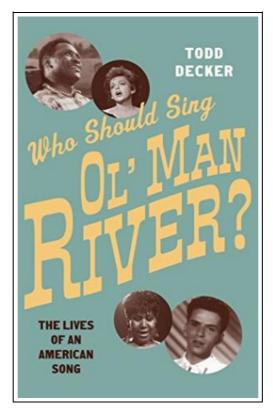
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(Jasen Roberts)

WHO SHOULD SING OL MAN RIVER?: THE LIVES OF AN AMERICAN SONG (HARDBACK)



Oxford University Press Inc, United States, 2015. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. In the mid 1920s, Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II wrote a song called OI Man River that combined the seriousness of a Negro spiritual with the crowd-pleasing power of a Broadway anthem. Inspired, according to Kern, by the voice of the African American singer Paul Robeson, OI Man River went on to great success in the Broadway musical Show Boat and became a signature song for Robeson, who turned the tune towards his own goals as an activist. But the story of OI Man River goes deeper than the curiosity of a song recorded by so many in so many different ways. For at the heart of Oscar Hammerstein s lyric is a clear-eyed vision of the black experience in American history. Anyone-black or white-who thought they should sing OI Man River has had to deal with the charged racial content of the song. Who Should Sing OI Man River ? traces this aspect of OI Man River s course through American history, an at-times high-stakes journey where the African American struggle for dignity and equality came down to the lyrics of a popular song. However beyond Robeson and Show Boat, OI Man River also had a long and rich life in the world of popular music. An astonishing variety of singers and musicians from across the musical spectrum-from pop to jazz, opera to doo wop, rhythm and blues to gospel to reggae-all chose to perform or record it. Who Should Sing OI Man River ?: The Lives of an American Song traces out the performance history of this remarkable song by listening closely to over two hundred recorded and filmed versions dating from the song s debut in 1927 to the present....



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