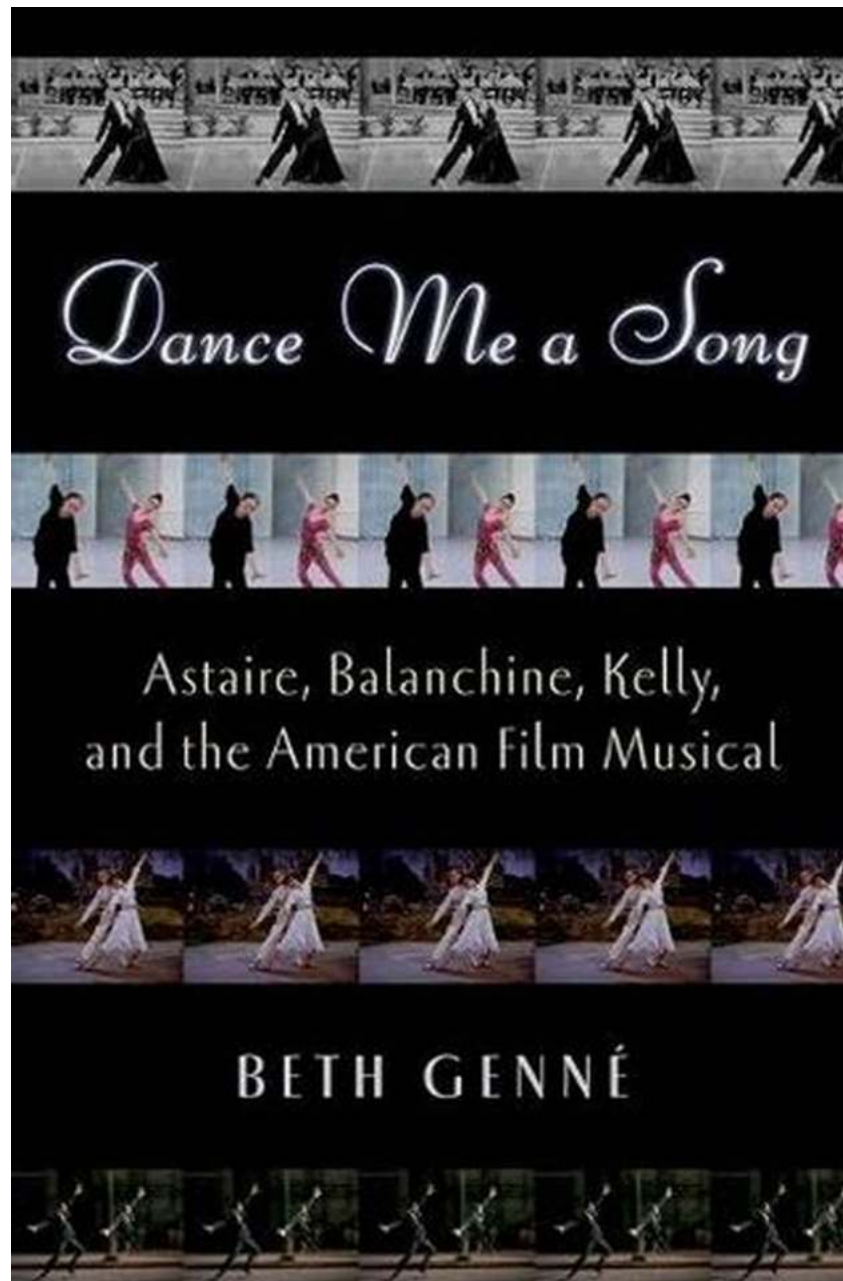


# Astaire, Balanchine, Kelly and the American Film Musical



When it comes to the American film musical, three names have become synonymous with grace, talent, and innovation: Fred Astaire, George Balanchine, and Gene Kelly. These iconic figures shaped the genre through their incredible

dance skills, choreographic brilliance, and influential contributions to the world of entertainment.

## Fred Astaire: The Smooth and Effortless Dancer

Fred Astaire revolutionized the way dance was perceived in American films. With his impeccable footwork, elegant style, and charming personality, Astaire became an icon of grace and sophistication. His famous collaboration with Ginger Rogers in a series of classic musicals such as "Top Hat" and "Swing Time" brought a new level of romance and elegance to the silver screen.



### Dance Me a Song: Astaire, Balanchine, Kelly, and the American Film Musical

by Robert Louis Stevenson (1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 33013 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 371 pages
Lending	: Enabled



Astaire's uniqueness lay in his ability to seamlessly merge tap, ballroom, and jazz dance styles. His routines were intricate yet effortless, leaving audiences in awe of his talent. Through his innovative choreography, Astaire pushed the boundaries of what was considered possible in dance, inspiring countless performers and choreographers that followed.

## George Balanchine: The Ballet Mastermind

George Balanchine, a Russian-born choreographer, made an indelible mark on the American film musical through his balletic influence. Balanchine brought his expertise in classical ballet to Hollywood and fused it with popular dance styles, creating a unique blend that appealed to a wide audience.

His work in films like "On Your Toes" and "The Goldwyn Follies" showcased the beauty and precision of ballet technique, elevating the quality of dance numbers in musical films. Balanchine's choreography introduced innovative movements and formations, adding an artistic element to the genre. His collaborations with composers such as George Gershwin and Richard Rodgers resulted in iconic dance sequences that showcased the seamless integration of music and movement.

### **Gene Kelly: The Athletic and Charismatic Performer**

Gene Kelly defied norms with his dynamic and athletic approach to dance in the American film musical. Known for his energetic and powerful movements, Kelly brought a newfound physicality to the genre. His work in films like "Singin' in the Rain" and "An American in Paris" displayed his versatility as a performer.

Kelly seamlessly blended classical techniques, tap, and even acrobatics into his routines, showcasing his abilities as a triple threat – a dancer, singer, and actor. His innovative use of props and unconventional settings for dance sequences, such as the famous rain scene in "Singin' in the Rain," added a distinct charm to his performances.

### **The Legacy and Influence**

The contributions of Astaire, Balanchine, and Kelly to the American film musical have left an enduring legacy. Their exceptional talent and innovative choreography continue to inspire dancers and filmmakers today.

Astaire, Balanchine, and Kelly elevated the status of dance in films, showing that it could be an art form on par with acting and singing. They expanded the possibilities of what could be achieved through dance and broadened the perception of the genre among audiences.

Beyond their individual achievements, their collaborations with other talented artists created unforgettable cinematic moments. In the dance world, their names remain synonymous with excellence and creativity.

## **The Enduring Magic of the American Film Musical**

The American film musical, with its captivating rhythms, unforgettable melodies, and awe-inspiring dance sequences, continues to captivate audiences. From the golden ages of Hollywood to the modern era, musicals have provided an escape into a world of joy, romance, and exuberance.

Although the landscape of cinema has evolved over the years, the influence of Astaire, Balanchine, and Kelly is still present. Their groundbreaking contributions have helped shape the American film musical into the diverse and vibrant genre it is today.

So, the next time you find yourself immersed in the magic of an American film musical, remember the pioneers who revolutionized the art of dance in cinema. Fred Astaire, George Balanchine, and Gene Kelly have left an indelible mark on the genre, and their legacies will continue to inspire generations of performers and filmmakers for years to come.

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Dancer-choreographer-directors Fred Astaire, George Balanchine and Gene Kelly and their colleagues helped to develop a distinctively modern American film-dance style and recurring dance genres for the songs and stories of the American musical. Freely crossing stylistic and class boundaries, their dances were rooted in the diverse dance and music cultures of European immigrants and African-American migrants who mingled in jazz age America. The new technology of sound cinema let them choreograph and fuse camera movement, light, and color with dance and music. Preserved intact for the largest audiences in dance history, their works continue to influence dance and film around the world. This book centers them and their colleagues within the history of dance (where their work has been marginalized) as well as film tracing their development from Broadway to Hollywood (1924-58) and contextualizing them within the American history and culture of their era.

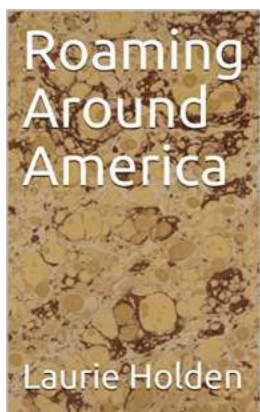
This modern style, like the nation in which it developed, was pluralist and populist. It drew from aspects of the old world and new, "high" and "low", theatrical and social dance forms, creating new sites for dance from the living room to the street. A definitive ingredient was the freer more informal movement and behavior of their jazz-age generation, which fit with song lyrics that poeticized

slangy American English. The Gershwins, Rodgers and Hart, and others wrote not only songs but extended dance-driven scores tailored to their choreography, giving a new prominence to the choreographer and dancer-actor. This book discuss how these choreographers collaborated with directors like Vincente Minnelli and Stanley Donen and cinematographers like Gregg Toland, musicians, dancers, designers and technicians to synergize music and moving image in new ways. Eventually, concepts and visual-musical devices derived from dance-making would give entire films the rhythmic flow and feeling of dance. Dancing Americans came to be seen around the world as archetypal embodiments of the free-spirited optimism and energy of America itself.



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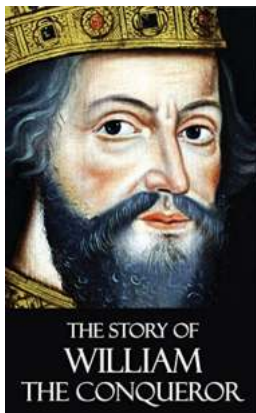
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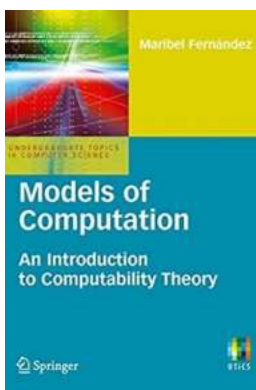
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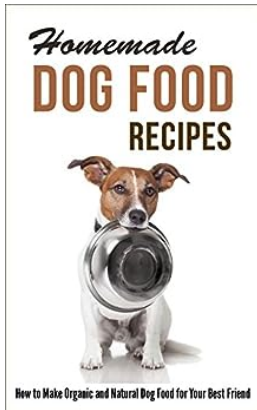
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