



The Ballad of John Latouche: An American Lyricist's Life and Work (Hardback)

By Howard Pollack

Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, 2017. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Born into a poor Virginian family, John Treville Latouche (1914-56), in his short life, made a profound mark on America's musical theater as a lyricist, book writer, and librettist. The wit and skill of lyrics elicited comparisons with the likes of Ira Gershwin, Lorenz Hart, and Cole Porter, but he had too, noted Stephen Sondheim, a large vision of what musical theater could be, and he proved especially venturesome in helping to develop a lyric theater that innovatively combined music, word, dance, and costume and set design. Many of his pieces, even if not commonly known today, remain high points in the history of American musical theater. A great American genius in the words of Duke Ellington, Latouche initially came to wide public attention in his early twenties with his cantata for soloist and chorus, *Ballad for Americans* (1939), with music by Earl Robeson—a work that swept the nation during the Second World War. Other milestones in his career included the all-black musical fable, *Cabin in the Sky* (1940), with Vernon Duke; an interracial updating of John Gay's classic, *The Beggar's Opera*,...



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