



# **Lillian Russell: A Bio-Bibliography (Bio-Bibliographies in the Performing Arts)**

*Anne A. Bowbeer, Donald R. Schwartz*

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Lillian Russell was the Victorian era's symbol of talent, charm, and beauty. She was introduced by impresario Tony Pastor in 1880, and was considered an emblem of feminine beauty until the turn of the century. Although her voice still set a standard of excellence, by that time America's vision of loveliness had changed, and her middle-aged body could not meet the new challenge on the musical stage. Russell responded with extraordinary resilience. She adapted with the times and became the *^Igrande dame^R* of the American theatre in non-musical plays, burlesque, variety, and the lecture circuit. She wrote widely-read newspaper columns in which she pioneered an optimistic philosophy of self-help, and she used her numerous connections to champion the causes that she held dear.

Carefully researched, this reference book is a comprehensive and thoroughly documented guide to Lillian Russell's life and career. A biography places her in the social and cultural context of her time and adds previously ignored information about her parents, birth, coming-of-age in the Midwest, early career, daughter, and death. A chronology then gives a detailed listing of events in her life and career. The chapters that follow are devoted to her many performances. Entries in each section provide cast and credit information, plot synopses, review excerpts, and critical commentary. Several appendices offer additional information about her work, and an extensive annotated bibliography lists sources of additional information.

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