



# Mr. Trumpet: The Trials, Tribulations, and Triumph of Bunny Berigan (Studies in Jazz)

*Michael P. Zirpolo*

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The life of jazz trumpeter Roland Bernard "Bunny" Berigan (1908-1942) resembles nothing less than an ancient Greek tragedy: a heroic figure who rises from obscurity to dizzying heights, touches greatness, becomes ensnared by circumstances, and comes to a disastrous early end. Berigan was intimately involved in the commercial music business of the 1930s and 1940s in New York City. Berigan was a charismatic performer, one of the few musicians in the history of jazz to advance the art. His trumpet artistry made a deep and lasting impression on almost everyone who heard him play, while the body of recorded work he left continues to evoke a wide range of emotions in those who hear it.

Too often writings about the Swing Era skip over the interrelationship between the music business and the music that the giants of jazz created. In *Mr. Trumpet: The Trials, Tribulations, and Triumph of Bunny Berigan*, Michael Zirpolo takes on this difficult task, exploring connections between the business of music and contemporary music makers and the culture of social dancing that drove it all. Through detailed research and insightful analysis, Zirpolo rectifies many heretofore misunderstood events in Berigan's life and in the Swing Era more generally.

In this panoramic examination of Berigan's personal and professional lives, *Mr. Trumpet* maps the great musician's role in what was a truly golden age of American popular music and jazz, offering close looks at some of his greatest performances and film work, comprehensive listings of all known broadcast recordings made by Berigan and his bands, as well as numerous previously unpublished photos of the great jazz artist.

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