



Making the Wiseguys Weep: The Jimmy Roselli Story

David Evanier

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The fascinating life of an Italian American icon.

The mob couldn't live with Jimmy Roselli and it couldn't live without him. Roselli is Hoboken's other great singer, and to a greater degree than Frank Sinatra, Roselli maintained his ties to his old neighborhood and its people--indeed, he made a career of those ties. He's their link to their cultural heritage and Italy, and continues to sing a good half of his repertoire in Italian. But this didn't stop his wiseguy following from getting angry at him from time to time.

"When I started singing big," Roselli told biographer David Evanier, "the tough guys were in the front row with the big cigars. They loved me so much they wanted to kill me. But their mothers and sisters and their wives wouldn't allow it." Roselli sang his best-loved song, "Little Pal," at John Gotti, Jr.'s wedding reception. Mobster Larry Gallo was buried with a Roselli record in his hands. "Hell of a guy," Roselli says of Gallo. "Nice, warm individual."

Hoboken's unsung singer feuded with Sinatra, stood up to shakedown artists, befriended godfathers, and now has thirty-six recordings in print. A captivating story of a brilliant entertainer, *Making the Wiseguys Weep* is also a colorful portrait of Italian American culture from the 240 saloons that lined Hoboken's streets to the bright lights of New York City.

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