

# BILLY WILDER

FILM AND CULTURE

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Joe McBride  
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Hollywood 78

# BILLY WILDER

## DANCING ON THE EDGE

JOSEPH McBRIDE

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS  
NEW YORK





Columbia University Press  
*Publishers Since 1893*  
New York Chichester, West Sussex  
cup.columbia.edu  
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: McBride, Joseph, 1947– author.  
Title: Billy Wilder : Dancing on the edge / Joseph McBride.  
Description: New York : Columbia University Press, [2021] | Includes bibliographical references, filmography, and index.  
Identifiers: LCCN 2021004923 (print) | LCCN 2021004924 (ebook) | ISBN 9780231201469 (hardback) | ISBN 9780231554114 (ebook)  
Subjects: LCSH: Wilder, Billy, 1906–2002. | Motion picture producers and directors—United States—Biography. | Austrians—United States—Biography. | Jews—United States—Biography. | Motion pictures—United States—History—20th century.  
Classification: LCC PN1998.3.W56 M33 2021 (print) | LCC PN1998.3.W56 (ebook) | DDC 791.4302/32092 [B]—dc23  
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021004923>  
LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021004924>



Columbia University Press books are printed  
on permanent and durable acid-free paper.  
Printed in the United States of America

Cover and book design: Lisa Hamm

Cover image: Billy Wilder rehearsing a tango with Jack Lemmon  
as “Daphne” in the cross-dressing comedy *Some Like It Hot* (1959).  
United Artists/Photofest

Frontispiece: Billy Wilder in a studio publicity photo from the 1950s.

*Do you remember my telling you earlier about that rooming house I lived in when I first was trying to get into the movies in Berlin? Well, next to my room was the can, and in it was a toilet that was on the blink. The water kept running all night long. I would lie there and listen to it, and since I was young and romantic, I'd imagine it was a beautiful waterfall—just to get my mind off the monotony of it and the thought of its being a can. Now we dissolve to 25 years later and I am finally rich enough to take a cure at Badgastein [now Bad Gastein], the Austrian spa, where there is the most beautiful waterfall in the whole world. There I am in bed, listening to the waterfall. And after all I have been through, all the trouble and all the money I've made, all the awards and everything else, there I am in that resort, and all I can think of is that goddamned toilet. That, like the man says, is the story of my life.*

✧ Billy Wilder, 1963





*For Ann*



