

# **Dreaming of a *White Christmas***

**"Sisters"**

**"Blue Skies"**

**"The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing"**

**"Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep"**

**"White Christmas"**

## **A Classic Film for the Holiday Season**

For more than half a century, *White Christmas* has remained one of Hollywood's most iconic musicals, bringing together Bing Crosby, Rosemary Clooney, Danny Kaye, and Vera-Ellen at the height of their careers. Released in 1954, the film showcased Irving Berlin's masterful songwriting, blending new numbers with the already-beloved title song to create a soundtrack that helped shape the sound of the season.

This month, we revisit its classic score by singing and dancing along to the music that continues to define the holiday season.



**Song: "Sisters" (1954)**  
**Songwriters: Irving Berlin**

***Brief Context:***

Written by Irving Berlin in 1954, "Sisters" became one of the standout musical numbers in the beloved film *White Christmas*, performed on screen by Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen with iconic blue feather fans in hand. The song's playful lyrics, tight harmonies, and charming choreography celebrate the bond between sisters and add a delightful touch of comedy to the film. Originally conceived as a lighthearted specialty number, "Sisters" has since become a favorite standard—even beyond the holiday season—embodying the warmth, wit, and timeless music that define *White Christmas*.

***Activity: Listening***

***What do you need?***

- Perfect Harmony "Sisters" video ([YOUTUBE](#))
- Perfect Harmony "Sisters" lyrics

***Suggested Discussion Prompt***

Although Rosemary Clooney sings "Sisters" in *White Christmas*, she wasn't actually dueting with co-star Vera-Ellen—Vera's vocals were dubbed by singer Trudy Stevens.

Clooney later recorded the song again, this time with her *real* sister, Betty!



Reinterpretation of the iconic "Sisters" dresses by Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre (2024)



## **Song: "Blue Skies" (1926)**

**Songwriter: Irving Berlin**

**Brief Context:** "Blue Skies," written by Irving Berlin in 1926, became an immediate sensation when it was added last-minute to the musical *Betsy*—earning an incredible 24 encores on opening night. Its cheerful lyrics paired with a subtly ironic minor-key setting made it a standout early American standard, later popularized in recordings, films, and jazz interpretations by artists such as Benny Goodman, Ella Fitzgerald, and even Willie Nelson. Over the decades, "Blue Skies" has remained one of Berlin's most enduring songs, celebrated for its optimism, timeless melody, and versatility across musical genres.

### **Activity: Singing**

#### **What do you need?**

- Perfect Harmony "Blue Skies" video ([YOUTUBE](#))
- Perfect Harmony "Blue Skies" lyrics

#### **Fun Fact**

"Blue Skies" appears during the rehearsal scene in *White Christmas*, where Bob Wallace (Bing Crosby) humorously attempts a dance number with Phil Davis (Danny Kaye). The moment pays tribute to Crosby's long history with the song—he first recorded "Blue Skies" in 1939, years before *White Christmas* brought the tune back into the spotlight.



Trailer screenshot, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



# **Blue Skies**

**Blue skies**

**Smiling at me**

**Nothing but blue skies**

**Do I see**

**Bluebirds**

**Singing a song**

**Nothing but bluebirds**

**All day long**

**Never saw the sun shining so bright**

**Never saw things going so right**

**Noticing the days hurrying by**

**When you're in love, my how they fly**

**Blue days**

**All of them gone**

**Nothing but blue skies**

**From now on**

**Song: "The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing" (1954)**  
**Recorded by: Danny Kaye, Joseph J. Lilley & His Orchestra**

**Brief context:** "The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing," written by Irving Berlin, was first performed by Danny Kaye and Vera-Ellen (dubbed by Trudy Stevens) in the 1954 musical film *White Christmas*. The song, a lively duet, plays a pivotal role in the film's storyline, as Phil (Kaye) and Judy (Vera-Ellen) share a romantic dance that helps set the stage for the blossoming love between their friends, played by Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney. The song was specifically crafted by Berlin to suit this joyful, situational dance moment in the film. The song was also included in the Broadway musical, which came after the film.

### **Activity: Movement**

#### ***What do you need?***

- Perfect Harmony "The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing" video ([YOUTUBE](#))

#### ***Suggested Seated Movement***

**Follow Perfect Harmony leader Kenny or create your own seated movement!**

**Use movements like . . .**

- Clasping your hands and reaching to the sky
- Tango-ing with your pretend partner
- Reaching your big toe forward and back
- Giving yourself a big hug



**Song: "Count Your Blessings (Instead of Sheep)" (1954)**

**Songwriter: Irving Berlin**

***Brief context:*** Irving Berlin is certainly known for his holiday music! "Count Your Blessings (Instead of Sheep)" is a song from the 1954 movie *White Christmas* starring Rosemary Clooney and Bing Crosby. At one point, Berlin was struggling with insomnia brought on by stress when his doctor recommended "counting his blessings." The comment was clearly a source of inspiration for Berlin, as he went on to incorporate it into this song and one of the most popular holiday movies of all time. Though originally performed as a Christmas song, there are no references to the holiday at all. This song has been recorded by not only Rosemary Clooney and Bing Crosby, but also Eddie Fisher, Sonny Rollins, Andy Williams, and Jimmy Durante, among others.

**Activity: Singing and engaged discussion**

***What do you need?***

- Perfect Harmony "Count Your Blessings (Instead of Sheep)" video ([YOUTUBE](#))
- Perfect Harmony "Count Your Blessings (Instead of Sheep)" lyrics

***Suggested discussion prompts***

**As we celebrate the holiday season, we often reflect on things, or people, in our lives we are thankful for.**

- Who, or what, are you feeling thankful for this year?
  - Suggested prompts: Family, Friends, Pets, Holiday Traditions
- Why do you feel thankful for these things?



# **Count Your Blessings (Instead of Sheep)**

**When I'm worried and I can't sleep  
I count my blessings instead of sheep  
And I fall asleep counting my blessings  
When my bankroll is getting small  
I think of when I had none at all  
And I fall asleep counting my blessings**

**I think about a nursery and I picture curly heads  
And one by one I count them  
as they slumber in their beds  
If you're worried and you can't sleep  
Just count your blessings instead of sheep  
And you'll fall asleep counting your blessings**

***[Repeat]***

## **Song: "White Christmas" (1942)**

**Songwriter: Irving Berlin**

***Brief Context:*** "White Christmas" is not only one of the most beloved Christmas songs, but also one of the most popular songs ever written. Bing Crosby's soulful, longing rendition remains the best-selling single of all time, with more than 50 million copies sold. Featured in two movie musicals—*Holiday Inn* (1942) and *White Christmas* (1954)—the song took on special significance during World War II, becoming a poignant anthem for troops serving overseas and for families on the home front.

### **Activity: Singing & Engaged Discussion**

#### ***What do you need?***

- Perfect Harmony "White Christmas" video ([YOUTUBE](#))
- Perfect Harmony "White Christmas" lyrics

#### ***Suggested Discussion***

**What is your favorite song from the movie *White Christmas*?**

- "White Christmas"
- "Sisters"
- "Snow"
- "Gee, I Wish I Was Back in the Army"
- "Count Your Blessings (Instead of Sheep)"





# **White Christmas**

**I'm dreaming of a white Christmas  
Just like the ones I used to know  
Where the treetops glisten and children listen  
To hear sleighbells in the snow**

**I'm dreaming of a white Christmas  
With every Christmas card I write  
May your days be merry and bright  
And may all your Christmasses be white**

**I'm dreaming of a white Christmas  
Just like the ones I used to know  
Where the treetops glisten and children listen  
To hear sleighbells in the snow**

**I'm dreaming of a white Christmas  
With every Christmas card I write  
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