

Songbook Hall of Fame

"I Got Rhythm"

"High Hopes"

"Orange Colored Sky"

"Over the Rainbow"

"Lotus Blossom"

They created the soundtrack of our lives ...

The Great American Songbook Hall of Fame celebrates lyricists, composers, and performers who helped to create "the soundtrack of our lives" with their contribution to American Popular song. New members are inducted into the Hall of Fame annually and we are proud to announce will be inducting Judy Garland this year on her centennial.

Other honorees include legendary composers like George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, and Cole Porter; lyricists like Ira Gershwin, Marilyn Bergman, and Sammy Cahn; beloved performing artists like Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra and Rosemary Clooney; and living artists carrying on the legacy and forging their own path like Johnny Mathis, Rita Moreno and Liza Minnelli. [Learn more about the inductees here.](#)



Song: I Got Rhythm (1930)
Songwriters: George & Ira Gershwin

George & Ira Gershwin were inducted into the Songbook Hall of Fame in 2015.

Brief Context: "I Got Rhythm" was created by composer George Gershwin and his brother Ira for the musical *Girl Crazy*, which opened on Broadway at the Alvin Theatre on October 14, 1930. Originally introduced by vocalist Ethel Merman, "I Got Rhythm" was among George Gershwin's favorites of the songs he composed for Broadway musicals.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "I Got Rhythm" video

Fun Fact

Pianist/singer Michael Feinstein, who once worked as an archivist for Ira Gershwin, explained in an interview: "I think the combination of Ira's lyrics and George's music is a perfect commingling of two different geniuses, and one spurred the other, one inspired the other, even though George most often wrote the tune first."

Continue exploring the Gershwin legacy through an online exhibit at [TheSongbook.org/george-gershwin](https://thesongbook.org/george-gershwin).



[Continue listening to the best of the Gershwins on Spotify!](#)



**Scanned image of "I Got Rhythm" sheet music housed in the
Songbook Library & Archives**



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Song: Orange Colored Sky (1950)
Songwriters: Milton Delugg and Willie Stein

Nat King Cole was inducted into the Songbook Hall of Fame in 2014.

Brief Context: "Orange Colored Sky" is a song written by Milton DeLugg and Willie Stein in 1950. The best known version of the song was recorded by Nat King Cole for his album *The Nat King Cole Story* in 1961. It has been recorded by other popular artists like Danny Kaye and Patty Andrews, Songbook Hall of Fame member Doris Day and even Lady Gaga.

Activity: Movement (upper and lower body)

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Orange Colored Sky" video

Suggested Seated Movement

1. Stay seated and sing-along with Olivia - feel free to sway along!
2. Alternating toe taps to the side
3. Slow marches
4. Alternating toe taps to the front
5. Slow marches
6. Pat lap on the beat (then double-time!)
7. Raise one arm straight up (then the other) and JAZZ HANDS!
8. Pat lap on the beat
9. Raise one arm straight up (then the other) and JAZZ HANDS!
10. Sway and paint arms to alternating sides
11. Raise one arm straight up (then the other) and JAZZ HANDS!
12. Lower arms out to side



Song: High Hopes (1959)

Songwriters: Jimmy Van Heusen & Sammy Cahn

Jimmy Van Heusen (2018) and Sammy Cahn (2021) are both Hall of Fame honorees.

Brief Context: "High Hopes" was written by Jimmy Van Heusen and Sammy Cahn for the 1959 movie *A Hole In The Head*, which starred fellow Songbook Hall of Fame member Frank Sinatra and was directed by Frank Capra. This popular aspirational song was repurposed for John F. Kennedy's presidential run in 1960. Sinatra sang a new set of lyrics written by Cahn for the campaign.

Activity: Singing & Engaged Discussion

What do you need?

- "High Hopes" Perfect Harmony video
- "High Hopes" lyrics sheet

Suggested Discussion Prompts

- This song puts a smile on my face and makes me feel like I can do anything. Tell someone about a time you felt hopeful.



High Hopes

**Just what makes that little old ant
Think he'll move that rubber tree plant
Anyone knows an ant, can't
Move a rubber tree plant
But he's got high hopes, he's got high hopes
He's got high apple pie, in the sky hopes**

**So any time you're gettin' low
'Stead of lettin' go
Just remember that ant
Oops, there goes another rubber tree plant
Oops, there goes another rubber tree plant**

**Once there was a silly old ram
Thought he'd punch a hole in a dam
No one could make that ram, scram
He kept buttin' that dam
'Cause he had high hopes, he had high hopes
He had high apple pie, in the sky hopes**

**All problem's just a toy balloon
They'll be bursting soon
They're just bound to go pop
Oops, there goes another problem kerplop
Oops, there goes another problem kerplop, kerlpop**

Song: "Over the Rainbow" (1939)
Songwriters: Harold Arlen & E.Y. Yip Harburg

Judy Garland will be inducted into the Songbook Hall of Fame in 2023.

Brief Context: "Over the Rainbow, " with music by Harold Arlen and lyrics by E.Y. "Yip" Harburg, is the Academy Award-winning song from the 1939 MGM film, *The Wizard of Oz*. Dorothy Gale, played by Judy Garland, sings this song on her family's farm in Kansas when she is longing for some place where there isn't any trouble. Can you believe that this iconic song almost didn't make it into the film?

Activity: Singing

What do you need?

- "Over the Rainbow" Perfect Harmony video
- "Over the Rainbow" Perfect Harmony lyrics sheet

Archives Connection:

On display in the Songbook Exhibit Gallery is the upright spinet piano used by songwriter Harold Arlen to craft such tunes as "Stormy Weather," and "Come Rain or Come Shine," and "Over the Rainbow."

Arlen's piano was gifted to him in 1931 by his brother Jerry when both were living at the Croyden Apartment Hotel. The Martha Washington piano eventually traveled with Harold to Los Angeles and served as his instrument of choice when birthing songs for the beloved movie musical *The Wizard of Oz*.

This resource made possible by the

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Over the Rainbow

Somewhere over the rainbow

Way up high

There's a land that I heard of

Once in a lullaby

Somewhere over the rainbow

Skies are blue

And the dreams that you dare to dream

Really do come true

Someday I'll wish upon a star

And wake up where the clouds are far behind me

Where troubles melt like lemon drops

Away above the chimney tops

That's where you'll find me

Somewhere over the rainbow

Bluebirds fly

Birds fly over the rainbow

Why then, oh, why can't I?

Somewhere over the rainbow

Bluebirds fly

Birds fly over the rainbow

Why then, oh, why can't I?

If happy little bluebirds fly

Beyond the rainbow

Why, oh why can't I?



Image of the Martha Washington spinet piano from The Harold Arlen Collection housed in the Songbook Library & Archives



Watch Songbook Academy music directors play "Over the Rainbow" on Arlen's piano



Song: "Lotus Blossom"

Songwriters: Billy Strayhorn

Billy Strayhorn was inducted into the Songbook Hall of Fame in 2021.

Brief Context: Billy Strayhorn was a pianist and arranger in fellow Songbook Hall of Fame member Duke Ellington's band in the 1940s. It was Ellington who recorded the most popular version of Strayhorn's "Lotus Blossom." Duke Ellington liked the song so much that it eventually became the sign-off song at the end of each of his band's performances. Ellington said that it was the song that Strayhorn liked to hear him play the most.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- **Perfect Harmony "Lotus Blossom" video**

Fun Fact

In 2021, Songbook Academy alumna Anaïs Reno recorded an album of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn songs called *Lovesome Thing*.

Listen to her rendition of Strayhorn's ["Still in Love"](#) for more Billy Strayhorn music.

