

The Luck of the Irish

"Luck Be a Lady"

"Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral"

"I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover"

"How Are Things in Glocca Morra?"

"Danny Boy"

Lucky songs in the Great American Songbook!

"Top O the mornin' to ya!" As we celebrate St. Patrick's Day this month, it seems fitting to take a trip to the Emerald Isle and check out some of the Songbook's Irish roots. Irish heritage is found throughout the performers of the Songbook including Bing Crosby, Bunny Berigan (trumpeter), Carmel Quinn, Gerry Mulligan (saxophonist), and Helen O'Connell (singer with Jimmy Dorsey and His Orchestra) and can also be found in the songs and musicals of the era as well. Whether from Ireland or just appreciating the culture, we hope you have a little extra "luck of the Irish" this month!



Song: "Luck Be a Lady" from *Guys and Dolls* (1950)
Songwriter: Frank Loesser

Brief Context: Originally composed by Frank Loesser in 1950, "Luck Be a Lady" was written for the musical *Guys and Dolls*. It has been performed by a variety of heavyweights including Frank Sinatra, Jack Jones, Barbara Streisand, and Seal. The idea of "Lady Luck" came from the ancient description of a goddess of luck named Tyche or Fortuna.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Luck Be a Lady"

Fun(ny) fact

After filming repeated takes of the scene where Sky (Marlon Brando) and Nathan (Frank Sinatra) first meet, they had to quit for the day when Sinatra had eaten too much cheesecake.

Brando, knowing how much Sinatra hated cheesecake, had purposely flubbed each take so that Sinatra would have to eat piece after piece of cheesecake. The next day, they came back and shot the scene perfectly on the first take.



Songbook Archives Artifact



Cover art on the published sheet music of "Luck Be a Lady" from Frank Loesser's Guys and Dolls.



Song: "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" (1913)

Songwriter: James Royce Shannon

Brief Context: "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (That's an Irish Lullaby)" is a classic Irish-American song that was written in 1913 by composer James Royce Shannon for the Tin Pan Alley musical *Shameen Dhu*. The original recording of the song, by Chauncey Olcott, peaked at #1 on the music charts. The song became a hit three decades later when Bing Crosby's performed it in 1944's *Going My Way*.

Activity: Singing & Discussion

What do you need?

- "Too-Ral-Loo-Ral-Loo-Ral" Perfect Harmony video
- Lyrics sheet

Suggested discussion prompt

Did you grow up having a lullaby sung to you to help you go to sleep? Perhaps this is a tradition you passed on to a child or a special someone in your life?

What lullabies have you sung to others or had sung to you?

- **Suggested prompts:**
 - Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral
 - You Are My Sunshine
 - Rock-A-Bye-Baby



Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral

Over in Killarney, many years ago

My mother sang a song to me in tones so soft and low

Just a simple little ditty in her good old Irish way

**And I'd give the world if she would sing the song to
me this day**

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral

Too-ra-loo-ra-li

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral

Hush now, don't you cry

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral

Too-ra-loo-ra-li

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral

That's an Irish lullaby

Oft in dreams I wander

to that cot again.

I feel her arms a-hugging me

As when she held me then.

And I hear her voice a-hummin'

to me as in the days of yore,

when she'd rock me, rock me fast asleep

outside the cabin door.

Song: "I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover" (1927)
As performed by: Mitch Miller

Brief Context: "I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover" was written by Harry Woods and Mort Dixon in 1927. Woods was a Tin Pan Alley lyricist who wrote the million-selling songs "When the Red Red Robin Comes Bobbing Along" (1926) and "Side by Side" (1927). The song was also used in *The Looney Tunes* cartoon series, sung by Bugs Bunny in "Operation Rabbit".

***Activity:* Movement**

What do you need?

- **Perfect Harmony "I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover" video**

Suggested Seated Movement

Follow Perfect Harmony leader Donna or create your own seated movement!

Use movements like . . .

- **Move arms side to side**
- **Raise arms up and down**
- **Pat legs to the beat**



Song: "How are Things in Glocca Morra?" from *Finian's Rainbow* (1947)
Songwriters: Burton Lane and E.Y. "Yip" Harburg

Brief Context: "How Are Things in Glocca Morra" was a popular song composed by Burton Lane with lyrics by Yip Harburg. It appeared initially in *Finnian's Rainbow* in 1947 and would be recorded by numerous other performers. Though "Glocca Morra" is a fictional town, the song evokes the feeling of homesickness and nostalgia.

Activity: Singing & Discussion

What do you need?

- "How are Things in Glocca Morra" Perfect Harmony video
- Lyrics sheet

Suggested Discussion Prompt

Have you ever traveled abroad or within the United States?

What did you enjoy most about where you traveled?

- Scenery (ocean, mountains, rainforest)
- History
- People
- Food



How are Things in Glocca Morra?

**I hear a bird, Londonderry bird,
It well may be he's bringing me a cheering word.
I hear a breeze, a River Shanon breeze,
It well may be it's followed me across the seas.
Then tell me please**

**How are things in Glocca Morra?
Is that little brook still leaping there?
Does it still run down to Donny cove?
Through Killybegs, Kilkerry and Kildare?**

**How are things in Glocca Mora?
Is that willow tree still weeping there?
Does that lassie with the twinklin' eye
Come smilin' by and does she walk away,**

**Sad and dreamy there not to see me there?
So I ask each weepin' willow and
each brook along the way,
And each lad that comes a-sighin' too ra lay
How are things in Glocca Morra this fine day?**

Songbook Archives Artifact



Shoes worn by Fred Astaire in the film "Finian's Rainbow" (1968). Fred Astaire (born Frederick Austerlitz, 1899-1987) was an American dancer, choreographer, singer, musician, and actor. The American Film Institute ranks him among the top five male entertainers of the 20th century.



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Song: "Danny Boy"
Traditional Irish Tune

Brief Context: Legend has it that the tune to "Danny Boy" was created in the seventeenth century by blind harpist, Rory Dall O'Cahan. In 1851, Jane Ross, of Limavady, Co Londonderry, wrote down the music after hearing it played by a traveling fiddler. The words we know today were written in 1910 by Frederick Edward Weatherly, an English lawyer, who is thought never to have set foot in Ireland. Throughout the years "Danny Boy" has been considered an unofficial anthem by Irish Americans.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- **Perfect Harmony "Danny Boy" video**

Did you know?

Elvis said he thought "Danny Boy" was written by angels and asked for it to be played at his memorial service.

