

Spring is Here!

"Here Comes the Sun"

"Blue Skies"

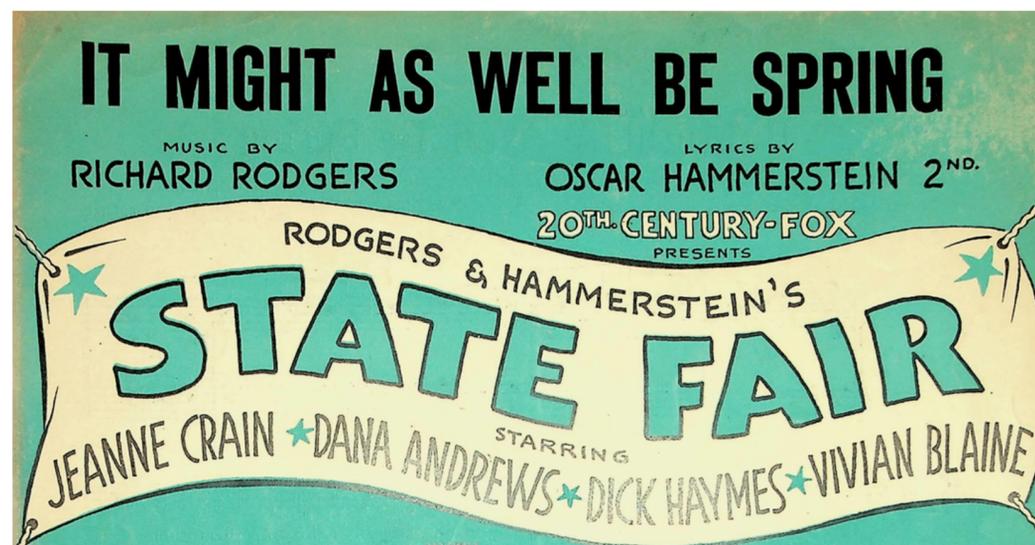
"Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head"

"Easter Parade"

"It Might as Well Be Spring"

Spring songs in the Great American Songbook!

Gone are the snowmen, hot cocoa, and winter coats! Make way for the flowers, the birds, and the rain: it's spring! Here at the Songbook Foundation, we are so excited for the change in seasons and the start of warmer (and greener) weather. With the Spring Equinox bringing longer days, it's no surprise that the Latin translation for spring (vernal) means "equal night." All this extra sunlight brings with it quite a few holidays including Easter, Earth Day, Arbor Day, and Mother's Day. Plenty to sing about as we celebrate spring through music!



Song: "Here Comes the Sun" (1969)

Songwriter: George Harrison

Brief Context: The Beatles song "Here Comes the Sun" was written in 1969 for their *Abbey Road* album by the "shy" Beatle, George Harrison. George wrote the song on a beautiful sunny day in a garden while visiting his friend and fellow guitarist, Eric Clapton.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- "Here Comes the Sun" Perfect Harmony video

Fun fact

The Beatles liked to experiment with different sounds. For "Here Comes the Sun" they used a new instrument called a Moog synthesizer which created an electronic sound.



Song: "Blue Skies" (1926)

Songwriter: Irving Berlin

Brief Context: Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies" was a last-minute addition to the Rodgers and Hart musical *Betsy*. It was so popular that audiences on opening night allegedly demanded 24 encores from Belle Baker. Since 1926, the song has been interpreted by many artists including Artie Shaw, Frank Sinatra and a country version recorded by Willie Nelson in 1978.

Activity: Singing & Discussion

What do you need?

- "Blue Skies" Perfect Harmony video
- Lyrics sheet

Suggested discussion prompt

Spring is finally here! What are your favorite things to experience in spring?

Examples below, if needed:

- Sunshine
- Warmth
- Birds chirping
- Flowers blooming



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

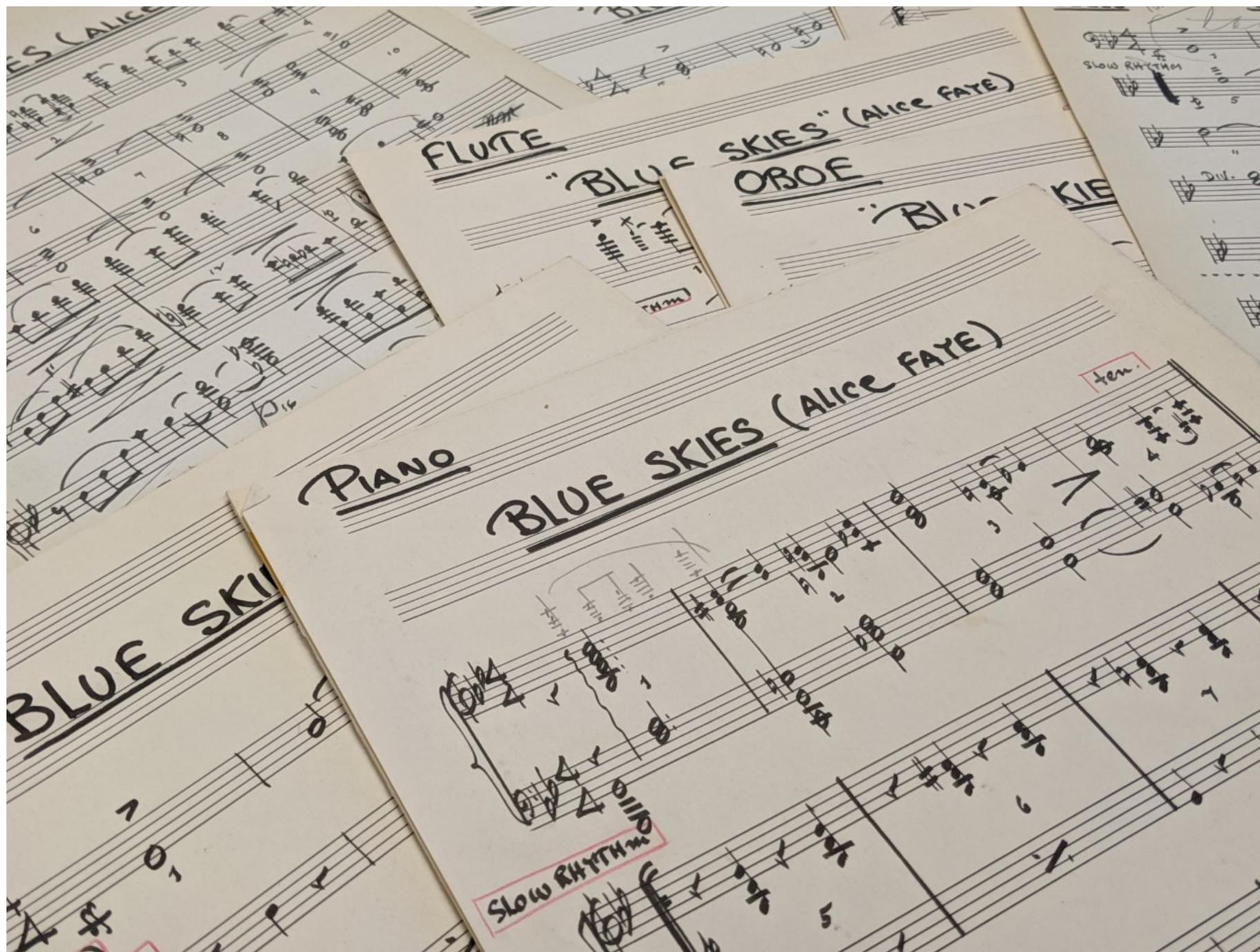
Blue days

All of them gone

Nothing but blue skies

From now on

Songbook Archives Artifact



An arrangement of "Blue Skies" used for the The Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show. Housed in the Songbook Library & Archives



Song: Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head (1969)
Songwriters: Burt Bacharach and Hal David

Brief Context: "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" was written by Burt Bacharach and Hal David for the 1969 film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford. It was originally created for Bob Dylan, but ended up becoming B.J. Thomas' signature song. "Raindrops" won an Academy Award for Best Original Song in 1970.

Activity: Movement

What do you need?

- "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" Perfect Harmony video

Suggested Seated Movement

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

Use movements like . . .

- Sway side to side
- Raise arms and move fingers like rain
- Move shoulders back and forth



Song: "Easter Parade" (1948)
Songwriter: Irving Berlin

Brief Context: Fred Astaire performed "Easter Parade" in the 1948 movie of the same name, and his became the most famous version of the song. It was written by Irving Berlin, who used the melody of a song he wrote in 1917 but never caught on called "Smile And Show Your Dimple." "Easter Parade" was also featured in the holiday hit 1942 film *Holiday Inn* starring Bing Crosby.

***Activity:* Singing & Discussion**

What do you need?

- "Easter Parade" Perfect Harmony video
- Lyrics sheet

Suggested discussion prompt

This song discusses dressing up for a holiday and wearing, in particular, a bonnet with "frills upon it"! What is your favorite accessory you like to wear for special holidays or events?

Examples below, if needed:

- Jewelry
- Bow tie
- Fascinator/Formal hat
- Pocket square



Easter Parade

**In your Easter bonnet, with all the frills upon it,
You'll be the grandest fella in the Easter Parade.**

**I'll be all in clover and when they look us over,
We'll be the proudest couple in the Easter Parade.**

**On the avenue, Fifth Avenue,
the photographers will snap us,
And you'll find that you're in the rotogravure.**

**Oh, I could write a sonnet about your Easter bonnet,
And of the guy I'm taking to the Easter Parade.**

Song: "It Might as Well Be Spring" (1945)
Songwriters: Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II

Brief Context: "It Might as Well Be Spring" is a song from Rodgers & Hammerstein's *State Fair* performed by the female lead Margy. In his biography of Richard Rodgers, William G. Hyland describes how the song was created: "The song originated while Hammerstein was musing about the uneasiness of the female lead. He told Rodgers that even though state fairs were never held in the spring, Margy's mood was such that it might as well be spring. Rodgers immediately recognized a song title."

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- "It Might As Well Be Spring" Perfect Harmony video

Did you know?

20th Century Fox offered Rodgers & Hammerstein the opportunity to write a musical version of their 1933 film *State Fair*. When the musical film premiered in 1945, so did multiple songs now regarded as American Standards, like "It's a Grand Night for Singing," "So Far" and "It Might as Well Be Spring," which won the Oscar for Best Original Song that year.



Songbook Archives Artifact



"It Might as Well Be Spring" sheet music from the Bob Grimes collection in the Songbook Library & Archives.

