

George Gershwin

"(Our) Love is Here to Stay"

"Someone to Watch Over Me"

"I Got Rhythm"

"S'Wonderful"

Songbook Academy Gershwin Medley

"Rhapsody in Blue"

The Gershwin Songbook



George Gershwin (1898–1937), the iconic American composer and pianist, left an indelible mark on the early 20th-century music scene. Known for blending jazz harmonies into symphonic compositions, he crafted enduring melodies seen in works like *An American in Paris* and the opera *Porgy and Bess*. Collaborating with his brother Ira, Gershwin's influence reached beyond the concert hall, producing Broadway hits such as "I Got Rhythm" and "Someone to Watch Over Me." His innovative and versatile contributions to both classical and popular music have solidified his legacy, making him a pioneer celebrated for enriching the tapestry of American musical history.



Song: "(Our) Love is Here to Stay" (1938)

Songwriters: George & Ira Gershwin

Brief Context: Over twenty years, George Gershwin composed more than five hundred songs. Many of them he created with his brother, the lyricist Ira Gershwin. "(Our) Love is Here to Stay" is one of the last songs they wrote before George passed away at the age of 38. As singer Michael Feinstein notes the song is, "An eloquent memorial to the brothers and their life and work together."

Activity: Singing

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "(Our) Love is Here to Stay" video
- Perfect Harmony "(Our) Love is Here to Stay" lyrics

Ira Gershwin

George Gershwin, born in 1896, and his brother Ira, born in 1898, are two of the most influential figures in the history of the Great American Songbook. While successful individually, it was their first musical together, 1924's *Lady Be Good*, which saw the Gershwin brothers' popularity skyrocket. From 1924 until George's untimely death in 1937, George and Ira worked together almost exclusively, creating iconic pieces of America's musical history that include *Strike Up the Band*, *Of Thee I Sing*, and *Girl Crazy*.



(Our) Love is Here to Stay

**It's very clear our love is here to stay
Not for a year, but ever and a day
The radio and the telephone
and the movies that we know
May just be passing fancies
And in time will go.**

**But, oh my dear,
Our love is here to stay
Together we're going a long long way
In time the Rockies may crumble,
Gebralter may tumble,
They're only made of clay
But our love is here to stay.**

Song: "Someone to Watch Over Me" (1926)

Songwriters: George & Ira Gershwin

Brief Context: "Someone to Watch Over Me" is a classic American song by George Gershwin, with lyrics by his brother Ira. It debuted in the 1926 Broadway musical *Oh, Kay!* starring Gertrude Lawrence. The song, expressing a desire for someone special for comfort and protection, has become one of Gershwin's enduring compositions. The song's lasting popularity highlights the Gershwin brothers' talent for creating emotionally resonant melodies that continue to captivate audiences over time.

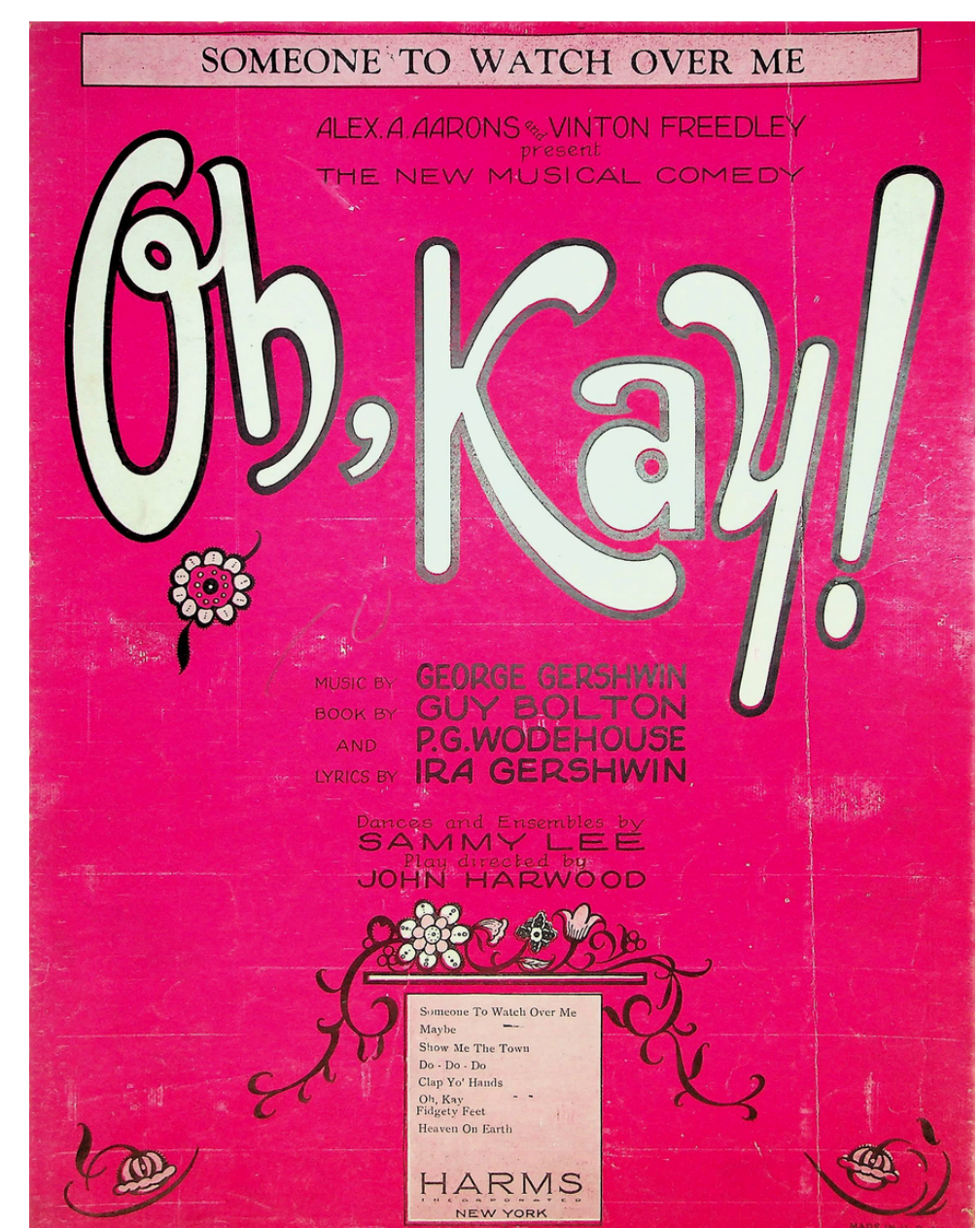
Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Someone to Watch Over Me" video

Archives Artifact

The Songbook Library & Archives houses many renditions of "Someone to Watch Over Me" in the form of sheet music and musical arrangements, including the original sheet music from the song's first use in the 1926 Broadway musical *Oh, Kay!*. This sheet music is part of the Robert Grimes Collection, which contains 34,000 pieces of sheet music, 14,000 recordings, 3,300 books, and more. Ironically, funds to purchase this collection in 2009 were donated by none other than the Gershwin Trust.



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

Brief Context: "I Got Rhythm" is a classic American song by George and Ira Gershwin. The song was introduced in the musical *Girl Crazy*, which premiered on Broadway in 1930. The musical starred Ethel Merman and featured the vibrant and upbeat "I Got Rhythm" as one of its standout numbers. Celebrating the uplifting power of music, the song's positive lyrics, catchy melody, and infectious rhythm quickly propelled it to hit status.

Activity: Movement

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "I Got Rhythm" video

Suggested Seated Movement

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

Use movements like . . .

- Slowly circle your arms from the top of your head to your legs
- Gently rock side to side
- Pat your thighs



Song: "S'Wonderful" (1927)

Songwriters: George & Ira Gershwin

Brief Context: "S'Wonderful" is a classic American song by George Gershwin with lyrics by his brother Ira. It debuted in the 1927 Broadway musical *Funny Face*, starring Fred Astaire and Adele Astaire. The song, expressing the joy of love, became a standout in the musical. With its catchy melody, it has become a jazz standard covered by many artists, showcasing the enduring appeal of the Gershwin brothers' timeless creations.

***Activity:* Singing and Discussion**

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "S'Wonderful" video
- Perfect Harmony "S'Wonderful" lyrics sheet

Suggested Discussion Prompt

How do you like to show a person that you care about them?

If needed, you can use the following prompts:

- Call them on the phone
- Write a letter
- Cook a meal
- Give them a hug
- Say "I love you"



S'Wonderful

'S wonderful

'S marvelous

You should care for me

'S awful nice

'S paradise

'S what I love to see

You've made my life so glamorous

You can't blame me for feeling amorous

Oh! 'S wonderful, marvelous

That you should care for me

'S wonderful

'S marvelous

That you should care for me

Song: Songbook Academy Gershwin Medley

Songwriters: George & Ira Gershwin

Brief Context: The Songbook Academy® is a transformative summer music intensive that immerses high school singers in America's musical heritage and fosters artistic identity through song. Each year the vocalists perform in a spectacular final concert featuring medleys of popular music from songwriters of the Great American Songbook's foundational era. In 2023, a group of singers performed a selection of Gershwin songs including "Summertime," "They All Laughed," "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," "Fascinating Rhythm," and more.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- The Songbook Academy® Gershwin medley video

Did you know?

George Gershwin created more than a thousand songs that became standards in American Popular music. Many of these he wrote with his brother, Ira, including "Someone to Watch Over Me," "The Man I Love," "The Man That Got Away," "Embraceable You," "I Got Rhythm," and so many more!



Song: "Rhapsody in Blue" (1924)

Songwriter: George Gershwin

Brief Context: "Rhapsody in Blue," composed by George Gershwin in 1924, is a groundbreaking blend of classical and jazz. It premiered at Aeolian Hall in New York City on February 12, 1924. Gershwin, a brilliant pianist, performed with Paul Whiteman's jazz band, creating a fusion of syncopated rhythms and bluesy melodies that captured the Jazz Age spirit. "Rhapsody in Blue" remains a timeless representation of the interplay between classical and jazz, showcasing Gershwin's innovative musical vision.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- "Rhapsody in Blue" video

Did you know?

"It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang, that is so often so stimulating to a composer – I frequently hear music in the very heart of the noise . . . And there I suddenly heard, and even saw on paper – the complete construction of the Rhapsody, from beginning to end. No new themes came to me, but I worked on the thematic material already in my mind and tried to conceive the composition as a whole. I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America, of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our metropolitan madness. By the time I reached Boston I had a definite plot of the piece, as distinguished from its actual substance." – George Gershwin (on the creation of "Rhapsody in Blue")

