

# Harold Arlen

***"Wizard of Oz Medley:  
If I Only Had a Brain/A Heart/The Nerve"***

***"Get Happy"***

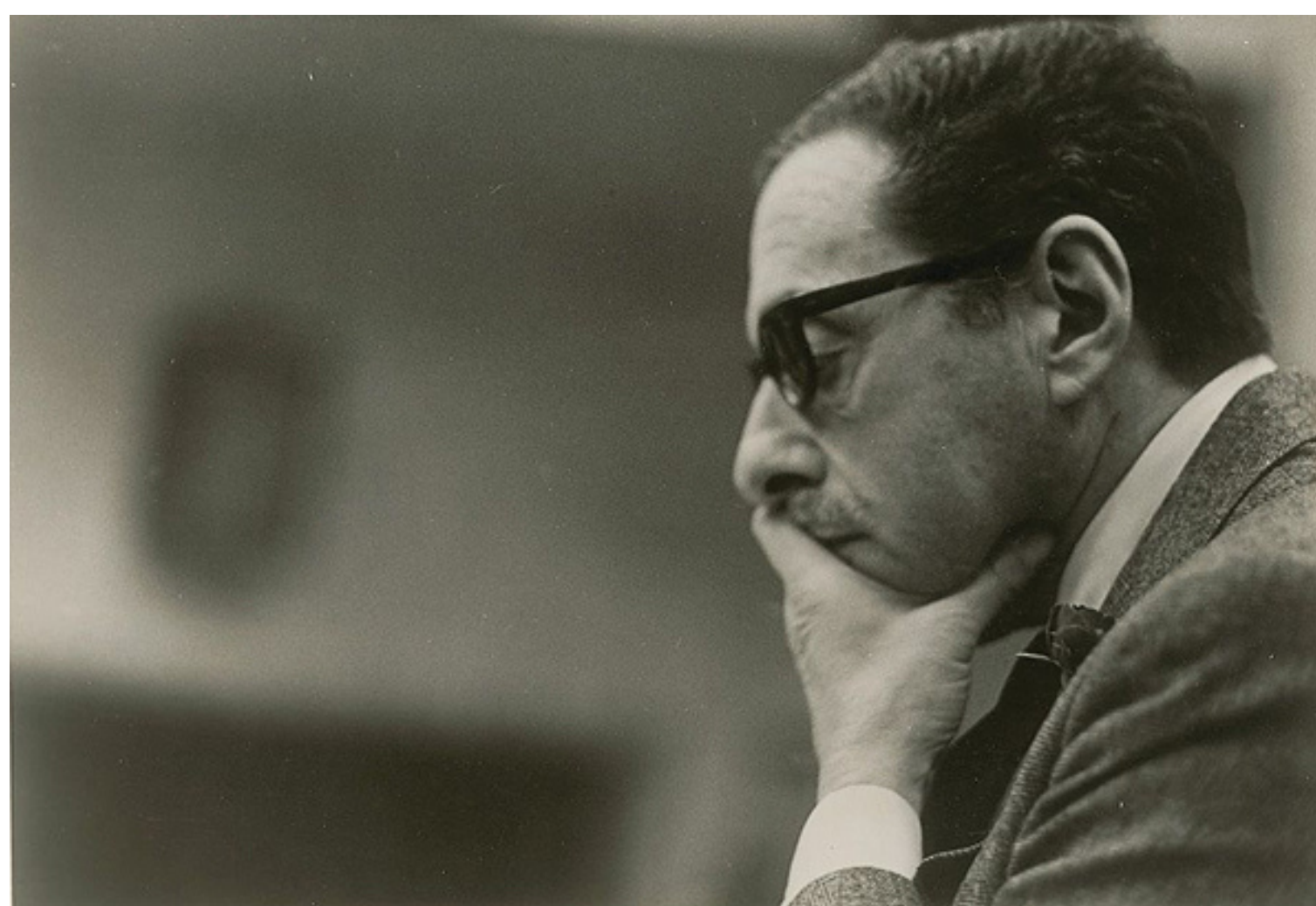
***"Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive"***

***"Let's Fall in Love"***

***"Stormy Weather"***

## **Songwriter Harold Arlen**

**Born in Buffalo, New York, Harold Arlen (born Hyman Arluck) would go on to be one of the most prolific composers of American popular music. He started out in the music scene as a vaudeville accompanist and then would appear occasionally as a band vocalist on recordings by local Buffalo performers. It was at this point he changed his name to be more "Americanized."**



**Song: "Wizard of Oz Medley: If I Only Had a Brain/A Heart/The Nerve" (1939)**

**From the movie musical *The Wizard of Oz***

***Brief Context:*** Did you know that three songs from the 1939 MGM classic *The Wizard of Oz* share the same melody? "If I Only Had a Brain," sung by the Scarecrow, "If I Only Had a Heart," sung by the Tin Man, and "If I Only Had the Nerve," sung by the Cowardly Lion each represent gifts that each character most longs to possess. At the end of the film, they learn that they've each had these gifts the entire time.

### ***Activity: Listening***

**What do you need?**

- **Perfect Harmony "Wizard of Oz Medley: If I Only Had a Brain/A Heart/The Nerve" video**

### ***Songbook Archives Artifact***

**In 1931, Harold Arlen was living in New York City's Croydon Hotel. His brother, Jerry, had decided to move in and immediately started making changes. One of the biggest changes was swapping out the Steinway grand piano for a Martha Washington Harpinette spinet piano. Once this piano entered Harold's study, the two were inseparable. Every song from 1931 until Arlen's death in 1986 was composed or arranged on this piano. Hits included "Stormy Weather," "Over the Rainbow," "That Old Black Magic," "Let's Fall In Love," "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive," "Come Rain or Come Shine" and "Any Place I Hang My Hat Is Home."**





# Songbook Archives Artifact



***Harold Arlen's Martha Washington Spinet piano from the Rita Arlen Collection (Songbook Library & Archives)***

**Learn more about Arlen's piano at [TheSongbook.org/arlen-piano](https://thesongbook.org/arlen-piano)**



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**Song: "Get Happy" (1929)**  
**From the movie musical *Summer Stock***

***Brief Context:*** In 1929, Arlen composed his first well-known song, "Get Happy," with lyricist Ted Koehler. This duo would continue to write songs and shows for the Cotton Club in Harlem as well as for Broadway musicals and Hollywood productions. "Get Happy" was featured in the MGM classic *Summer Stock* starring Judy Garland – forever to be remembered in that iconic jacket and fedora costume for the closing song-and-dance number.

***Activity: Singing and Discussion***

***What do you need?***

- Perfect Harmony "Get Happy" video
- Perfect Harmony "Get Happy" lyrics

***Suggested Discussion Prompt***

Music often helps us to feel or express emotions in a unique way. When listening to this song, as the lyrics suggest, did you "forget your troubles" and "get happy"?

If yes, what about the music made you happy?

1. Singing
2. Rhythm
3. Lyrics
4. Remembering a special time when you listened to this song before

If no, what are some other songs you enjoy listening to that help you "get happy"?

1. Here Comes the Sun
2. On the Sunny Side of the Street
3. Good Vibrations
4. Blue Skies



# Get Happy

**Forget your troubles  
And just get happy  
You better chase all your cares away  
Sing hallelujah, come on get happy  
Get ready for the judgement day**

**The sun is shining  
Come on get happy  
The Lord is waiting to take your hand  
Shout hallelujah, come on get happy  
We're going to the promised land**

**We're heading across the river  
Wash your sins away in the tide  
It's all so peaceful on the other side**

**Forget your troubles  
And just get happy  
You better chase all your cares away  
Shout hallelujah, come on get happy  
Get ready for the judgement day**

**Forget your troubles  
And just get happy  
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**We're heading across the river  
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**Forget your troubles  
And just get happy  
You better chase all your cares away  
Shout hallelujah, come on get happy  
Get ready for the judgement day**

***Song: "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive" (1944)***  
***As performed by: Aretha Franklin***

***Brief Context: "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive" was written by Harold Arlen and lyricist Johnny Mercer. Mercer was inspired by his Southern roots and Baptist preachers, and created his own "sermon." Arlen set Mercer's sermon to music that managed to conjure the image of a church revival with a big band orchestra leading the way. "The song must have really pleased John," Harold Arlen said. "It was the first time I ever saw him smile."***

***Activity: Movement***

***What do you need?***

- **Perfect Harmony "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive" video**

***Suggested Seated Movement***

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

**Use movements like . . .**

- **Alternate shoulder shrugs**
- **Slow neck rolls**
- **Stretch arms left and right**



**Song: "Let's Fall in Love" (1933)**  
**from the movie musical *Let's Fall in Love***

***Brief Context:*** "Let's Fall in Love" was introduced in 1934 in the romantic film comedy *Let's Fall in Love* by Arthur Jarrett and chorus. The song was popularized by Eddy Duchin and his Orchestra with a No. 1 chart record. In 1967, it was revived with a recording by Peaches and Herb.

***Activity:*** Listening

**What do you need?**

- Perfect Harmony "Let's Fall in Love" video

***Lyricist Ted Koehler***

**Ted Koehler was born in Washington, D.C. on July 14, 1894. Koehler worked as a lyricist by writing songs for nightclub revues, primarily at Harlem's Cotton Club, in the 1930s. His most successful songs, including "Get Happy," "Stormy Weather," and "I've Got the World on a String," were written with composer Harold Arlen and introduced by such performers as Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway.**





**Song: "Stormy Weather" (1933)**  
**lyrics by Ted Koehler**

***Brief Context:*** A 1933 song written by Harold Alen with lyrics by Ted Koehler, "Stormy Weather" was first performed at Harlem's Cotton Club by Ethel Waters. "Stormy Weather" is notable for its poignant lyrics that convey a sense of longing and heartbreak. The metaphor of "stormy weather" is used to represent emotional turmoil and personal struggle.

**Activity: Listening**

***What do you need?***

- Perfect Harmony  
"Stormy Weather" video

***Did you know?***

Lena Horne's rendition of "Stormy Weather" in the 1943 musical film of the same name is particularly famous. The film featured a memorable scene with Horne singing the song in a theatrical setting, evoking the emotional depth of the lyrics.

