

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

Issue #37...October 10, 2020

Editor: Ray Scroggins

Songwriters of the Classic Era: 1910-1960

Songwriters who were active in the classic era between 1910 and 1960 were the pioneers, classic Broadway and Hollywood composers and lyricists, and others identified as part of the Great American Songbook. They include:

Harold Arlen If the 1930s-1940s era of the Great American Songbook had a Mt. Rushmore, Arlen would be on it. Examples include "Paper Moon," "Blues in the Night," and "Over the Rainbow." Probably best known for his work with lyricists Yip Harburg and Johnny Mercer.

Irving Berlin The father of American Popular Song. Examples include "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "White Christmas," "God Bless America," "There's No Business Like Show Business," "Puttin' On the Ritz."

Ralph Blane Singer-turned-songwriter best known for collaborating with Hugh Martin on "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and "The Trolley Song."

Sammy Cahn Winner of multiple Academy Awards for best song, also one of Frank Sinatra's go-to songwriters. Examples include "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow," "It's Been a Long, Long Time," "Three Coins in a Fountain," and "Come Fly with Me."

Duke Ellington Bandleader and composer, notable as foremost African-American front man during the big band era. Examples include "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)," "My Dreams Are Getting Better All The Time," and "I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)."

George Gershwin Classically-influenced composer whose work includes the opera *Porgy and Bess*. Song examples include "I Got Rhythm," "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," and "Rhapsody in Blue."

Oscar Hammerstein II Lyricist who first worked with Jerome Kern, then later with Richard Rodgers. Known for musicals *Show Boat*, *Sound of Music*, and others. Song lyrics include "Ol' Man River," "You'll Never Walk Alone," and "Edelweiss."

Jerome Kern Another patriarch from the formative years of American pop. Composer best-known for the musical *Show Boat*. Song examples include "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," "The Way You Look Tonight," and the timeless "They Didn't Believe Me."

Peggy Lee Star vocalist who also was a gifted lyricist. Her prose includes "It's A Good Day," "Manana," and of course, "Fever."

Bob Merrill Lyricist and scriptwriter whose songs range from the sublime to the ridiculous. Examples include "How Much Is That Doggy in The Window," "Honeycomb," and "People."

Bob Nolan Leader of the Sons of the Pioneers vocal group who penned "Tumbling Tumbleweeds" and the classic "Cool Water."

Cole Porter Another composer whose likeness should be on the Great American Songbook's Mt. Rushmore. Song examples include "Begin the Beguine," "I Get A Kick Out of You," and "I've Got You Under My Skin."

Richard Rodgers Composer of the American soundtrack of the 20th Century, everything from *Victory at Sea* to *The Sound of Music*. Song examples include "Oh What a Beautiful Mornin'," "Some Enchanted Evening," and "Getting to Know You."

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

Sam Stept Composer most active during the 1920s and 1930s whose influence has outlasted most of the recordings of his songs. Some that have survived include “That’s My Weakness Now” and “Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree.”

Jimmy Van Heusen Raconteur, test pilot, and prolific songwriter whose hits spanned from the 1930s through the 1960s. Collaborated mostly with Johnny Burke and later with Sammy Cahn. Song examples include “Call Me Irresponsible,” “Pocketful of Miracles,” and “Love and Marriage.”

Richard Whiting 1920s era composer who had a knack for writing simple, “catchy” tunes that sold incredibly well. Examples include “Hooray for Hollywood,” “Ain’t We Got Fun,” and “The Good Ship Lollipop.”

Popularsong.org



Successful Aging

Neurologist David Levitin, PhD, says successful aging is “the ability to take pleasure from things that you enjoy, to discover new things, and to live your life in a way that is meaningful at any age.”

BottomLine Health

Elephants are capable of swimming 20 miles per day, but it doesn’t seem to help their figure.



George and Ray brought a “Christmas in September” program to the folks at Good Samaritan Village via their CCTV network.

An Amazing Story



The words to *Amazing Grace* are actually a poem written in 1779 by a reformed slave ship captain, John Newton. While legend suggests he

heard the tune being sung by slaves on his ship, this is unlikely. We do know that the current melody (known as *New Britain*) has only been associated with it since the 1830s.

In a popular YouTube video, Wintley Phipps discusses how most Negro spirituals can be played using only a piano’s black keys. *Amazing Grace*, while not an authentic spiritual, also can be played with only the black keys. Contrary to legend, this is not because Black slaves were not allowed to touch the white keys. In fact, it’s unlikely that slaves had any access to pianos. Instead, the black keys, when played in sequence, form what is known as a pentatonic scale, having five notes instead of the seven in the diatonic scale we are familiar with. Pentatonic scales are common in African American music, including music from slavery, but also are common in folk music from many European and Asian cultures.

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members



Shut Down Stress with Fresh Air

If you're feeling overwhelmed or stressed, step outside-or open a window! Researchers say getting more oxygen to the brain is a quick and effective stress-reliever. Taking in a deep breath of fresh air can immediately shift your neurochemistry, they say. *Readers Digest*

Where Did Jack O'Lanterns Come From?



Pumpkins with ghoulish faces illuminated by candles are a sure sign of the Halloween season. The practice of decorating jack-o'-lanterns originated in Ireland, where large turnips and potatoes served as early canvasses. In fact, the name, jack-o'-lantern, comes from an Irish folktale about a man named Stingy Jack. Irish immigrants brought the tradition to America, home of the pumpkin, and it became an integral part of Halloween festivities

According to the story, Stingy Jack invited the Devil to have a drink with him. True to his name, Stingy Jack didn't want to pay for his drink, so he convinced the Devil to turn himself into a coin that Jack could use to buy their drinks. Once the Devil did so, Jack decided to keep the money and put it into his pocket next to a silver cross, which prevented the Devil from changing back into his original form. Jack eventually freed the Devil, under the condition that he would not bother Jack for one year and that, should Jack die, he would not claim his soul. The next year, Jack again tricked the Devil into climbing into a tree to pick a piece of fruit. While he was up in the tree, Jack carved a sign of the cross into the tree's bark so that the Devil could not come down until the Devil promised Jack not to bother him for ten more years. Soon after, Jack died. As the legend goes, God would not allow such an unsavory figure into heaven. The Devil, upset by the trick Jack had played on him and keeping his word not to claim his soul, would not allow Jack into hell. He sent Jack off into the dark night with only a burning coal to light his way. Jack put the coal into a carved-out turnip and has been roaming the Earth with it ever since. The Irish began to refer to this ghostly figure as "Jack of the Lantern," and then, simply "Jack O'Lantern."

NEVER BE AFRAID TO
TRY SOMETHING NEW.
REMEMBER, AMATEURS
BUILT THE ARK;
PROFESSIONALS BUILT
THE TITANIC.