

## The Wizard of Oz: A Whiz of a Score

When M-G-M decided to produce a film musical version of L. Frank Baum's 1900 children's book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the studio's intention was for the film to have cross-generational appeal, appropriate for adults as well as children. M-G-M intended to present Baum's classic fantasy with a Broadway sensibility, utilizing the best performers of the theater and film worlds. The movie's budget was set at 1.7 million dollars, but by the time it was completed, the total had risen to 2.7 million, 65% over budget. When it was released in August 1939, it met with virtually universal acclaim, but didn't go into the black until its theatrical reissue in 1949. *Oz* didn't start reaping substantial profits until 1956, when it was first broadcast on television. Subsequent annual presentations on television, which began in 1959, helped secure the film's status as one of the best-loved motion pictures of all time.

Today, *The Wizard of Oz*, with its enchanting story and memorable songs, has become a cherished tradition in millions of households. The film's groundbreaking musical score includes a number of unforgettable classics, and is considered one of the masterpieces in film music history. Towering among the songs is "Over the Rainbow," which was named Song of the Century on a list compiled by both the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and the National Endowment for the Arts in 2001. Three years later, it was selected as the number one movie song of all time for the American Film Institute's "100 Years... 100 Songs" chart. (Another song from the film: "Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead," came in at number 82.) The songs and the background music were primarily the work of three remarkable men: lyricist E. Y. "Yip" Harburg, composer Harold Arlen, and musical director Herbert Stothart. Together, they fashioned the memorable songs and musical themes that have remained in our collective consciousness for 70 years.

### Yip Harburg

Born as Irwin Hochberg in New York's lower East Side, Edgar Yipsel Harburg (1896–1981) grew up in poverty. Along with his parents, he worked in a ladies' garment sweatshop, in addition to doing other odd jobs in the neighborhood. As a youth, Harburg fell in love

with the Yiddish theater (his nickname, "Yip," was short for "Yipsel," a Yiddish term for a squirrel), and he often went to shows to laugh at the uproarious comedies and cry at the devastating tragedies.

While attending Townsend Harris Hall (which enrolled both high school and college students), Harburg befriended a young Ira Gershwin (1896–1983), who introduced him to the music of Gilbert and Sullivan.

Lyricist W. S. Gilbert, who wrote the hilarious lyrics to the patter songs in their operettas, became



Original Decca 78 rpm record album of songs from *The Wizard of Oz*.

Harburg's first idol. In later years, Harburg discovered the works of other literary wits, including George S. Kaufman, Dorothy Parker, and Marc Connelly, and he voraciously read Franklin P. Adams's "The Conning Tower," an influential column in the *New York World*.

After graduating from the City College of New York, Harburg wrote poetry and spent much time with Ira Gershwin, who had begun a lucrative career writing lyrics for his brother George's Broadway musicals. In 1929, inspired by Ira Gershwin's success, Harburg decided to try his hand at writing lyrics, and thanks to Ira's introduction, began writing songs with composer Jay Gorney (1894–1990). Before he settled into his partnership with Harold Arlen, Harburg wrote songs with 31 different composers. His breakthrough came in 1932 when he wrote lyrics to three revues, including *Americana*, for which Harburg and Gorney wrote one of the most evocative songs of the Depression years, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" While working on *Americana*, Harburg met composer Harold Arlen, and although the two collaborated on just one inconsequential number for the revue ("Satan's Little Lamb"), they worked together again throughout the decade, on the songs "It's Only a Paper Moon" (1932) and "Last Night When We Were Young" (1935), the revues *Life Begins at 8:40* (1934) and *The Show Is On* (1936), and the antiwar musical *Hooray for What!* (1937).

# As Coroner, I Must Aver

Music by Harold Arlen

Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg

Arranged by Dan Coates

Moderately bright

C F

2 5

*mf* As cor - o - ner, I must a - ver. I thor - ough - ly ex -

4 G7 C/E D7 C/E F C/E

1 2 1

am - ined her, and she's not on - ly mere - ly dead, she's

7 F G7 C F G7 C

4 1 2 4 1 2 4 1

real - ly most sin - cere - ly dead. *mp* *rit.* *p*

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Judy Garland and the Munchkins.

MGM/Photofest



The Lullaby League ballerinas, with Judy Garland, during the Munchkinland sequence.

MGM/Photofest

# We're Off to See the Wizard

Music by Harold Arlen

Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg

Arranged by Dan Coates

Moderate march tempo

The musical score is written for piano in 6/8 time. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system is an instrumental introduction. The second system begins with measure 5 and includes the lyrics 'Fol - low the yel - low brick road,'. The third system begins with measure 9 and includes the lyrics 'Fol - low, fol - low, fol - low, fol - low, fol - low the yel - low brick road.' The fourth system begins with measure 13 and includes the lyrics 'Fol - low the rain - bow o - ver the stream, fol - low the fel - low who fol - lows a dream.' Chord symbols are placed above the treble staff, and fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Dynamics include *f*, *p*, and *mf*. A 'with pedal' instruction is present under the first system.

**System 1 (Measures 1-4):** Chords: G7, C/G, G7, C/G, G7. Dynamics: *f*, *p*. Includes 'with pedal' instruction.

**System 2 (Measures 5-8):** Chords: C, G7, C, G7, C. Lyrics: Fol - low the yel - low brick road, fol - low the yel - low brick road. Dynamics: *mf*.

**System 3 (Measures 9-12):** Chords: Am7, D7, G. Lyrics: Fol - low, fol - low, fol - low, fol - low, fol - low the yel - low brick road.

**System 4 (Measures 13-16):** Chords: F, C, G7, C. Lyrics: Fol - low the rain - bow o - ver the stream, fol - low the fel - low who fol - lows a dream.

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# If I Only Had the Nerve

Music by Harold Arlen

Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg

Arranged by Dan Coates

Moderate swing (♩ =  $\overset{\text{3}}{\text{♩}}$ )

*The Cowardly Lion:*

**Measure 1:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Chord: Gm7. Melody: G4 (4), A4 (2), B4 (3), C5. Bass clef: G3 (mf), Bb3, D4.

**Measure 2:** Treble clef: C5 (C7), B4, A4, G4. Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4.

**Measure 3:** Treble clef: F4 (3), E4, D4, C4 (5). Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "Yeah, it's"

**Measure 4:** Treble clef: Bb4 (F), A4, G4, F4. Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "sad, be-lieve me, Mis-sy, when you're"

**Measure 5:** Treble clef: E4 (Dm7), D4, C4, Bb4 (3). Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "born to be a sis-sy with -"

**Measure 6:** Treble clef: A4 (C7), G4, F4, E4 (5). Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "out the vim and verve."

**Measure 7:** Treble clef: D4 (F), C4, Bb4 (Bb), A4. Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "But I"

**Measure 8:** Treble clef: G4 (Gm7), F4, E4, D4. Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "could show my prow-ess, be a"

**Measure 9:** Treble clef: C5 (C7), B4, A4, G4. Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "li - on, not a 'mou-ess' if I"

**Measure 10:** Treble clef: F4 (C7/E), E4, D4, C4. Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "on - ly had the nerve."

**Measure 11:** Treble clef: Bb4 (F), A4, G4, F4. Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "I'm a -"

**Measure 12:** Treble clef: E4 (Gm7), D4, C4, Bb4 (3). Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "fraid there's no de - ny - in', I'm"

**Measure 13:** Treble clef: A4 (C7), G4, F4, E4. Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "I'm"

**Measure 14:** Treble clef: D4 (F), C4, Bb4 (Dm7), A4 (4). Bass clef: G3, Bb3, D4. Lyrics: "I'm"

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# The Merry Old Land of Oz

Music by Harold Arlen

Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg

Arranged by Dan Coates

Moderately, with spirit

F B $\flat$  Gm7 F/C C7 F  
 1 3 3 1 3 4 1  
*mf*  
 5 2 1 2 5

5 Gm C7 F C7  
*mp*  
 2 2 5

9 F Gm7 C F Am  
 4 4 2 3 1  
*mf*  
 2 4 2 4  
 Ha - ha - ha! Ho - ho - ho, and a coup - le of tra - la -

12 B $\flat$ /D C7 F B $\flat$  Gm7 F/C C7  
 4 3 1 2 1 3 4 3 1  
 las. That's how we laugh the day a - way in the mer-ry old Land of

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