

**FAMILIAR SONGS AND THEIR
UNFAMILIAR STORIES:
DISCOVER THE ROOTS OF
AMERICAN SONG**

**PART 4
ALL TOGETHER Now**

If You Believed in Me



Billy Rose wanted just one song for his production of *The Great Magoo*, a Broadway drama by Ben Hecht and Gene Fowler.

Following the great success of Ben Hecht's *The Front Page*, expectations for his new drama were high. It closed after 8 days and 11 performances. But the song lives on.

**Over the Rainbow: The Real-Life
Challenges that Produced the Song of
the Century**



In the opening scene of *The Wizard of Oz*, Judy Garland's performance of *Over the Rainbow* looks so effortless! It gives no hint of the aspirations and struggles that preceded it.

Sandy Schuman
Stories and Music



Sandy Schuman is a storyteller, musician, and educator. He tells stories about songs and songwriters, personal adventures, historical sagas, folk tales, and stories in the Jewish storytelling tradition.

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A Four-Part
Program with
**Sandy
Schuman**

Four 1-hour
sessions that can
be shortened to
one 60-90
minute program
to meet your
scheduling needs

FAMILIAR SONGS AND THEIR UNFAMILIAR STORIES

DISCOVER THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN SONG

Learn how some of the best-known American songs came to be written and uncover their roots. This four-session program features songs from the *Great American Songbook* and stories about the songwriters who wrote them – Harold Arlen, Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Jay Gorney, E. Y. Harburg, and Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter.

PART 1

HUDDIE WILLIAM LEDBETTER: Singer, Songwriter, Murderer; King of the 12-String Guitar



Huddie William Ledbetter, better known as “Lead Belly,” got a bum deal. Was he justly sentenced to prison for murder? Twice? Was he exploited by the man who discovered him? Did he have to share credit for writing the song that became the number one hit of 1950!

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Was he exploited by the man who discovered him? Did he have to share credit for writing the song that became the number one hit of 1950!

PART 2

THE CANTORS’ SONS

God Blessed America for Me



The little known but easily recognized Jewish origins of Irving Berlin’s *God Bless America*, a hit song of 1939 and number 19 of the 365 *Best Songs of the 20th Century*.

And then there’s its most famous parody.

Get Happy



Harold Arlen aspired to a career as a singer and piano player. Serendipity led to his first big hit—in 1929—and a songwriting career that landed many of his songs in

The Great American Songbook.

PART 3

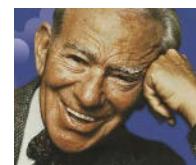
WHO COULD ASK FOR ANYTHING MORE

George had *Chutzpah*, Ira Didn’t!



The surprising Jewish story behind *It Ain’t Necessarily So*, one of the most famous songs from *Porgy and Bess*, the 1935 opera. It was written by George Gershwin and DuBose Heyward, but they needed some help with the lyrics from George’s older brother, Ira. The story begins in 1909, at Ira’s Bar Mitzvah.

The Forgotten Man



E. Y. Harburg lost his electrical appliance business in the Great Crash, was thousands of dollars in debt, and had no way forward.

Acting on the advice of his old high school buddy, he went on to write the lyrics for the Anthem of the Great Depression.

PART 4 ➔