

**SANDY SCHUMAN**

# Song of the Century

Songs and Stories from the  
Great American Songbook

*There is always  
another side to the  
story.*



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## SONG OF THE CENTURY

**The little-known stories behind some of the  
best-known songs and the people who wrote them.**

### The Rhythm Changes

In music, there are many commonly used chord progressions. This one has its own special name. George wrote it; Ira named it. When Ethel sang it –holding one note through the chorus – it made her famous. You can do it too.

### Get Happy

Harold Arlen quit high school to pursue a career in music. He aspired to be a pianist, singer, and musical arranger. When the *Buffalodians*, the hottest dance band in town, made their way to New York City, he went with them. When they retreated to Buffalo, Harold stayed.

### The Forgotten Man

Yip Harburg's electrical appliance business was roaring in the '20s – until he lost it in the Great Crash. He was thousands of dollars in debt and had no way forward – until an old high school buddy suggested he try his hand at writing songs.

### Song of the Century

Which song is “the song of the century”? (I’m talking 20<sup>th</sup> century here, in case you were wondering.) Even without my (sometimes deceptive) hints, you’ll probably figure it out. And, if you think you’ve got it, keep it to yourself! Let the other folks figure it out on their own. More importantly, who wrote it? Let’s give credit where it’s due.