

***The Great American Songbook Through the Lens of Judy Garland***

**An Honors Thesis (MUSP 401)**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis paper, as well as the accompanying recital, delves into the topic of The Great American Songbook Through the Lens of Judy Garland. The Great American Songbook is a collection of American standard repertoire from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. Judy Garland in particular is an exemplary performer of this period; her life parallels the troubles and careers of many other performers in this era. By exploring and performing songs that Garland performed during her career, this paper relates the history of American music to the life of the acclaimed Judy Garland.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Dr. Jon Truitt for the guidance, insight, advice, and training he has provided me with throughout this project and these past four years. His help with the many performance endeavors of my collegiate career has been invaluable.

I would also like to thank my mom and dad for inspiring a curiosity and interest in music at a young age. Lastly, thank you to Julian for always listening with kind and encouraging ears.

## **Process Analysis Statement**

Recitals, concerts, and cabarets are important events in a music educator's profession. These are the culmination of unseen efforts rehearsing music, planning logistics, and organizing personnel. In my chosen career, it is important to understand the process of creating a musical performance; hence, I decided to perform a recital as my honors thesis. This process allowed hands-on experience with every detail involved in planning a concert. Through this process, I have learned how to execute a successful performance from the bottom up, which will be very useful for my future vocation.

The first step in my recital process was to pick a theme. My advisor and I shared several ideas for themes. We discussed the use of politics, subjects, styles, composers, events, and performers as topics for thematic programming of the recital. After three years of classical vocal training, I was eager to branch out into a new style of vocal music. I considered many subjects that were interesting to me, including feminism, political activism, and twentieth century music. I narrowed the range of music to the twentieth century. However, I soon realized that the twentieth century was too broad with far too many musical styles to present a cohesive recital encompassing all twentieth century vocal music. I decided to focus on music that is uniquely American because of my love for jazz and musical theatre. Dr. Truitt suggested that I choose music from the Great American Songbook, a collection of popular American standards from the late nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth century. I liked the idea of exploring music that I have grown up with and heard all my life as an American. However, the Great American Songbook was still too wide a topic for a recital of this length. Dr. Truitt and I shared ideas about how to narrow down the topic using performers, composers, and song subjects as the uniting theme of a recital. I chose to study this music through the lens of Judy Garland. Garland

is one of my favorite American performers. I loved watching her films and listening to her rich alto voice. Additionally, Garland's life closely resembles the average life of a performer in the Great American Songbook era. She experienced the same career pressures as many other performers, such as being force-fed pills to perform well. She also spent most of her career in film in Hollywood and later transitioned to recording and performing concerts. Through this process of narrowing down, I learned that music will always offer a plethora of topics from which to choose. I also learned that there are some subjects too comprehensive to encompass in a single concert or recital. As I plan for my future choral concerts, I need to consider topics that are neither too narrow nor too broad to explore with enough music to fill out a program, but not too much to represent with not enough time.

After we solidified the theme for my recital, I began to select repertoire to perform. I condensed my selections to the Great American Songbook pieces that Judy Garland performed. Judy Garland performed for the entirety of her life, so there were a multitude of choices. I categorized the type of music I was looking for by popular songs that would engage an audience, American standards that I have always wanted to perform, pieces by popular composers, and show tunes from the classic Broadway repertoire. I was programming for many reasons—my audience's interest, my personal taste, and my theme. First, I chose the songs most familiar to me. These were pieces that I have always admired from the Great American Songbook era—"I Got Rhythm", "Someone to Watch Over Me", "Embraceable You", "I've Got You Under My Skin", and "But Not for Me". The benefit of performing songs that Garland performed is that she has sung almost every classic one could name. Next, I discovered many songs that I loved but did not know that she performed. These songs may not be primarily associated with Garland's performance of them, but still they complemented the rest of the repertoire well. These pieces



include “Get Happy”, “The Christmas Song”, “Smile”, and “When You’re Smiling (The Whole World Smiles with You)”. I also discovered many pieces from the musicals that Garland performed in during her career. From *Words and Music*, I found “I Wish I Were in Love Again” and “Johnny One Note”. From *Girl Crazy*, I found “I Got Rhythm”, “Embraceable You”, and “But Not for Me”. I also found wonderful tunes like “After You’ve Gone”, “Look for the Silver Lining”, and “I’m Nobody’s Baby” from *For Me and My Gal*, *Till the Clouds Roll By* and *Andy Hardy Meets Debutante*, respectively. I selected some pieces for particular reasons. For example, I chose “Be a Clown” from *The Pirate* because of its similarity to the piece “Make ‘Em Laugh” from *Singin’ in the Rain*. In my studies, I learned that “Make ‘Em Laugh” by Nacio Herb Brown and Arthur Freed was actually modeled directly on “Be a Clown”; some would even assert that this song was plagiarized (Furia and Patterson 2010, 181). Additionally, I selected “The Trolley Song” from *Meet Me in St. Louis* because I did not want to include the other popular option from that show, “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas”. I felt that two pieces about Christmas on a program in October would be too early for my taste. “The Christmas Song” comes attached with childhood memories, so I chose the nostalgic song instead of the popular one. Lastly, I could not perform a Judy Garland recital without performing the song she ended her concerts with regularly, the favorite of many of her fans, and the one everyone will know—“Over the Rainbow”. After all this discovery of new and familiar music, I had a full program ahead.

Reflecting throughout the process, I realized that there were some pieces that I would have liked to perform, but I did not select at the proper time in the preparation process. Throughout my research process, I found several songs that I connected with and would have enjoyed performing. The song “I Don’t Care” from *In the Good Old Summertime* would have suited my voice very well. I also would have liked to perform this song because of its lyrics;

Garland's character sings about how she does not care what others think of her because she is an independent person. I related well to this message, and I could have conveyed this to my audience. I also regretted not including any compositions by Irving Berlin. To many, he was the epitome of American music in this era. I would have loved to perform "Puttin' on the Ritz", "Blue Skies", or "How Deep Is the Ocean?"—all pieces that Garland performed. Although I missed some repertoire opportunities, I had to make choices by a certain date and within certain limits. The same will happen for choir concerts in the future. As a director, one must make their best effort to present a performance that exhibits the knowledge they have at the present time and their assessment of the choir's present ability.

This process of selecting repertoire for a themed recital felt quite similar to compiling repertoire for a choir concert. In my career, I will have to program many concerts for all sorts of vocal ensembles. In the future, I will explore my topic much further and utilize more resources for discovering music that I found useful during my research—YouTube, books, and score collections. These are the best places to discover quality repertoire of a particular theme. I would also like for my next program to be prepared further in advance. I had solidified my repertoire by the second week of classes, leaving seven weeks of preparation for my recital. This was an acceptable amount of time for myself, my teacher, and my accompanist to prepare and perform an excellent recital. However, for any musician, the more time we have to practice, the better a piece or a program becomes. I will set a goal to have repertoire selected, ordered, and programmed by the end of summer break, while I am creating my curriculum and preparing for the next school year. The hands on experience of selecting repertoire completely at my discretion was a valuable experience as an educator. I am pleased with the choices I made, but I also learned what I would do to improve this process in the future.



After all the thought, research, and selection, I had about an hour's worth of music—eighteen songs that Judy Garland performed. I then needed to make a program for the recital. Recitals can include small sets of repertoire with common themes. These may be according to topics, composers, chronological order, or something of the like. I also could have grouped these songs according to the timeline of Garland's career. Out of all these options, I chose to group these songs by topic because I felt that was how I could best help the audience understand what songs from the Great American Songbook era were about. The first set of pieces I named *Songs for Entertainment*. These pieces explored music, mostly from the '30s, that was written for fun and to entertain. From songs like "Be a Clown" to "Get Happy" to "I Got Rhythm", these pieces lifted your spirits and gathered the audience's attention. During the 1930's, the Great Depression allowed music to be a relief from hardships for many Americans. These exciting pieces would definitely lift a listener's spirits during hard times. I chose to start the recital with these attention-getters to ensure the audience that they would not regret their decision to come hear Great American Songbook music. Next, I noticed that there were several pieces about love. Some pieces were joyful, some were mournful. I grouped them into two sets of *Popular Love Songs*—these had positive, happy themes—and *Wistful Love Songs*—these had negative, blue themes. Songs that fit into these two categories comprise a large majority of Great American Songbook repertoire; therefore, I feel that it was necessary to underscore the theme of love in both a positive and negative light. The program also created a narrative between these two sets. The second set, *Popular Love Songs*, began with "Someone to Watch Over Me". In this song, the lover is thinking about someone they might have had a chance with. Then, the lover falls more in love with this person in "Embraceable You" and "I've Got You Under My Skin". Finally, the second set concludes with "Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart" as the love between the two of

these people reaches a climax. In the third set, which was after intermission, something has happened in the relationship. “After You’ve Gone” is a piece where the lover warns their partner about what will happen if they leave. Then, they are gone and the lover is alone in “I’m Nobody’s Baby” and “But Not for Me”. The third set ends with a clever nod to the cyclical nature of relationships in “I Wish I Were in Love Again”. This piece talks about the good and the bad in relationships that the lover actually ends up missing over the years. The final set explores pieces concerning nostalgic and optimistic themes. After searching for repertoire, I realized that many of these songs have positive maxims, like “Look for the Silver Lining” and “When You’re Smiling (The Whole World Smiles with You)”. This repertoire also focuses on making the best of all hard situations, as in “Smile”. In the early era of modernization, Americans went through a lot of change, financial hardship, and social development. “The Christmas Song” shows the nostalgic side of America, the one where chestnuts roasting and yuletide carols are not just a thing of the past. These songs reminded Americans that even though everything around you is changing, life is still worth it. This attitude was a distinctly American feature of this time. I put this set at the end because Judy Garland usually ended her concerts with “Over the Rainbow”, a song with clear nostalgic and optimistic themes. It was like a sweet dessert of American nostalgia pie for the recital. It was surprisingly easy to draft a program order after creating themes for the sets. I will keep these ideas in mind when creating sets for my future choirs’ concerts—grouping chronologically, by topic, or by composer.

After selecting repertoire and solidifying the program, I learned the music. This stage in the process was the longest and the one in which I made the most growth. My program consisted of eighteen songs, which was more music than I have ever learned at once before. This process allowed me to apply principles that I have learned from the past three years of voice lessons and



music education classes. As a voice student, I learned what method works best for me to prepare and rehearse music regularly. First, I start learning the pitches of a piece because this is the area in which I am most successful. Then, I add in rhythm to these pitches and isolate any rhythm with which I have particular difficulty. In “Johnny One Note”, I had to spend a lot of my rehearsal on one rhythm—a dotted quarter followed by two tied eighths, and another dotted quarter in cut time. I listened to recordings of Judy Garland singing “Johnny One Note” to sing along and feel the rhythm of the piece. After I am singing a piece accurately, I find particular words or sections that need special attention to vowels, resonance, diction, or breath support with the help of my voice teacher. During my voice lessons, it felt like a culmination of all the work I had done with my voice in the past three years. I learned how to control my larynx and keep it relaxed throughout all parts of my range. I trained myself to breathe from a low place and use that air for supported singing. I focused on the position of my soft palate and learned how to keep it raised while singing. Reflecting on my past growth, this recital demonstrates my ability to understand and apply concepts of vocal performance. This will be beneficial experience for the vocal coaching I will have to do with my students. Throughout the process of learning a piece, I memorize as I am able. Usually, the first thing I memorize is the melody. Then, I memorize the words by speaking the text, rehearsing trouble lines, and including lots of repetition. These rehearsal strategies for memorization would apply well to the choral setting. As I memorize music, the easier it becomes to make the performance especially expressive. Without sheet music to distract me, I can focus on my facial expressions and gestures, the message of the piece, and how to convey the latter through the former. My voice teacher and I discussed movement and gestures throughout the program. Through the process of learning this music, I also learned how to sing healthily in a style other than classical singing. Dr. Truitt and I worked to obtain a

brighter tone to my voice to project more in my higher range. By brightening my tone, it allowed me to sound full and rich without reverting to classical vowel shapes. It was interesting to learn a different way to shape my resonator to achieve a different style of sound. As I rehearsed with accompaniment, I also began to learn many performance practices of this era. Many of my pieces contained repeated sections; sometimes the whole piece would repeat. My voice teacher, my accompanist, and I decided together which repeats to take and which to skip or alter in some way. For example, in "Someone to Watch Over Me", instead of repeating the entire refrain, we repeated the latter half of the refrain. We chose not to repeat the entire section to keep the audience from becoming bored. Part of this repeat was just piano; my accompanist improvised rhythmically and melodically, as is custom in this genre of music. In "The Trolley Song", we kept the repeat as written, but I modified the rhythm and melodic contour of the line to create interest. Without the variations, there would be no need to repeat the same material. I created variations in other pieces with repeats, such as "Get Happy", "When You're Smiling", and "I Got Rhythm". Another performance practice was to repeat the last line of the song as a tag ending. In "I've Got You Under My Skin", I repeated the last line three times in different variations. After learning the music, making musical decisions, and memorizing the material, I was finally ready to present a recital. However, there was still a lot to prepare ahead of me.

Through the process of planning a recital, I experienced many logistical decisions that come with creating an excellent program. First, I had to find an accompanist. This style of music required a pianist with substantial skills, particularly experience with jazz repertoire. I asked several graduate student accompanists, but none of the ones I asked were available. My advisor recommended that I ask Dr. Jim Rhinehart, a professor in the music theory faculty at Ball State. He had significant experience with Great American Songbook music; he was the best candidate



for the job. Luckily, he was available during my lessons, my dress rehearsal, and my recital. After securing an accompanist for my recital, I still had many logistical decisions ahead. One component of my recital was a PowerPoint to show pictures of Garland. These included pictures from the movies she was in, pictures from concerts, and headshots. To find these photographs, I utilized the library's resources. I found several books full of pictures of Garland's career, and I scanned these into the computer to use for my PowerPoint. I also realized that in order to show the PowerPoint, I needed to secure equipment—a projector, projector screen, extension cord, and Macbook adapter. Thankfully, the library had these items available for rent. I also had to consider where to store these items in the meantime, how to transport such large equipment, and who would click the slides for the presentation. These are decisions I did not anticipate having to make, but I settled every detail as it came along. In addition to the PowerPoint, I also wanted to include a short speech before each set to introduce the theme of each set, as well as relay some background knowledge to the audience. I had to limit the wealth of information I had about Judy Garland and the Great American Songbook to a few choice details that connected the audience to the pieces. I included information about Garland's career throughout her life—from Vaudeville to MGM and beyond. I also explained the cultural context and American attitudes of the time, which affected the way I grouped the sets. After creating the additional visual and aural supplements to my recital, I had to decide how to set up the equipment in the recital hall. For the PowerPoint, I made sure that it was in a spot that was within reaching distance of an outlet, as well as visible for every audience member. I also had to decide if the piano lid should be open, closed, or half open. My advisor and I decided that a closed lid was the best option due to the balance needed between my accompanist and me. Lastly, I needed to consider what to include in my program notes. These usually include background information about the pieces and lyrics



and/or translations. Since my program was entirely in English, I did not need any translations. I also decided to omit the lyrics from my program notes because I had too many pieces to fit them into a document of reasonable length. I tried doing so at first, and it ended up being ten pages of lyrics alone. My program notes included information such as the date of the piece, the composer, the lyricist, the show the piece is from, when Garland performed the piece, musical elements to listen for, and interesting tidbits about the piece. After creating this document, I also had to ensure that I printed enough copies for each expected audience member. Throughout the process, I gathered an audience for my recital. There is no program if there is no one to listen to you perform. I utilized social media and word of mouth to gather an audience for my recital. On Snapchat, I posted an image of Judy Garland with details of the event to my story. I also posted videos of Garland's performance of "Get Happy" to give my possible audience a taste of the music I would be performing. I created a Facebook event and invited everyone I thought would possibly attend. I told all my peers and friends to mark their calendars on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. I also invited the people in my community church choir. However, I do not believe that I did enough to recruit the size of audience that I wanted. The day of the recital, I had an audience of about thirty people. In addition to the methods I used, I would have liked to post flyers around the music buildings and other areas around campus. Although I would have liked more people to have physically been present at my recital, I also had many people view my recital online through a Facebook live event that I created. This choice proved very helpful because it made the recital available to people who were out-of-state, busy, or simply did not know about it. I found that many people came to me after my performance and said they enjoyed watching my live video, wishing they could have been there in person. Additionally, many people did not know that I had recorded the recital, so I was able to point them toward the live video after they told me they

were sad to have missed it. These logistical decisions were an integral part to creating a successful recital.

All of these seemingly small logistical decisions must be made in a timely manner in order to ensure a successful program. In an educator's position, these decisions—finding an accompanist, planning visual elements, writing speaking and program notes, gathering an audience—have to be made for every concert. It was useful to have the hands on experience of locating materials and making decisions on my own. I liked the freedom of being the sole person responsible for how to plan my recital, but it also came with a lot of responsibility. In the classroom, I will face the same situation. The success of each choir concert rests largely in my hands. After experiencing what goes on behind the scenes of a musical program, I have learned what I will replicate and improve from this process.

After two short months of rehearsal, I had prepared enough to successfully execute this recital. I had selected the program, learned the music, studied the history of the pieces, and made all logistical decisions. The day of the recital was relaxed, exciting, and stress-free. Since I had worked hard during the rehearsal process, I was not worried about how the recital would go. I will be able to utilize this model of the rehearsal process to plan for a stress-free concert day in the future. The performance of "The Great American Songbook through the Lens of Judy Garland" went very well. I was relaxed and comfortable in front of my audience, which enabled me to perform at my best. The audio of my recital is available for listening in the accompanying CD. The process of executing a senior honors recital was incredibly beneficial as a music educator and a performer. I will take this hands-on experience and apply it to the first year in my career.



Throughout the process of preparing a recital, I gleaned a wealth of information about the Great American Songbook era, Judy Garland, and the pieces that I performed. The Great American Songbook is not a physical book of songs, but rather a collection of American standards from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. Since Judy Garland performed from around 1932 to 1969, I mainly studied music written around this period. The standards of the Great American Songbook often coincide with events in American society during this time. In the 1920s, the prohibition of alcohol in America created the need for speakeasies. Music of this decade was buzzing with the influence of jazz. The speakeasies allowed many opportunities for African-American composers to play their jazz pieces, like “Fats” Waller (Kuehn 2003). The 1920s also include the rise of Tin Pan Alley, an area of New York where many music publishers and composers worked, including George Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Irving Berlin, and Cole Porter. Many of these composers were of Jewish heritage, which had an influence on their style of American music. When the stock market crashed in 1929, America’s economy took a downturn. Consequentially, American music tried to lift the spirits of the American people affected by the Great Depression. Songs like “Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries” by Ray Henderson and Lew Brown and “Happy Days Are Here Again” by Milton Ager and Jack Yellen focus on optimistic themes (Kuehn 2003). People were celebrating when prohibition ended in 1933, which created a distinctly American touch of optimism during this period. While the Great Depression affected many industries, the radio industry escaped misfortune; music became America’s choice of entertainment in this era. This period of America also saw the rise of Hollywood as a major place of influence in the movie industry. In the late 1930s, many composers and lyricists fled to the West from Tin Pan Alley, like Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, George and Ira Gershwin, Lorenz Hart, and Harold Arlen (Kuehn 2003). During



this time, Hollywood musicals influenced American popular music because of these important composers. Like most periods, music from the Great American Songbook era mirrored events and attitudes of society at the time.

An important facet of the Great American Songbook is the influence of the leading composers and lyricists of this time. Many prolific composers created countless American standard repertoire pieces. Some composers and lyricists paired up to form songwriting duos, like Rodgers and Hart or George and Ira Gershwin. George Gershwin began his career as a composer and pianist in New York. He often used the “blue chord”—a major chord with a flatted seventh—in his music (Kuehn 2003). In their songwriting process, George Gershwin composed piano music, and then his brother Ira Gershwin would write lyrics. My recital included several Gershwin songs—“I Got Rhythm”, “Someone to Watch Over Me”, “Embraceable You”, and “But Not for Me”. Richard Rodgers was another great American composer of musical theatre. He teamed with lyricist Lorenz Hart to write songs that I performed, including “Johnny One Note” and “I Wish I Were in Love Again”. Later, Rodgers paired with Oscar Hammerstein. Together the two of them wrote the music for *The King and I*, *The Sound of Music*, *Oklahoma*, and more. Another influential pair of the time was Harold Arlen and E. Y. Harburg. These two wrote the music for *The Wizard of Oz*, including Garland’s famous performance of “Over the Rainbow”. The collaboration between composers and lyricists was an important aspect of Great American Songbook music. Some composers also wrote the lyrics for their music, like Cole Porter. He wrote the music for *Anything Goes*, an American musical from 1934. Porter also wrote “Be a Clown” and “I’ve Got You Under My Skin”, two selections from my recital repertoire. These composers created an abundance of American standard repertoire during this period.

Music from the Great American Songbook era has a distinct style that results from its historical influence. The American style of music in this era inherited influences from English folktunes, Viennese operettas, the rhythm of African music, the harmonic progression of the blues, music from Jewish and Irish immigrants, call and response music, spirituals, work songs, and the syncopation of ragtime (Kuehn 2003). The fusion of many elements together created the distinct American sound that became popular during the early twentieth century. The melodies could range from pentatonic in Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm" to the chromaticism of Porter's work. They also include harmonically interesting structures, as in Mel Tormé's "The Christmas Song". This repertoire also has common forms used throughout the era. Often, these songs would include an introductory section to place the listener within the context of the song. Several of the songs from my recital included introductory sections, including "I Got Rhythm", "Someone to Watch Over Me", "Get Happy", "Over the Rainbow", and "Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart". Many of these songs include repeats of refrains or the whole song. In my recital, I performed some repeats and omitted others, as is custom in this style of music. These composers implemented some repeats of the same melodic and lyric material because it allowed performers to improvise rhythms and melodies in the repeat section. I performed "Get Happy", "When You're Smiling (The Whole World Smiles with You)", "The Trolley Song", and "I Got Rhythm" in this manner with vocal variations in the repeat. This type of repertoire also allows for instrumental variation for accompanists. My accompanist was quite adept at improvising within the harmonic progression and melodic contour of the song, as in "I Got Rhythm". These features make American music of this era distinct from any other kinds of music.

With Judy Garland as the thread tying my recital together, I learned a lot about her life and career. Judy Garland was born Frances Ethel Gumm in 1922. From a very young age, she



performed with her sisters in their group, The Gumm Sisters (Edwards 1974, 14-15). After an unfortunate misspelling of their name as “The Glum Sisters”, they changed their title to The Garland Sisters. Frances Gumm adopted the new name “Judy” from the song of the same title by Hoagy Carmichael (Edwards 1974, 26-27). Garland also performed vaudeville acts in the early part of her career. Her big discovery came when Garland sang “Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart” for Jack Robbins, the talent executive for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (DiOrlo 1973, 30). After she sang, they brought in Louis B. Mayer to listen to Garland. Two months later, she was signed to MGM (DiOrlo 1973, 30). Garland starred in several musicals throughout her career at MGM. Many of these films featured Mickey Rooney as her performing partner. The *Andy Hardy* series created a story of the relationship between Judy Garland as the girl next door and Mickey Rooney as Andy Hardy (Shipman 1992, 112). In my program, “I’m Nobody’s Baby” comes from *Andy Hardy Meets Debutante* (1940). Aside from the Andy Hardy series, Garland also starred in many other films with Rooney at her side, including *Girl Crazy* and *Words and Music*. Garland’s career with MGM ended in 1950 with her appearance in *Summer Stock*. After her career with MGM, she produced a few more movies, like *A Star Is Born* (1954); however, her focus during this time was on concerts and vocal performances instead of film. In 1961, Garland booked a concert in Carnegie Hall. The resulting recording, *Judy at Carnegie Hall*, solidified her career comeback and earned a Grammy for album of the year (Deans and Pinchot 1972, 187). Garland’s success throughout her career is evident by the numerous fan clubs she had and the legacy she left on American music. However, her success did not come without troubles. Due to the high-pressure environment of her work, Garland was working as many as twelve hours a day for six days a week at the age of fourteen (Deans and Pinchot 1972, 11). In order to cope with such a demanding job, the studio gave her pills for many reasons—amphetamines to keep her



awake and alert, barbiturates to put her to sleep, and diet pills to make her lose weight (Deans and Pinchot 1972, 11). The effects of these pills were detrimental to Garland's mental well-being, which suffered on the movie set of *Annie Get Your Gun*, resulting in Garland being fired. Garland even suffered to the point of attempting suicide to avoid getting up and facing the day ahead of her (Deans and Pinchot 1972, 14). Aside from forced drug addiction and mental health issues, Garland also endured several different marriages throughout her life. Unfortunately, every one of them ended in separation. Garland's experience in show business demonstrates the reality for many performers throughout this era. Many of them experienced the same loneliness, forced drug addiction, overburdening, and emotional turmoil that Garland did. Although the crowds loved her ceaselessly, Garland still suffered many hardships in her life, including incredible loneliness. From success to seclusion, Garland's life proves that she was able to persevere despite the obstacles she faced.

Through the process of creating, planning, and executing a senior honors recital, I experienced firsthand every decision and element that comes with planning a performance. The practical application of this process will be exceedingly beneficial to me in my career as a choral director. After delving deep into the historical background of the Great American Songbook and Judy Garland, I have learned much more about the history, style, and context of American music.

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## Appendix A: Program Notes

### *Songs for Entertainment*

**“Johnny One Note”** from *Babes in Arms* and *Words and Music* by Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and Lorenz Hart (1895-1943)

“Johnny One Note” is a Broadway tune from the musical *Babes in Arms* (1937) by the popular pair, Rodgers and Hart. Judy Garland starred in the 1939 movie version of the musical with her stage partner, Mickey Rooney. This movie featured the pair’s vaudevillian background and showcased their many talents. Garland performed “Johnny One Note” again in the 1948 biopic *Words and Music*, which was about the partnership of Rodgers and Hart.

**“I Got Rhythm”** from *Girl Crazy* by George (1898-1937) and Ira (1896-1983) Gershwin

“I Got Rhythm” is a popular jazz standard composed by the brothers George and Ira Gershwin. The song originally appeared in the 1930 musical *Girl Crazy*, performed by Ethel Merman. Judy Garland reprised Merman’s role in the 1943 remake of *Girl Crazy*. “I Got Rhythm” is popular among jazz instrumentalists chiefly for its simplicity and regularity. Jazz musicians use the “rhythm changes”—or harmonies—of the song to improvise. The predictable harmonies and phrases allow musicians much room for chord substitutions and improvising new melodies.

**“Be a Clown”** from *The Pirate* by Cole Porter (1891-1964)

“Be a Clown” is a piece written by Cole Porter for the 1948 film *The Pirate*. Judy Garland starred in this film, which was directed by her then husband, Vincente Minnelli. Garland performed “Be a Clown” with her co-star Gene Kelly dressed in huge baggy clown suits. The bit was full of clownish jokes, like being hit over the head with a club and wiggling ears. The song was particularly well suited to Garland’s personality. Controversy sparked when Nacio Herb Brown and Arthur Freed composed their tune “Make ‘Em Laugh” for the musical *Singin’ in the Rain*. Listen carefully to “Be a Clown” and you will find that these two tunes are remarkably similar, some have even deemed “Make ‘Em Laugh” as plagiarism of Porter’s song.

**“Get Happy”** from *Summer Stock* by Harold Arlen (1905-1986) and Ted Koehler (1894-1973)

This piece is a spiritually-tinted American standard composed by Harold Arlen and lyricist Ted Koehler. The lyrics were inspired by African-American spirituals, featuring language like “judgment day”, “The River”, “Hallelujah”, and “the Lord”. Although the song was composed in 1929, popularity for the song came from Garland’s performance of “Get Happy” in the 1950 MGM film *Summer Stock*. In this movie, her last film with MGM, she exhibited noticeable differences in her figure. For the film’s finale, Garland performed “Get Happy” thirty pounds lighter, but the difference in her size did not deter her fans from adoring the number.

**“The Trolley Song”** from *Meet Me in St. Louis* by Ralph Blane (1914-1995) and Hugh Martin (1914-2011)

“The Trolley Song” is an upbeat number about falling in love on a trolley from the 1944 musical film *Meet Me in St. Louis*. The composition of “The Trolley Song” came about by an interesting discovery. As Ralph Blane perused books about St. Louis in the Beverly Hills Public Library, he encountered a picture of a trolley from 1903. Underneath, the words, “Clang, clang, clang went the trolley” were scrawled. Blane brought the words to Hugh Martin, and roughly ten minutes later they had composed a song that they had been struggling to write for a while.

### *Popular Love Songs*

**“Someone to Watch Over Me”** by George (1898-1937) and Ira (1896-1983) Gershwin

“Someone to Watch Over Me” is a classic Great American Songbook tune from the 1927 musical *Oh, Kay!* by George and Ira Gershwin. This song is typical of Gershwin because of its form and content—the self-contained thirty-two-bar melody in four phrases, the AABA form. Although the material is usual for Gershwin, countless musicians have performed this standard, from Willie Nelson to Frank Sinatra to Judy Garland.

**“Embraceable You”** from *Girl Crazy* by George (1898-1937) and Ira (1896-1983) Gershwin

“Embraceable You” is another Gershwin tune from the 1930 musical *Girl Crazy*. In this song, Ira Gershwin plays with unusual rhymes in tandem with George’s articulatory rests, as in “embraceable you” and “irreplaceable you”. Listen for the musical punctuation within each phrase. Judy Garland performed “Embraceable You” in the 1943 MGM remake of *Girl Crazy*.

**“I’ve Got You Under My Skin”** by Cole Porter (1891-1964)

“I’ve Got You Under My Skin” was written by Cole Porter for the 1936 movie musical *Born to Dance*. The song exhibits Latin-American influenced rhythms and harmonies, a special interest in 1930s American music. Porter’s use of repetitious melodic motives highlight the ease of embellishing this class American standard.

**“Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart”** by James F. Hanley (1892-1942)

“Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart” is a tune from the 1938 MGM film *Listen, Darling*. Garland performed this piece at the young age of sixteen. However, this song was also the start of her famous career. Jack Robbins, head of MGM’s sheet music company, listened to Garland perform “Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart” and sensed the depth of talent in her. This was the beginning of a long, sometimes arduous career for Garland at MGM Studios.



*Wistful Love Songs*

**“After You’ve Gone (And Left Me Crying)”** from *For Me and My Gal* by Turner Layton (1894-1942) and Henry Creamer (1879-1930)

“After You’ve Gone” is a tune incorporated into the 1942 MGM musical *For Me and My Gal*, starring Judy Garland and Gene Kelly. Although this popular American song was composed in 1918 apart from the musical, Garland has made the song her own. She often performed “After You’ve Gone” as a concert piece, adding a slower, bluesy verse at the end of the song. This song also exhibits Garland’s transformation from mostly Hollywood and vaudeville practices to the refined New York style of music.

**“I’m Nobody’s Baby”** from *Andy Hardy Meets Debutante* by Benny Davis (1895-1979), Milton Ager (1893-1979), and Lester Santly (1894-1983)

This song is a 1927 tune by Benny Davis, Milton Ager, and Lester Santly. “I’m Nobody’s Baby” appears in the 1940 MGM film *Andy Hardy Meets Debutante*. Mickey Rooney played the Andy Hardy character for a large portion of his career, but this film marks the beginning of the dynamic duo of Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney. In the film, Garland sings the tune plaintively as she longs for the boy next door.

**“But Not for Me”** from *Girl Crazy* by George (1898-1937) and Ira (1896-1983) Gershwin

“But Not for Me” is yet another of George and Ira Gershwin’s numerous Great American Songbook standards from the 1930 musical *Girl Crazy*. Garland starred with her partner, Mickey Rooney, in a 1943 MGM remake of the musical. Ira’s lyrics in this jazz tune are poignant and clever, although comprised of many cliché phrases. Listen for the witty turn of phrase at the end of the piece; a twist on the words was a signature idea of Ira Gershwin.

**“I Wish I Were in Love Again”** from *Words and Music* by Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and Lorenz Hart (1895-1943)

“I Wish I Were in Love Again” was originally intended for the 1937 Rodgers and Hart musical *Babes in Arms*, but it did not make the cut. Instead, MGM brought the tune back for the 1948 Rodgers and Hart biopic *Words and Music*, where Judy Garland played herself and Mickey Rooney played Lorenz Hart. Hart’s clever lyrics characterize an unusual look at love—“the lovely loving and the hateful hates”. Listen to the words to grasp the resentment and longing the performer feels toward being in love.

*Nostalgic & Optimistic Songs*

**“The Christmas Song”** by Mel Tormé (1925-1999) and Robert Wells (1922-1979)

“The Christmas Song” was composed by Mel Tormé and Robert Wells in 1945. This holiday tune marked the beginning of a new genre—popular holiday songs pressed into 78 rpm records. These holiday tunes had little to do with Christian theology, but they did encompass a nostalgic



longing for the American past. The modernization of the twentieth century made many Americans want to turn back to the old way of life. “The Christmas Song” perfectly plays on this sentiment with symbols of chestnuts roasting, mistletoe, Jack Frost, and yuletide carols. Listen for the reference to a favorite past holiday carol in the piano accompaniment.

**“Look for the Silver Lining”** from *Till the Clouds Roll By* by Jerome Kern (1885-1945) and Buddy DeSylva (1895-1950)

“Look for the Silver Lining” is a song by Jerome Kern and Buddy DeSylva. The piece was included in the 1947 fictionalized biopic about Jerome Kern, *Till the Clouds Roll By*. Judy Garland appeared as the Broadway star Marilyn Miller. “Look for the Silver Lining” joins this set as a piece rife with optimism and a tinge of nostalgia, both prominent themes in the Great American Songbook.

**“Smile”** by Charles Chaplin (1889-1977), John Turner (b. 1932), and Geoffrey Parsons (1929-1995)

“Smile” is an instrumental tune from the 1936 movie *Modern Times*, starring Charlie Chaplin. The lyrics, added by John Turner and Geoffrey Parsons, exemplify the uniquely American attitude of optimism that prevailed during the 1940s and 1950s. Judy Garland made the song her own, and brought her distinct voice to the piece. It became a regular concert piece for Garland.

**“When You’re Smiling (The Whole World Smiles with You)”** by Mark Fisher (1895-1948), Joe Goodwin (1889-1943), and Larry Shay (1897-1988)

“When You’re Smiling” is a popular American standard written in 1928 by Mark Fisher, Joe Goodwin, and Larry Shay. Judy Garland incorporated this song into her magnificent concert program: Judy at Carnegie Hall. This song exhibits the optimism present in American songwriting during the first half of the twentieth century. Listen and compare this piece to “Smile”, both of which have similar subjects with different philosophic approaches.

**“Over the Rainbow”** from *The Wizard of Oz* by Harold Arlen (1905-1986) and E. Y. Harburg (1896-1981)

“Over the Rainbow” is the most recognized piece Judy Garland performed in her repertoire. This song is from the 1939 MGM musical *The Wizard of Oz*. “Over the Rainbow” was awarded Best Song of the Year, despite nearly being cut from the film several times. This piece is a classic example of the hopeful attitude Americans held at the end of the 1930s looking forward to the end of the Great Depression. Judy Garland most often ended her concerts with this famous showstopper.

## Appendix B: Recital Speaking Notes

Good afternoon! Thank you for coming to share great American music with me. This recital fills part of the requirements of my honors degree, so I am also completing a thesis alongside my preparation of these songs. The theme I chose to study is The Great American Songbook through the Lens of Judy Garland. The Great American Songbook is not an actual physical book of music, but rather a collection of American standard compositions from the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century to the 1950s. The American style of music in this era inherited influences from English folk tunes, Viennese operettas, the rhythm of African music, the harmonic progression of the blues, music from Jewish and Irish immigrants, call and response music, spirituals, work songs, and the syncopation of ragtime. Judy Garland in particular is an exemplary performer of this era. She sang countless American standards in her performance career, from earlier songs like “After You’ve Gone” to later tunes like “The Christmas Song”. Her career began in vaudeville, like many other stars, with The Gumm Sisters. She was born Frances Ethel Gumm and began performing with her sisters at a very young age. Later on, she was signed to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios and starred in countless movies during her time there. She had numerous fan clubs. Although her life was plagued with troublesome events like drug addiction and pressure to lose weight, she is still remembered fondly for the indelible mark she made on American music.

Each set for the evening has a theme. I will begin tonight’s recital with “Songs for Entertainment”. These songs were mostly composed during the 1930s, the era of the Great Depression. During this decade, the American people were looking for distraction from the hard financial troubles many were facing. This set represents well the American tendency to set aside troubles and woes to find the happy aspects of life, like falling in love on a trolley. Now, come on, let’s get happy!

This next set of songs is a few popular love songs of the time. Love was often the main focus of movies and musicals. I’ll begin with two standards by the brothers George & Ira Gershwin that were often performed, followed by a Cole Porter classic. Keep an ear out for the language similar to “The Trolley Song” in “Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart”.

As quickly as they fall in love in the movies, they quickly fall out of it. This set begins with the breakup—“After You’ve Gone”—and ends with a wish to be in love again, but probably not in the way you might expect. In these musicals and movies, the couple at hand was often Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney. They partnered up for “I Wish I Were in Love Again” from *Words and Music*. Garland also sings wistfully that she’s nobody’s baby in *Andy Hardy Meets Debutante*, with Rooney as Andy Hardy.

The final set concerns the themes nostalgia and optimism. These are two distinctly American concepts in this style of music and this era of society. Americans were looking back to a simpler way of life during the modernization of society, as in “The Christmas Song”. They were looking for music to celebrate the hope of the future, despite the prevalence of hardship and war, and these songs encapsulate those desires perfectly.