

Starr-Waterman

American Popular Music

Chapter 4: “I Got Rhythm”: The Golden Age of Tin Pan Alley Song, 1920s and 1930s

Student Study Outline

- I. Influential and Commercially Successful Songs
 - a. **Irving Berlin** (1888–1989)
 - b. Richard Rodgers (1902–1979)
 - c. **Cole Porter** (1891–1964)
 - d. **George Gershwin** (1898–1938)
 - i. **Al Jolson** (1886–1950)
- II. Tin Pan Alley Song Form
 - a. AABA structure and verse-and-chorus forms
 - b. **Verse-refrain** form
 - i. **Verse**
 - ii. **Refrain**
- III. Box 4.1: Irving Berlin
 - a. **Irving Berlin** (1888–1989)
- IV. Listening Guide: “Deed I Do”
 - a. Music by Fred Rose, lyrics by Walter Hirsch; performed by Ruth Etting (1926)
 - i. Tin Pan Alley form: Intro (hook) + Verse + AABA Refrain
- V. What Were Tin Pan Alley Songs About?
 - a. Popular songs and the musical plays and films in which they appear were designed to help people escape the pressures of daily life
 1. Middle-class culture
 2. Romantic love
 - a. First-person lyrics
 - b. **Crooning**
- VI. Listening Guide: “My Blue Heaven”
 - a. Music by Walter Donaldson, lyrics by George Whiting; published 1924; performed by Gene Austin; recorded 1927
 - i. **Crooners**
- VII. Listening Guide: “April Showers”
 - a. Music by Louis Silvers, lyrics by Buddy DeSylva; published 1921; performed by Al Jolson; recorded 1921
 - b. Music by Louis Silvers, lyrics by Buddy DeSylva; published 1921; performed by Al Jolson; recorded 1932
- VIII. Listening Guide: “How Deep Is the Ocean?”
 - a. Lyrics and music by Irving Berlin; performed by Bing Crosby; recorded 1932
 - b. **Bing Crosby** (1904–1977)
 - c. **Minor key to major key**
- IX. Box 4.2: Al Jolson: A Vaudevillian Pop Star
 - a. **Al Jolson** (1886–1950)

- X. What Makes a Song a “Standard?”
 - a. Popular songs that endure
 - b. **Standards**
 - c. “I Got Rhythm”
 - i. **George and Ira Gershwin**
- XI. Listening Guide: “I Got Rhythm”
 - a. Music by George Gershwin, lyrics by Ira Gershwin; published 1930; performed by Ethel Merman; recording 1947
 - b. **Up-tempo**
- XII. **George Gershwin** (1898–1937)
- XIII. Tin Pan Alley and Broadway
 - a. Proximity of music publishers on Tin Pan Alley to the stages of Broadway; the center of popular music publishing and musical theatre performance
 - b. Long-standing relationship between popular songs and Broadway shows
- XIV. Key Terms

Bridge	Minor key	Up-tempo
Crooners	Refrain	Verse
Crooning	Release	Verse-refrain
Major key	Standards	

- XV. Key People

Al Jolson	Cole Porter	Ira Gershwin
Bing Crosby	George Gershwin	Irving Berlin