

"I've Got Rhythm"
Program Notes

An American in Paris – George Gershwin, arr. John Whitney

George Gershwin was one of the first composers of American classical music. He created a uniquely American sound. He was a classically trained pianist who composed at a time when music was undergoing some changes. In 1926 he went to Paris to study with Maurice Ravel who was experimenting with new chord progressions. Ravel encouraged him to use his own creativity and become a great composer in his own style. After that trip, Gershwin came back to the states with a piece entitled "Very Parisienne," which later became "An American in Paris." He not only used modern chord progressions and rhythms but he added Parisian taxi horns and saxophone to the orchestration. He called it a "rhapsodic ballet," but it wasn't choreographed until 1951 when Gene Kelly choreographed it for the movie.

Let's Do It (Let's Fall in Love) – Cole Porter, arr. Mike Lewis

This song was written by Cole Porter in 1928 for his first Broadway musical, "Anything Goes." It has been used in several other musicals and movies. The lyrics have wonderful suggestion and innuendo. "Let's Do It" was a pioneer pop song to openly declare "sex is fun." It features a string of suggestive and droll comparisons and examples, preposterous pairings and double entendre, dropping famous names and events, drawing from highbrow and popular culture. The nature of the song is such that it has lent itself over the years to modification with contemporary stanzas.

Smooth – Itaal Shur and Rob Thomas, arr. Jerry Brubaker

The Latin rock of the band Santana and the lead singer, Rob Thomas, of Matchbox 20, created this Grammy award winning song. It was the final number-one Hot 100 hit of the 1990s. It was also the first number one Hot 100 hit of the 2000s. It is the only song to appear on two decade-end Billboard charts. As of 2018, "Smooth" is ranked the second most successful song of all time by Billboard.

As Time Goes By – Herman Hupfeld, arr. Mike Lewis

This song was written by Herman Hupfeld in 1931. It became famous in 1942 when part of it was sung by the character Sam (Dooley Wilson) in the movie "Casablanca." The song was voted no. 2 on the AFI's 100 Years... 100 Songs special, commemorating the best songs in film (only surpassed by "Over the Rainbow" by Judy Garland). The song has since become the representative song of Warner Bros. and used as such in the production credits at the beginning of many Warner Bros. films since 1999, as well as in the closing credits to most Warner Bros. television shows since 2003. "As Time Goes By" is also the title and theme song of a 1990s British romantic comedy television series. "As Time Goes By" celebrates the importance of the little things in life.

Try to Remember – Tom Jones and Harve Schmidt, arr. Mike Lewis

"The Fantastics" is the world's longest running musical, running for 42 years or 17,162 performances. Songs such as "Try to Remember" helped make the show so durable. The music and the timelessness of

the plots made the show a staple of regional, community, and high school productions since its premiere. "Try to Remember" is the opening song, inviting the audience into the story.

Chicago, A Medley – John Kander, arr. Ted Ricketts

"Chicago" is an American musical based on a 1926 play by reporter Maurine Dallas Watkins about actual criminals and crimes she reported on. It is a satire on corruption in the criminal justice system of the 1920s, and introduces the concept of the "celebrity criminal." The original Broadway production opened in 1975 and ran until 1977. Bob Fosse choreographed the original production and his style is strongly identified with the show. "Chicago" holds the record for the longest running musical revival on Broadway, and its fourth longest running show. "Chicago" has been staged in numerous productions around the world and has toured extensively in the United States and the United Kingdom. The 2002 film version of the musical won the Academy Award for Best Picture.

Satchmo! A Tribute to Louis Armstrong, arr. Nelson Riddle

"Satchmo!" Is a tribute to the charismatic Jazz trumpeter and vocalist Louis Armstrong, featuring some of his signature songs including "What a Wonderful World," and "Hello Dolly!" The nickname "Satchmo" is a shortened version of "Satchel mouth," a childhood name originating from other kids teasing him about his large mouth. Armstrong's musical career spanned five decades, from the 1920s to the 1960s. He started as a young boy singing in the streets in a quartet. His fame came from his inventive trumpet and cornet playing style. He played in brass bands, parades, and on riverboats. He was born in New Orleans, the birthplace of Jazz, and in 1922 he went to Chicago to play in the Creole Jazz Band. He became known not only for his trumpet playing but for his amazing gravelly voice. As his skill and musicianship grew, he made numerous recordings, toured internationally, and appeared in over thirty films. About the music he loved and played, he stated, "If you have to ask what Jazz is, you'll never know."

The Children of Sanchez – Chuck Mangione, arr. Bob Phillips and Jerry Dennison

"The Children of Sanchez" is a 1978 film about Mr. Sanchez and his family, and their struggle with their impoverished life in Mexico. The music for the film was composed by Chuck Mangione, who won a Grammy award for the opening song that year. The lyrics affirm the necessity of hope in life, especially for one's children:

*...Every child belongs to mankind's family
Children are the fruit of all humanity
Let them feel the love of all the human race
Touch them with warmth, the strength of that embrace
Give me love and understanding, I will thrive
As my children grow, my dreams come alive
Those who hear the cries of children, God will bless
Oh yes, He will
I will always hear the children of Sanchez*

Dream – Johnny Mercer, arr. Nelson Riddle

The words and music to “Dream” were written by Johnny Mercer in 1944 as the musical theme for his radio program. Since that time, many artists have performed it, including Ella Fitzgerald, who sang this same arrangement of the piece, written by Nelson Riddle. Nelson Riddle was a prolific composer/arranger who fueled the careers of many popular vocalists of his day including Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Ella Fitzgerald, and Linda Ronstadt. In addition to arranging music for singers, he scored music for many television shows and movies, including “The Great Gatsby” (1974), “Ocean’s 11” (1960), “The Untouchables,” “The Bob Newhart Show,” and “Batman” (1966). Ella Fitzgerald and Nelson Riddle worked together to produce several albums, with the resulting music testifying of Riddle’s skill to complement the sound of the vocalist. His daughter shared, “He often wrote specifically for individual vocalists, keeping their strengths and limitations in mind and pushing them to deliver emotionally resonant performances.”

A Foggy Day (In London town) – George and Ira Gershwin, arr. Chuck Sayre

“A Foggy Day” was written by George and Ira Gershwin for the 1937 film “Damsel in Distress.” The film starred Fred Astaire and Joan Fontaine and was released a few months after George Gershwin died of a brain tumor. Since 1937 this piece has been recorded by numerous artists from Frank Sinatra to Michael Bublé to David Bowie. In this arrangement one can hear the tolling of Big Ben.

Cole Porter Salute – Cole Porter, arr. John Whitney

Cole Porter was born to a wealthy family in Indiana. He defied his family and became a musician. He became one of the great song writers of the twentieth century. He wrote Broadway musicals during the 1920s and 1930s. Tonight’s medley of his work includes “Another Op’nin, Another Show,” “In the Still of the Night,” “Anything Goes,” and “Night and Day.” Porter’s musical “Anything Goes” was one of his most successful works. In 1948 his most successful musical, “Kiss Me Kate” won the first Tony Award for best Musical. He continued to write for Broadway and the movies until he died in 1964.

I Only Have Eyes For You – Al Dubin and Harrey Warren, arr. Nelson Riddle

This romantic love song was written in 1934 for the film “Dames.” It has become a Jazz standard, recorded by numerous musicians. This arrangement was written for the 1961 Verve album, “Ella Swings Brightly with Nelson.” The arrangement features all of the classic Riddle hallmarks, including sensitive vocal backgrounds, punchy brass, and a great half-chorus shout section.

I Got Rhythm – George and Ira Gershwin, arr. Nelson Riddle

When George Gershwin wrote “I Got Rhythm” for the 1930’s musical, “Girl Crazy,” he created one of the most catchy melodies in American history. Little did he know that his song would evolve into something far greater. The blues structure of “I Got Rhythm” is the most adapted, mimicked, or ripped-off form in modern Jazz music. George Gershwin later adapted the song into a symphonic work, “Variations on I Got Rhythm,” dedicated to his brother, Ira Gershwin, the lyricist for the original song. Even his brother couldn’t have imagined the endless variations on this winning composition. “Who could ask for anything more?”