

Master Songwriter

Module 11 of *Music: Under the Hood*

John Hooker

Carnegie Mellon University

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Outline

- Biography of Harold Arlen
- Analysis of *Stormy Weather*

Biography

- **Harold Arlen, 1905-1986**
 - **Born Hyman Arluck in Buffalo, NY**
 - Son of Jewish cantor
 - Loved to sing
 - Began studying piano at 9 but hated practicing
 - **Formed a combo (Snappy Trio) as a teenager**
 - Wrote arrangements for it.



Biography

- **Career**
 - **Wanted to be a professional singer**
 - But his arrangements were always more popular than his singing.
 - Moved to NYC, age 22
 - **Met lyricist Ted Koehler**
 - They wrote *Get Happy*, 1929, Arlen's first hit.
 - Wrote for Cotton Club, 1930-34.
 - *Stormy Weather* also a hit.

Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler

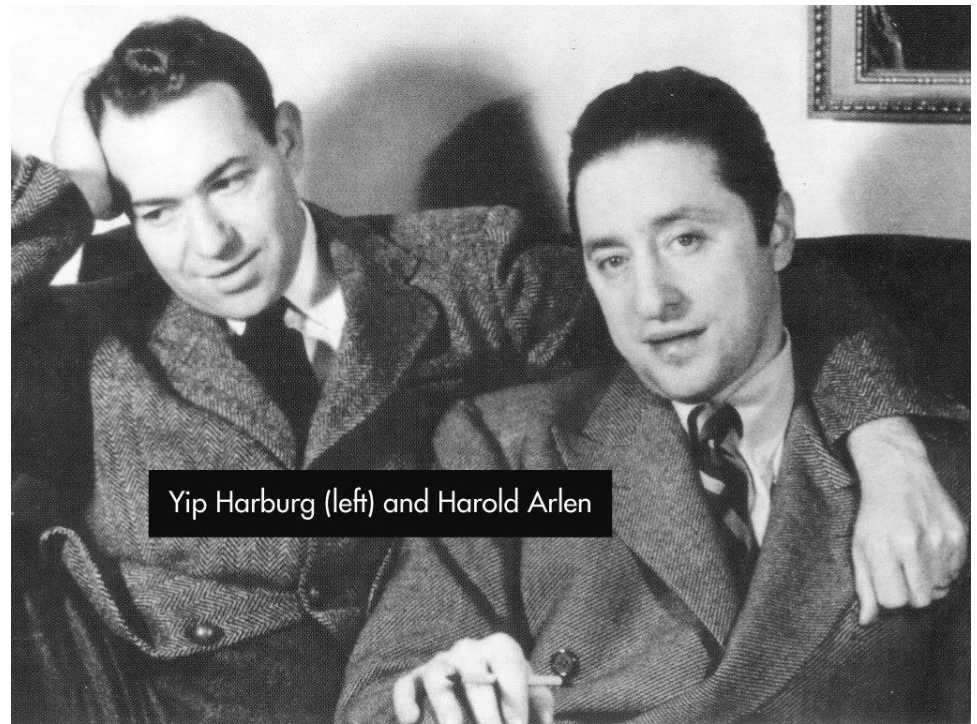


Biography

- Career

- Wizard of Oz

- Arlen teamed with lyricist Yip Harburg for the movie
 - He felt the movie needed a ballad with a broad, sweeping melody.
 - It came to him while driving on Sunset Blvd...



Yip Harburg (left) and Harold Arlen

Biography

- Career

- *Over the Rainbow*

- *Over the Rainbow* was cut from the film 3 times.
 - Associate Producer Arthur Freed, who hired Arlen, lobbied to have it restored
 - Ranked *Best Song of the Century* by Recording Industry Association of America.
 - Named *best movie song of all time* by American Film Institute.



Stormy Weather

- Music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Ted Koehler
 - A lament
 - Illustrates Arlen's gift for expressive melody
 - First performed 1933
 - by Ethel Waters at Cotton Club
 - She made first recording same year.
 - Also sung by Frank Sinatra, Lena Horne, Billie Holiday

Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler



Courtesy Sam Arlen

STORMY WEATHER (KEEPS RAININ' ALL THE TIME)

Slow lament

Lyrics by TED KOEHLER
Music by HAROLD ARLEN

[Audio file
\(first recording,
by Ethel Waters\)](#)

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *p* (piano). The piano accompaniment includes guitar chord diagrams for various chords.

System 1: The piano accompaniment begins with a *mp* dynamic. The vocal line starts with a *mf* dynamic. The lyrics are: "Don't know why there's no sun up in the sky. Storm-y Weath-er."

System 2: The piano accompaniment continues with a *mp* dynamic. The lyrics are: "Since my {man gal} and I ain't to - geth - er. keeps rain - in' all the time."

System 3: The piano accompaniment continues. The lyrics are: "Life is bare, gloom and mis - ry ev - 'ry - where, Storm-y Weath-er."

Chord Diagrams:

- G: $\begin{array}{c} \text{X} \\ \text{0} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{3} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{0} \end{array}$
- G#dim: $\begin{array}{c} \text{X} \\ \text{0} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{3} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{0} \end{array}$
- Am7: $\begin{array}{c} \text{X} \\ \text{0} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{3} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{0} \end{array}$
- D9: $\begin{array}{c} \text{X} \\ \text{0} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{3} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{0} \end{array}$
- Am7: $\begin{array}{c} \text{X} \\ \text{0} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{3} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{0} \end{array}$
- D11: $\begin{array}{c} \text{X} \\ \text{0} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{3} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{0} \end{array}$
- D7-9: $\begin{array}{c} \text{X} \\ \text{0} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{3} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{0} \end{array}$

Am7 D11 G Am7 D7-9 G

Just can't get my poor self to - geth - er, I'm wear - y all the time, the

C G G#dim Am7 D7-9 G Am7 G C

time. So wear - y all the time. When ^{he}/_{she} went a - way - the blues walk

mf

G C G C G

in and met me. If ^{he}/_{she} stays a - way - old rock - in' chair will get me.

C G C G E7-5

All I do is pray - the Lord a - bove will let me walk in the sun once

more. Can't go on, ev - ry - thing I had is gone, Storm - y

Weath - er, Since my { man gal } and I ain't to - geth - er.

keeps rain - in' all the time, keeps rain - in' all the

time. Don't know time.

rall. *p*

Ped.

STORMY WEATHER (KEEPS RAININ' ALL THE TIME)

Melody

Audio file

Slow lament

Lyrics by TED KOEHLER
Music by HAROLD ARLEN

The first system of the musical score shows the piano accompaniment in G major, 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Slow lament'. Dynamics include *mp* and *mf*. The melody is written in the treble clef with a soprano line and a piano line. The piano line features a steady accompaniment of eighth notes.

This repeated motif emphasizes yearning

The second system of the musical score includes the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Don't know why there's no sun up in the sky. Storm-y weath-er." Three red boxes highlight a repeated melodic motif: a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. A red arrow points from the text on the left to the first box.

...as does this prolonged leading tone

The third system of the musical score includes the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Since my {man} and I ain't to - geth - er. keeps rain - in all the time." A red box highlights a prolonged leading tone (F#4) in the vocal melody. A red arrow points from the text on the left to this box.

Dramatic octave drop suggests exhaustion and release

The fourth system of the musical score includes the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Life is bare, gloom and mis - ry ev - 'ry - where, Storm-y weath-er." A blue box highlights a dramatic octave drop in the vocal melody. A blue arrow points from the text on the left to this box.

Anticipates middle section

A snippet of a musical score in G major. The vocal line has three phrases highlighted with boxes: an orange box around the first phrase, a blue box around the second, and another blue box around the third. An orange arrow points from the text 'Anticipates middle section' to the first orange box. Two blue arrows point from the text 'Drop of a fourth or third echoes octave drop earlier (also used by Chopin)' to the two blue boxes. The piano accompaniment is visible below the vocal line.

Drop of a fourth or third echoes octave drop earlier (also used by Chopin)

Extra 2 bars. Standard is 32 bars, here it is 34.

A snippet of a musical score. A green box highlights a phrase in the vocal line, with a green arrow pointing from the text 'Extra 2 bars. Standard is 32 bars, here it is 34.' to it. An orange box highlights a later phrase in the vocal line, with an orange arrow pointing from the text 'Echoes motif from first section' to it. The piano accompaniment is visible below.

Echoes motif from first section

Inspired by chorus of African American spiritual

A snippet of a musical score. Two phrases in the vocal line are highlighted with orange boxes. An orange arrow points from the text 'Inspired by chorus of African American spiritual' to the first orange box. The piano accompaniment is visible below.

Solid rhythm and repetition contrast with opening lament

A snippet of a musical score. A phrase in the vocal line is highlighted with an orange box. An orange arrow points from the text 'Solid rhythm and repetition contrast with opening lament' to it. The piano accompaniment is visible below.

Melody echoed in accompaniment

more. Can't go on, ev - ry - thing I had is gone, Storm - y

Weath - er, Since my { man } gal and I ain't to - geth - er.

keeps rain - in' all the time, keeps rain - in' all the

time. Don't know time.

STORMY WEATHER (KEEPS RAININ' ALL THE TIME)

Harmony

[Audio file](#)

Repeated **ii-V-I**

Melody is suspended over **ii⁷**, resolves after chord change

Diminished chord provides passing tones

ii⁷ is suspended over **V**, resolves after chord change

Slow lament

Lyrics by TED KOEHLER
Music by HAROLD ARLEN

Don't know why there's no sun up in the sky. Storm-y Weath-er.

Since my {man} gal and I ain't to geth-er. keeps rain-in' all the time.

Life is bare, gloom and mis-ry ev-'ry-where, Storm-y Weath-er.

Am7 D11 G Am7 D7-9 G

Just can't get my poor self to - geth - er, I'm wear - y all the time, the

ii⁷ V⁷9 I ii⁷ V⁷9+12 I

C G G#dim Am7 D7-9 G Am7 G C

time, So wear - y all the time. When {he /she} went a - way - the blues walk

mf IV

IV – I pattern is common in spirituals

G C G C G

in and met me. If {he /she} stays a - way - old rock - in' chair will get me.

I IV I

C G C G E7-5

All I do is pray - the Lord a - bove will let me walk in the sun once

IV I

Dissonant 7 chord
marks return to lament
(we heard it in
Satin Doll)

more. Can't go on, ev - ry - thing I had is gone, Storm - y

Chords: II⁶⁷, V^{7o9}, I, ii⁷, V⁷⁹

Weath - er, Since my { man } and I ain't to - geth - er.

Chords: G, Am7, D11, G, I, ii⁷, V⁷⁹, I

keeps rain - in' all the time, keeps rain - in' all the

Chords: Am7, D7-9, G, Am7, D7-9, ii⁷, V^{7o9+12}, I, ii⁷, V^{7o9+12}

time. Don't know time.

Chords: G, Am7, D9, G, Am7, Gmaj7, C, G

1. 2. I, rall., p, Ped.