

Master Songwriter

Module 11 of *Music: Under the Hood*

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Outline

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

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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.



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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

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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

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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.



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Melody echoed in accompaniment

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

IV - I pattern is common in spirituals

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