

## FACT SHEET

**TITLE:** THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK  
[TV-G] [Stereo] [CC]

**LENGTH:** 1/90 Base and Pledge; 1/120 Pledge Event

**NOLA CODE:** GASB

**CATEGORY:** Music & Entertainment

**OFFERED:** December 2009 by Premium Service 21

**EXPECTED RELEASE:** February 27, 2010

**CONTRACT TERMS:** Sixteen telecasts (over the course of two windows: 2/27/10-9/27/10 & 11/26/10-12/23/10). Telecast is defined as one time only.

**PROGRAM SUPPLIER:** Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:** Throughout a long golden era, the American movie musical transformed Hollywood into a Mecca for the biggest singing stars and leading songwriters of the '30s, '40s and '50s. Hosted by musician and musicologist Michael Feinstein, THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK offers a dazzling parade of American popular songs as seen and heard in some of the most beloved films ever made. With stars ranging from Al Jolson to Judy Garland to Frank Sinatra, and sounds from the Gilded Age to New Orleans jazz to Broadway musicals, THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK tells the story of the first 50 years of American popular music. Whether it was from the vaudeville stage or Tin Pan Alley, on the radio or the record player, it all found its way to the silver screen. This treasure trove of musical clips overflows with the very best of George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Jerome

– more –

## THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK

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Kern, Lorenz Hart, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, and many more.

**PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS:** Use above description for guide listings. A press release will be posted to PBS Connect and [APTonline.org](http://APTonline.org). Color photography will be available via email and will also be posted on [APTonline.org](http://APTonline.org).

**COPYRIGHT DATE:** © 2003 Turner Entertainment Company

**PRODUCTION CREDITS:** Director/Producer: Andrew J. Kuehn  
Executive producer: Michael Feinstein,  
Susan B. Landau  
Producer: Stephen Netburn  
Co-producer: Michael J. Shapiro  
Writers: Joe Gilford and Mary Cleere Haran

**BROADCAST HISTORY:** PBS 2003-2005

**RELATED MERCHANDISE:** Individual viewer purchase:  
Recordings by stars featured in THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK are available in retail outlets nationwide.

Pledge:  
Program DVD: "Michael Feinstein: The Great American Songbook"; Related 2-CD set: "Somewhere Over the Rainbow: The Golden Age of Hollywood Musicals"; Related hardcover book: "The American Songbook: The Singers, Songwriters & The Songs"

**VIEWER INQUIRIES:** [www.APTonline.org](http://www.APTonline.org)

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF AMERICAN MUSIC WITH THE PUBLIC TELEVISION SPECIAL *THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK***

*Program chronicles the music of great American composers including Cole Porter, George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Leonard Bernstein and more!*

BOSTON (Feb. 23, 2010) – Explore the Golden Age of American popular music in a public television special showcasing the work of some of the nation’s greatest composers. American Public Television’s **THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK**, releasing on public television stations nationwide beginning Feb. 27, 2010 (check local listings), delves into the history of American song from the early 1900s to the 1950s. Listen to the great works of George and Ira Gershwin, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and more, and follow the progression of American song from vaudeville and Tin Pan Alley to Broadway and Hollywood! Acclaimed musician and musicologist Michael Feinstein guides viewers through a treasure trove of some of the most memorable and culturally defining songs of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The program begins by chronicling the rise of the Broadway musical in the early 1900s and the great composers who wrote for the stage. From George Michael Cohan – who starred in, wrote and directed his very own Broadway debut – to Jerome Kern, who learned how to integrate traditional European songwriting with a relaxed American sensibility, the early Broadway composers integrated their diverse backgrounds and traditions into a new and exciting sound. In the melting pot of New York City, Irish and Jewish melodies mixed with the rhythms of ragtime, Africa, and the blues. A whole new sound that transcended the minstrel shows, European operettas, vaudeville, variety shows, and follies of the past began to emerge, and America took notice. The groundbreaking hit production *Show Boat*, by Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, helped popularize an entirely new genre, the “musical play,” characterized by a coherent plot and integrated songs.

Traveling reviews and vaudeville acts helped make the songs of Broadway popular throughout the country. Vaudeville performer Al Jolson, who electrified crowds with his distinctive voice and singing style, became America’s first superstar performer. His celebrity status was cemented with the help of the Ziegfeld Follies, a Broadway review featuring lavish production numbers, dazzling sets and costumes and scores of beautiful dancers. Other stars to emerge under Ziegfeld’s promotion included comedienne and chanteuse Fanny Brice and the brassy-voiced Sophie Tucker.

**THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK** also explores the role of song during several traumatic events in American history – two World Wars and the Great Depression. During the first World War, songs like “Over There,” written by Cohan, provided the encouragement the country needed to forge ahead in a time of need. The Great Depression, on the other hand, had lively and optimistic numbers like “The Gold Diggers’ Song (We’re in the Money),” to lift spirits and lighten the pressures of the financial crisis. During World War II, bands such as The Andrews Sisters kept spirits high with their swinging, big-band, “boogie-woogie” sound.

When the film industry began to take off in the late ‘20s and ‘30s, composers moved to Hollywood to cash in on the boom. Wonderful new partnerships emerged. When Irving Berlin teamed with Fred Astaire in the movie *Top Hat*, magic happened. Fred Astaire’s and Ginger Roberts’ dance to “Cheek to Cheek” is a classic and unforgettable movie moment to this day. George and Ira Gershwin, Cole Porter and Harry Warren also contributed many a memorable song to the silver screen.

From the bright lights of Broadway to the glamour of the sunset strip, **THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK** traces the musical journey of America’s legendary composers. Generations of fans will revel in the landmark moments in song featured in this comprehensive overview of a magical period in American music.

**THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK** is presented by Turner Entertainment Co. and Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution in association with American Public Television’s Premium Service, a co-production, co-financing and acquisition fund that provides fundraising specials to member stations, now in its 21st season. With the financial backing of their public television client stations, APT Premium Service has secured many of public television’s most prestigious and highest-rated programs.

**About American Public Television**

American Public Television (APT) has been a leading distributor of high-quality, top-rated programming to America’s public television stations since 1961. In 2009, APT distributed 56 of the top 100 highest-rated public television titles. Among its 300 new program titles per year are prominent documentaries, dramatic series, how-to programs, children’s series and classic movies, including *Spain...on the road Again*, *Rick Steves’ Europe*, *Worldfocus*, *Globe Trekker*, *Simply Ming*, *America’s Test Kitchen From Cook’s Illustrated*, *Lidia’s Italy*, *P. Allen Smith’s Garden Home*, *Murdoch Mysteries*, *Doc Martin*, *Rosemary & Thyme*, *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison*, *Liza’s at the Palace....* and *John Denver: The Wildlife Concert*. APT also licenses programs internationally through its APT Worldwide service. In 2006, APT launched Create™ – the TV channel featuring the best of public television’s lifestyle programming. For more information about APT’s programs and services, visit [APTonline.org](http://APTonline.org).

### MICHAEL FEINSTEIN

Michael Feinstein – the multi-platinum selling, five-time Grammy-nominated entertainer dubbed “The Ambassador of the Great American Songbook” – is considered one of the premier interpreters of American Popular Song. His 150 plus shows a year have included Carnegie Hall, the Hollywood Bowl and major concert halls, as well as the White House and Buckingham Palace. More than a mere performer, he is nationally recognized for his commitment to the American popular song, both celebrating its art and preserving its legacy for the next generation.

The Sinatra Project – his new CD from Concord Records which celebrates the musical sensibilities of “Old Blue Eyes” – earned Michael his fifth Grammy Award nomination in 2009. Feinstein is currently preparing the PBS-TV series, “Michael Feinstein: Man On A Mission” – to start airing in 2010 – in which Michael discovers treasures of the Great American Songbook around the world. He is designing a new piano for Steinway called “The First Ladies,” inspired by the White House piano. Feinstein will also serve as the Artistic Director of the Carmel Performing Arts Center, a \$160 million three-theatre performing arts center in Carmel, Indiana, which will host an annual international Great American Songbook festival, along with diverse live programming and a museum to house his rare memorabilia and manuscripts. Starting in 2010, Michael will be taking the helm as the director of Popular Song Series at Jazz at Lincoln Center

Michael has written the score for two new stage musicals: The Day They Saved Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade and The Gold Room, and he has just started to work on a new MGM project turning The Thomas Crown Affair into a musical for Broadway.

His previous CD from Concord Records is Hopeless Romantics, a songbook of Harry Warren classics recorded with legendary jazz pianist George Shearing. In 2004, Michael completed a national tour with songwriting icon Jimmy Webb based on their CD, Only One Life – The Songs of Jimmy Webb. The disc was named one of “10 Best CDs of the Year” by USA Today.

In 2003, Michael received his fourth Grammy Award nomination for his release, Michael Feinstein with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, his first recording with a symphony orchestra. The year before, Rhino/Elektra Music released The Michael Feinstein Anthology, a two-disc compilation spanning the years 1987 to 1996, featuring old favorites and previously unreleased tracks.

Michael hosted and produced The Great American Songbook, a public television special and DVD set from Warner Home Video that traces the history of popular music in our country. His own record label Feinery, a Concord Records subsidiary, released The Livingston & Evans Songbook, featuring Feinstein and special guest Melissa Manchester. Feinery also records favorite current artists and restores recordings and musical broadcasts from the golden age of popular song.

His Manhattan nightclub, Feinstein's at Loews Regency, has presented the top talents of pop and jazz such as Rosemary Clooney, Steve Tyrell, Barbara Cook, Tony Danza, Glen Campbell, Diahann Carroll, Jackie Mason and Dame Cleo Laine. He appears there for a sold-out holiday engagement every year. Michael also opened the new theater, Feinstein's at the Shaw, in London, featuring such talent as Eartha Kitt, Dionne Warwick, Elaine Stritch, Chita Rivera and Boy George.

Michael started playing piano by ear when he was five. After graduating from high school in Columbus, Ohio, he worked in local piano lounges for two years, moving to Los Angeles when he was 20. Through the widow of legendary concert pianist-actor Oscar Levant, he was introduced to Ira Gershwin in July 1977. He became his assistant for six years, granting him access to numerous unpublished Gershwin songs, which he has since performed and recorded.

Gershwin's influence provided a solid base upon which Mr. Feinstein has not only evolved into a captivating performer, composer and arranger of his own original music, but has also become an unparalleled interpreter of music legends such as Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Johnny Mercer, Duke Ellington and Harry Warren.

Through his live performances, recordings, film and television appearances, and his songwriting (in collaboration with Alan and Marilyn Bergman, Lindy Robbins and Carole Bayer Sager), Feinstein has been an important musical force during the past 15 years. In addition, he scored the original music for the film Get Bruce. His television credits include performances on "Caroline in the City," "Melrose Place," "Coach" and "Sybil."

The Library of Congress elected Michael to the exclusive "National Sound Recording Advisory Board," safeguarding America's musical heritage.

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By [michaeladmin](#) September 29, 2009  
Source: [www.michaelfeinstein.com](http://www.michaelfeinstein.com)