

an enduring classic, one of the few songs in history introduced by a child that became a hit in the grown-up world.

Munchkinland

The Munchkinland scene was originally scripted in March 1938 by Herman Mankiewicz (1897–1953) as an elaborate multi-themed production number. (Mankiewicz worked on the film for only three weeks.) Many different ideas had been proposed for “Munchkinland,” which included some songs written by Roger Edens. When Harburg and Arlen were hired a few months later, they expanded upon the idea, creating a six-minute-long musical sequence consisting of rhymed dialog and brief songs, patterned after the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan. Harburg had experience writing

in this form before, although only briefly, when he worked with Ira Gershwin on *Life Begins at 8:40*. That show’s finale, which featured Bert Lahr, was a mock operetta titled “Beautifying the City” that included patter songs and reprises of numbers heard earlier in the show. In addition to writing the



Original sheet music edition of “We’re Off to See the Wizard.”

lyrics for “Munchkinland,” Harburg also added the recitative dialog.

The segment begins with the arrival of Glinda, the Good Witch (Billie Burke) and ends with Dorothy skipping down the Yellow Brick Road towards Oz. Except for a section of dialog when the Wicked Witch appears, the songs and recitative flow naturally, uninterrupted, as if in an operetta, and form what is one of the most unique and charming episodes of the entire film. Harburg’s half-spoken/half-sung recitatives poke fun at the verbose pomposity of formal ceremonies, such as when the Town Council formally declares that the Wicked Witch of the East is “morally, ethically, spiritually, physically, positively, absolutely, undeniably, and reliably dead.”

When it came time to record the soundtrack, the voices of almost all of the Munchkins were dubbed by professional session singers and altered in the studio by vocal arranger Ken Darby (1909–1992). To create the Munchkins’ high-pitched voices, Darby added an extra gear to the recording equipment so that the voices could be recorded at a slower speed. (Recording tape had not yet been invented.) When played back at normal speed, this resulted in the cartoonish voices of the Munchkins. To make sure the words could be clearly understood, Darby had the actors enunciate their lines slowly and distinctly when the recordings were made. (Darby did the opposite when creating the low-pitched, menacing voices of the Winkie guards.) The sped-up vocals for “The Lullaby League” were dubbed by Lorraine Bridges, Betty Rome, and Carol Tevis, while “The Lollipop Guild” featured the voices of Billy Bletcher, Pinto Colvig, and Harry Stanton.

Herbert Stothart

Herbert Stothart (1885–1949) was assigned the job of adapting Harburg and Arlen’s songs and composing a background score for *The Wizard of Oz*. The dean of the M-G-M music department, Stothart had a long history in Broadway before going to work for M-G-M. Among the many musical comedies he worked on as either a composer or conductor were *Rose-Marie* (with Rudolf Friml and Otto Harbach), *Wildflower* (with Oscar Hammerstein II), and the operetta *Song of the Flame* (with Hammerstein, Harbach, and George Gershwin). In 1929, Louis B. Mayer invited Stothart to join M-G-M as part of its music department, where he became a pioneer in the early years of orchestral scoring.

Stothart became M-G-M’s principal music director, composing, arranging, and conducting music for more than 100 scores. From 1929 until his death in 1949, he worked with all of the studio’s top directors and performers and developed a reputation for professionalism and the ability to inspire superior performances from his orchestras. In his work as musical director for *The Wizard of Oz*, Stothart created musical motifs to define the main characters in the movie and established the atmosphere necessary for scenes such as the cyclone and Dorothy’s rescue from the Wicked Witch’s castle. Assisting him was a team of renowned M-G-M orchestrators, which included George Bassman, George Stoll, and Robert Stringer. All of the orchestrations of the film’s songs were prepared by Murray Cutter, except for the “Munchkinland Musical

Lullaby League and Lollipop Guild

Music by Harold Arlen
 Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg
 Arranged by Dan Coates

Moderately

G

1. We *mp* re - pre - sent the Lul - la - by League, the
 re - pre - sent the the Lol - ly - pop Guild, the

3 D7/G

G

Lul - la - by League, the Lul - la - by League, and in the name of the
 Lol - ly - pop Guild, the Lol - ly - pop Guild, and in the name of the

6

Am

D

1.
Am D G

Lul - la - by League, we wish to wel - come you to Munch - kin - land. 2. We
 Lol - ly - pop Guild, we wish to wel - come you to

If I Only Had the Nerve

Music by Harold Arlen

Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg

Arranged by Dan Coates

Moderate swing (♩ = $\overset{3}{\text{♩}}$)

The Cowardly Lion:

F Dm Gm C7

Yeah, it's sad, be - lieve me, Mis - sy, when you're born to be a sis - sy with -

mp

3 F Bb Gm7 C C7

out the vim and verve. But I could show my prow-ess, be a li - on, not a "mou-ess" if I

7 F Bb F Gm C7 F Dm

on - ly had the nerve. I'm a - fraid there's no de - ny - in', I'm

mf

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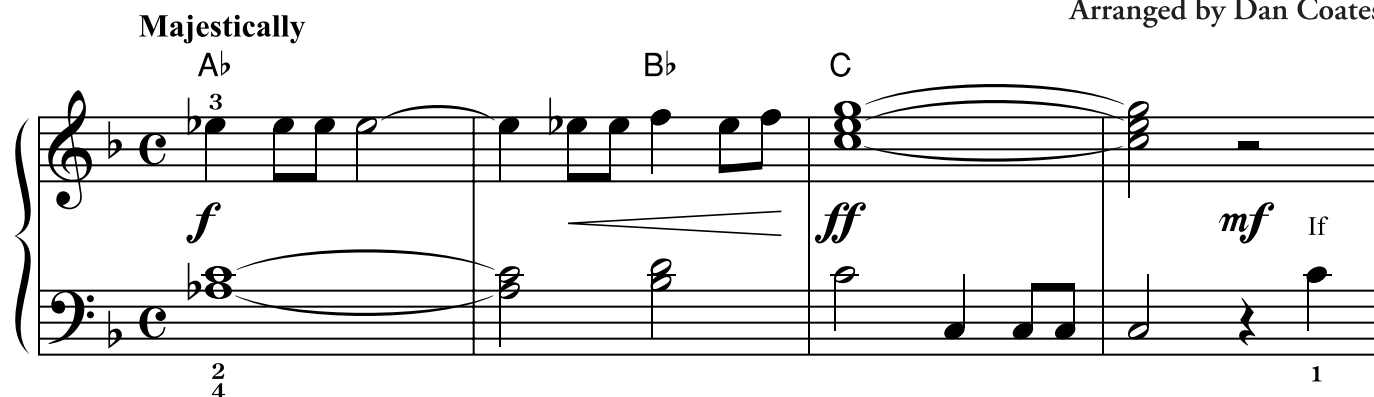
If I Were King of the Forest

Music by Harold Arlen

Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg

Arranged by Dan Coates

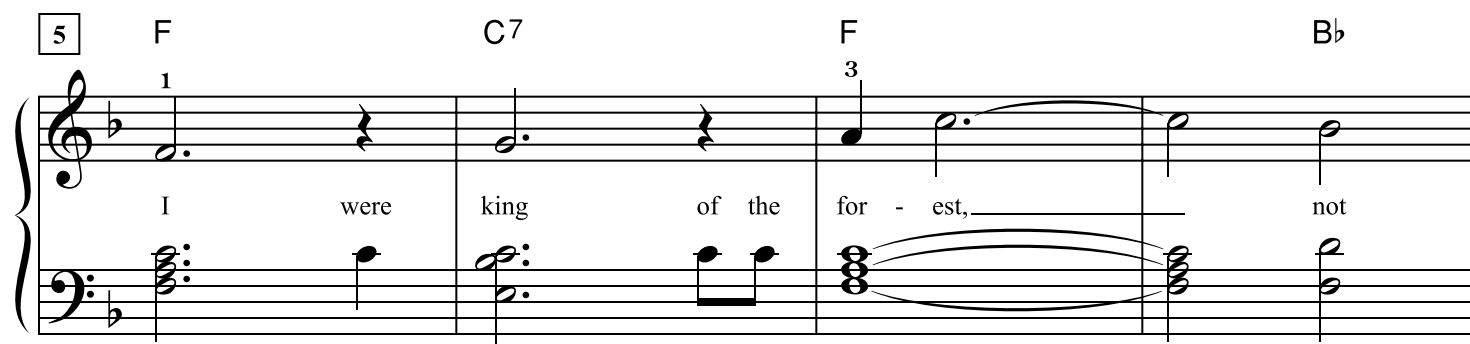
Majestically



f *ff* *mf* If

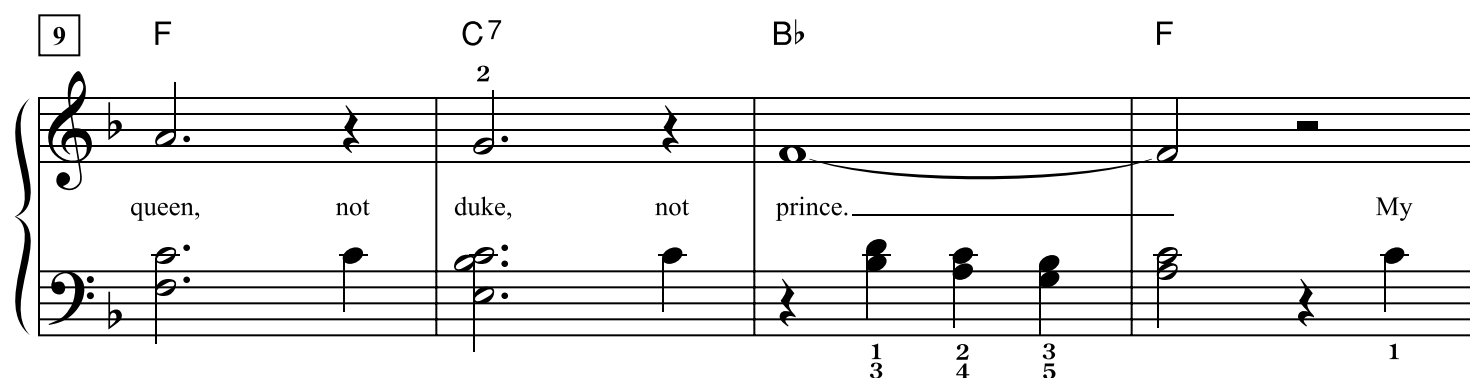
2 4 1

[5] F C7 F B \flat



I were king of the for - est, not

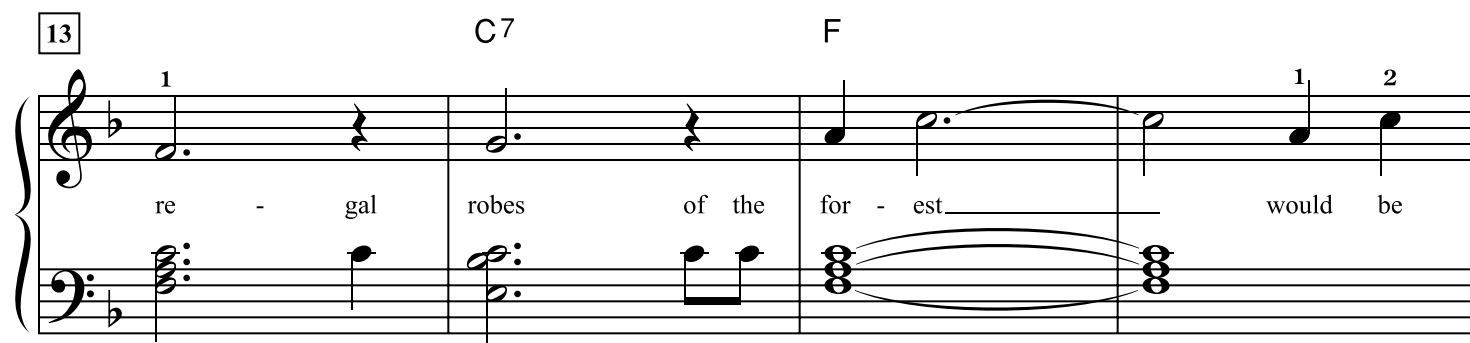
[9] F C7 B \flat F



queen, not duke, not prince. My

1 3 2 4 3 5 1

[13] C7 F



re - gal robes of the for - est would be



Judy Garland as Dorothy during the "Merry Old Land of Oz" sequence.
The manicurists are Dorothy Barrett, Lois January, and Ethelreda Leopold.

MGM/Photofest