

## STUDENT C - MUSICAL FILMS IN CONTRAST

Musical films developed from musical plays. The biggest difference between film and theatre musicals is that films use splendid **sets**, impractical in theatre.



Film set.

Musical films usually contain elements of musical theatre: actors and actresses often sing and dance as if there is an **audience** watching, they look directly into the camera and perform to it.

Musical theatre is similar to opera. The differences are: musicals generally integrate spoken dialogue, dancing and popular music. Apart from that, a musical is almost always in the language of its audience. Musicals produced in London or New York, for example, are in English, although the **original version** was in another language.



*La Traviata.*

While an opera singer is first a singer and only secondarily an actor (and rarely dances), a musical actor is usually an actor first and then a singer and dancer. Music composers for musicals often consider the vocal capacities of musical actors, and musical actors generally use microphones to **amplify** their voices. This is impossible in opera.

The most popular musical theatres are in London, in the **West End** neighbourhood, and in New York, in the **Broadway** neighbourhood.

## SESSION 2 – *Porgy and Bess*.

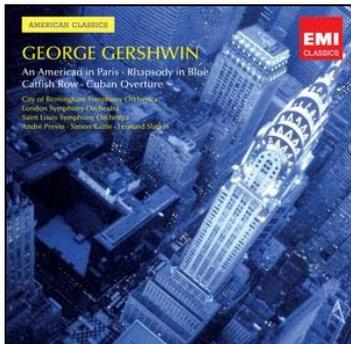
### STUDENT C – THE AUTHOR

George Gershwin (New York 1898 – Hollywood 1937) was an American **composer** and **pianist**. His real name was Jacob Gershovitz. His parents were Russian Jews: his father changed his surname to Gershwin after immigrating to the United States from Russia in the 1890s. He died when he was 38 years old from a brain tumour.

George Gershwin wrote most of his works in collaboration with his elder brother, **Ira Gershwin**. He composed music for Broadway theatres and the classical concert halls. He also wrote popular songs. Apart from *Porgy and Bess*, his other important works are *Rhapsody in Blue* and *An American in Paris*.



George Gershwin in 1937.



*Rhapsody in Blue* CD cover.



A scene in the film *An American in Paris* (1951).

Gershwin's compositions appear in a lot of films and on television, and many became jazz standards recorded in many versions. A lot of singers and musicians have recorded Gershwin songs. "**Summertime**" is the most popular piece from the work. It has been recorded many times.



Maurice Ravel by his piano.

Gershwin was friend of French composer **Maurice Ravel**. Gershwin asked to study with Ravel but when Ravel heard Gershwin playing the piano, Ravel replied "How about you give me some lessons?". Gershwin also admired Russian composer Igor Stravinsky.

SESSION 3 – “Summertime”. *Porgy and Bess*.

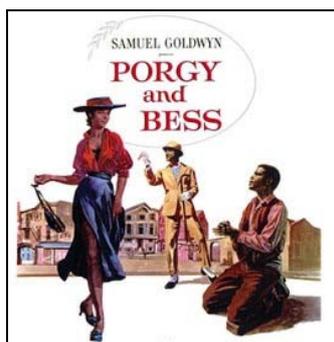
STUDENT C

There are more than 11,900 different recordings of this lullaby. We are going to listen to six of them. Label the pictures below:

*Billie Holiday - Porgy and Bess film - The Zombies - Billy Stewart - Janis Joplin - Sublime*



1.	2.	3.
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4.	5.	6.
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Complete the following chart asking your group mates for missing information.

Version	Year	Style	Notable instruments
Billie Holiday			Voice, piano, trumpets, clarinet and drums.
Porgy and Bess film	1959		
The Zombies		Beat pop	
Billy Stewart			Voice, guitar, trumpets and drums.
Janis Joplin	1968		
Sublime		Hip-hop	

- |                        |      |   |
|------------------------|------|---|
| 1. Billie Holiday      | 2:56 | <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ApiOuBegj2g">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ApiOuBegj2g</a>   |
| 2. Porgy and Bess film | 2:33 | <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEIL6kWwmv4">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEIL6kWwmv4</a>   |
| 3. The Zombies         | 2:12 | <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmOIW63Emw0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmOIW63Emw0</a>   |
| 4. Billy Stewart       | 3:51 | <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evCvGA8kP-E">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evCvGA8kP-E</a>   |
| 5. Janis Joplin        | 2:18 | <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTFF-BaT0MM">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTFF-BaT0MM</a>   |
| 6. Sublime             | 4:20 | <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0U0ODnxGaU&amp;feature=related">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0U0ODnxGaU&amp;feature=related</a> |

STUDENT C – THE CONTEXT

After World War II the **American economy** was stable and **prosperous** for the white middle class. There was an increase in **consumer products** such as cars, dishwashers, televisions and stereos. But prosperity didn't extend to everybody. The vast number of **immigrants** that the two **World Wars** and the **Cold War** generated caused that many Americans continued living in poverty, especially **racial minorities**.



Typical suburbs.

Apart from that, they suffered from **segregation**:

- The neighbourhoods were racially differentiated: the **suburbs** were restricted to whites.
- **Public buildings** and **services** like education were divided into separate "white" and "coloured" spaces. Those for "coloured" were of inferior quality.
- Voting was difficult for the African Americans.
- Blacks, Latinos and Asians were discriminated at work and they had less job opportunities.
- There was individual, police and organizational **violence** against blacks.



This second-class status of racial minorities, especially African American, generated a great opposition among all blacks and some whites. In 1955, **Rosa Parks** (the "mother of the Civil Rights Movement") refused to give her seat on a public bus to a white passenger. She started the **African-American Civil Rights Movement**. Although some people were violent, most of them used non-violent strategies, such as **Martin Luther King**.



Rosa Parks in 1955, with Martin Luther King at the back.

Stokely Carmichael, known as Kwame Ture, member of the Black Panthers.



These **social problems** had a great influence on American musical theatre.

Fight scene in *West Side Story*, between whites (the Jets) and latins (the Sharks).

SESSION 5 – “America” *West Side Story*.

[Anita:]

Puerto Rico  
My heart's devotion  
Let it sink back in the ocean  
Always the hurricanes blowing  
Always the population growing  
And the money owing  
And the sunlight streaming  
And the natives steaming  
I like the island Manhattan  
Smoke on your pipe  
And put that in!

[Girls:]

I like to be in America!  
O.K. by me in America!  
Everything free in America.

[Bernando:]

For a small fee in America!

[Anita:]

Buying on credit is so nice.

[Bernando:]

One look at us, and they charge twice.

[Rosalia:]

I have my own washing machine.

[Indio:]

What will you have, though, to keep clean?

[Anita:] Skyscrapers bloom in America,

[Rosalia:] Cadillac zoom in America,

[Consuelo:] Industry boom in America.

[Guys:]

Twelve in a room in America!

[Anita:]

Lots of new housing with more space.

[Bernando:]

Lots of doors slamming in our face.

[Anita:]

I'll have a terrace apartment.

[Bernando:]

Better get rid of your accent.

[Anita:]

Life can be bright in America.

[Guys:]

If you can fight in America.

[Girls:]

Life is all right in America.

[Guys:]

If your all-white in America.

[Guys:]

la-la-la-la-la America... America

la-la-la-la-la America... America

[Girls:]

Here you are free and you have pride.

[Guys:]

Long as you stay on your own side.

[Girls:]

Free to be anything you choose.

[Guys:]

Free to wait tables and shine shoes!

[Bernando:]

Everywhere grime in America,

Organized crime in America,

Terrible time in America.

[Anita:]

You forget I'm in America.

[Bernando:]

I think I'll go back to San Juan.

[Anita:]

I know a boat you can get on.

[Girls:] Bye bye!

[Bernando:] Uh-huh!

[Bernando:]

Everyone there will give big cheer!

[Anita:]

Everyone there will have moved here.

[All:]

Ole!

Immigrants' perspective on the USA

In your group of three, complete this chart. **Don't copy the lyrics**, just write the topic.

<b>Positive</b> sides of immigration to the USA (The girls)	<b>Negative</b> sides of immigration to the USA (The guys)

STUDENT C – THE PLOT



Tonight is a special night of the year, the tribe of **Jellicle Cats** unite to celebrate who they are. They emerge from the dark, singing about their **unique abilities** and **special qualities**.

At first, the cats don't want to allow the audience into their domain. In "**The Naming of Cats**", however, they reveal who they are.

The Jellicle Cats singing the song "The Naming of Cats".

They wait for their leader, **Old Deuteronomy**, who will choose one of the Jellicle Cats for its qualities, to travel tonight to the **Heaviside layer** to be reborn into a new life.

And then begins the **presentation** of the different cats. Individually, they sing to be selected to make the special journey.

All the cats sing and dance to be selected by Old Deuteronomy.



Although she is a Jellicle Cat, **Grizabella** is rejected by the rest of the tribe because she left the tribe years ago to explore the outside world and now she wants to return.

Finally Old Deuteronomy has to decide which cat will be reborn. Grizabella sings her song "**Memory**" of how things used to be. The cats accept her back into the tribe and Old Deuteronomy chooses her to travel to the Heaviside Layer and be **reborn**.



Old Deuteronomy chooses Grizabella to travel to the Heaviside Layer.

SESSION 7 – “Rum Tum Tugger”, “Memory” and “Skimbleshanks” *Cats*.

What do the music and the lyrics tell you about the aspect and character of each cat? Write all the words that come to your mind while listening to the song without watching the video.

**1. The Rum Tum Tugger (4:23)**

**2. Grizabella (6:00)**

**3. Skimbleshanks (5:05)**