



SANDY SCHUMAN
Storyteller, Musician, Educator

Sandy Schuman is a storyteller, musician, and educator. He tells stories about songs and song-writers, personal adventures, historical sagas, folk tales, and stories in the Jewish storytelling tradition. His programs include:

Familiar Songs and their Unfamiliar Stories

Learn how some of the best-known American songs came to be written. This program features songs from the *Great American Songbook* and stories about the people who wrote them.

Singer, Songwriter, Murderer; “King of the 12-String Guitar”

Was Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter justly sentenced to prison for murder? Twice? Was he exploited by the man who discovered him? Did he have to share credit for writing the #1 hit song of 1950!

New York Tales: Tall & True

Some of New York State’s folklore is truly unbelievable. Some of its history is even more so. “The Great American Hoax,” “The Goldarndest Liar,” “How New York State Got its Western Border,” “The Curse of Mamie O’Rourke,” ...

My Father Was a Storyteller

From help wanted ads to front page headlines, beaches to skyscrapers, my father’s longed for saxophone to my sister’s required piano, this personal and historical saga stretches across “the stories of a lifetime.”

Jewish Stories Every Person Should Know

A Rabbi, a Prophet, and a King Walk into a Bar – and other stories, old and new, that reveal Jewish humor, tradition, and values.

Welcome to Chelm’s Pond ...

... where the ridiculous stories of Chelm meet the preposterous tall tales of the Adirondacks, where “every acre is two acres, you can till the soil with a teaspoon, and there are not only four seasons, there are five.”

How to Tell a Story

A workshop for beginners – teenagers, educators, grandparents – who want to learn or sharpen their storytelling skills.

*There is always
another side to the
story.*



Sandy Schuman
www.tothestory.com
sschuman@exedes.com
518-229-8345

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ANOTHER SIDE TO THE STORY

Familiar Songs and their Unfamiliar Stories

FAMILIAR SONGS AND THEIR UNFAMILIAR STORIES

Some of the best-known songs and the little-known stories about the people who wrote them.

The Rhythm Changes



In music, there are many commonly used chord progressions. This one has its own special name. George wrote it; Ira named it. When Ethel sang it –holding one note through the chorus – it made her famous. You can do it too!

George had Chutzpah, Ira Didn't!

Porgy and Bess was written by George Gershwin and DuBose Heyward. But, they needed help with the lyrics from George's brother, Ira. The story begins in 1909, at Ira's *Bar Mitzvah*.

If God Blessed America for Me



The finale for *Yip Yap Yaphank* was not a good fit for the show, so he didn't use it. Twenty years later it was a #1 hit song and is #19 in the *Best Songs of the 20th Century*. But, could the parody be even more popular than the original?

Lead Belly: Singer, Songwriter, Murderer; King of the 12-String Guitar



Was "Lead Belly" justly sentenced to prison for murder? Twice? Was he exploited by the man who discovered him? Did he have to share credit for writing the #1 hit song of 1950!

Tzena Tzena Tzena



The Weaver's 1950 recording, which rose to #2 on the charts, had English lyrics to what they thought was an Israeli folk tune. It took a legal proceeding to establish the song's true origins.

Mairzy Doats



This 1943 song was so wildly popular, the *Time* magazine article was entitled, "*That Song.*" No other introduction was necessary. "If the words seem queer and funny to your ear just sing ..."

Get Happy



Harold Arlen quit high school to pursue a career as a pianist, singer, and music arranger. When the *Buffalodians*, the hottest band in town, moved to New York City, he went with them. When they retreated to Buffalo, Harold stayed.

The Forgotten Man



Edgar Harburg's electrical appliance business was roaring in the '20s – until the Great Crash. He had no way forward – until his old high school buddy suggested he try writing songs.

If You Believed in Me

Produced by Billy Rose, with a script by Ben Hecht and Gene Fowler, "The Great Magoo" was sure to make Broadway history. It did.

Song of the Century

Which is the song #1 of the 20th century? Even without my (sometimes deceptive) hints, you will undoubtedly figure it out. And, when you've got it, keep it to yourself! Let the other folks figure it out on their own. More importantly, who wrote it? Let's give credit where it's due.

