

InsideOUT

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Theatre Company
KENT THOMPSON
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Irving Berlin's WHITE CHRISTMAS THE MUSICAL

WHITE CHRISTMAS

BASED UPON THE PARAMOUNT PICTURES FILM.
WRITTEN FOR THE SCREEN BY NORMAN KRASNA,
NORMAN PANAMA AND MELVIN FRANK
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY IRVING BERLIN
BOOK BY DAVID IVES AND PAUL BLAKE

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Douglas Langworthy Editor
Sally Gass Contributing Writer
David Saphier Education Contributor
Tina Risch Community Services Manager

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Synopsis

On Christmas Eve, 1944 somewhere in war-ravaged Europe, Captain Bob Wallace, a Broadway entertainer, is performing for the troops of the 151st Division with the help of his buddy, Private Phil Davis, a would-be entertainer. The mood is somber, for word has come down that their beloved commanding officer, Major General Thomas F. Waverly, is being relieved of command. He arrives for the end of the show and delivers an emotional farewell, and the men give him a rousing send-off. An enemy barrage ensues and Phil saves Bob's life.

After the war, Wallace and Davis form a successful show-biz partnership, eventually becoming important Broadway producers. Bob agrees to see a nightclub act by the Haynes sisters, Betty and Judy, as a favor to an Army friend. Phil has always tried to help Bob find romance, so when he realizes that Bob is smitten with Betty, he arranges for them to accompany the girls to a small Vermont inn where they are performing in a show. The men are shocked to find that Major Waverly, their former commanding officer, is the owner. He has sunk his savings and pension into this venture, but there's been no snow, and he's on the verge of bankruptcy. Bob and Phil come up with a plan to help the General, but it leads to a misunderstanding between Bob and Betty, so Phil and Judy intervene to get them back together. It all ends happily with snow falling on everyone! ■

WHITE CHRISTMAS

THE STORY OF THE SONG

“Songs make history and history makes songs.”

Irving Berlin ¹.

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“White Christmas” is the biggest popular tune of all times; it is the top selling and most frequently recorded song. Artists such as Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Elvis Presley, Aretha Franklin, the Beach Boys, the Supremes and Barbra Streisand have recorded it. It succeeded because it served as a comforting anthem to Americans frightened by World War II and was embraced by homesick American GIs. The song has an underlying theme of sadness and a wistful ache for bygone years. Composer Irving Berlin, a self-taught musician, had written the song in 1940 and it was first sung by Bing Crosby on his radio show on Christmas Day, 1941. He soon recorded it for Decca records and since then it has become a perennial holiday favorite. “White Christmas” was written for the 1942 film *Holiday Inn*, which was remade in 1954 with the title *White Christmas*.

Musicologist Michael Beckerman wrote, “The song is a kind of holiday Moby Dick with distant images of things that cannot be reclaimed: the past, childhood and innocence itself.” ² Nostalgia for old times is evoked by the song; it is not an ode to joy, but a lament for lost happiness and a kind of winter blues.

Irving Berlin had a soft spot for Stephen Foster songs and “White Christmas” has ties to the “home song tradition.” ³ Such songs speak to newly arrived immigrants, have a pastoral serenity and evoke memories of happy times in distant days. Author Jody Rosen writes in her book about the song: “The power of “White Christmas” is its ambivalence: it depicts both the mythic ideal of Christmas... and the inevitable letdown—the bummer of holiday dreams unfulfilled.” ⁴ ■

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1. Rosen, p. 129.

2. Ibid, p. 54.

3. Ibid, p. 60.

4. Ibid, p. 188.

IRVING BERLIN

“Everyone should have a Lower East Side in their lives.”

Irving Berlin ¹

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Irving Berlin’s popular music served as a measure for much of the 20th century. It marched to war with soldiers, offered hope and encouragement to a nation in bleak times and rejoiced in the good things embodied in the American way of life. It also provided anthems for American culture in such standards as “White Christmas,” “Easter Parade,” “God Bless America” and “There’s No Business Like Show Business.”

Born Israel Baline on May 11, 1888, in Temun, Siberia, Berlin fled with his family to America to escape the Russian persecution of the Jews. They arrived in New York in 1893, settling on Manhattan’s Lower East Side. Compelled by poverty to work rather than attend school, Berlin made money by singing on street corners and secured a job as a singing waiter at the Pelham Café. During this time, he also began writing songs of his own and in 1907 published “Marie from Sunny Italy,” signing the work I. Berlin and thereby establishing the name under which he would become so well known. As George M. Cohan quipped, [He was] the Jewish boy who named himself after an English actor and a German city.” ²

Berlin continued his involvement in the blossoming music industry as a young man, initially working at odd jobs in the neighborhood that was becoming known as Tin Pan Alley. Eventually he secured a job as a lyricist for the music publishing firm of Waterson and Snyder. “The publishing houses of Tin Pan Alley aimed for topicality, exploiting the latest public fancies and news events.” ³ In 1911, his “Alexander’s Ragtime Band” became a huge hit and immediately earned him the title of “King of Tin Pan Alley.” Entirely self-taught as a musician, Berlin developed a unique musical style by playing only on the black keys. Therefore, most of his early songs were written in the key of F sharp, but, by using a transposing keyboard, Berlin was able to compose in other keys.

By the 1920s Berlin had become one of the most successful songwriters in the country, despite his lack of formal training. Opening the Music Box Theatre with Joseph N. Schenck and Sam Harris in 1921, Berlin began to stage his own revues and musical comedies. When the Great Depression hit in 1929, Berlin lost his fortune, as many others did. However, his misfortunes did not last long, and he

returned to the theatre with the show *Face the Music* (1932). Berlin and others began to write songs for the Regular Man such as James Cagney and Jimmy Stewart—“an upwardly mobile person yearning for the emotional and material comforts of middle class life.”⁴

Established on the Broadway stage, Berlin took his musical talents to Hollywood, writing the scores for such films as *Top Hat* (1935) and *Holiday Inn* (1942), in which the song “White Christmas” was introduced. As sung by Bing Crosby, “his voice embodied the Everyman character—casually dropped g’s which projected modesty and conviviality.”⁵

Berlin’s songs have served as rallying cries for the nation during two world wars. While serving in the Army in World War I, Berlin wrote patriotic songs for the shows *Yip, Yip Yaphank* (1918) and *This is the Army* (1942). The proceeds from the latter totaled over 10 million dollars and were given to the Army Relief Fund. Berlin’s most patriotic work remains “God Bless America”, sung for the first time by Kate Smith at an Armistice Day celebration in 1938.

Berlin also wrote some of the most popular love ballads of the century. “When I Lost You” was written in honor of his first wife, who died in the first year of their marriage. Some of his most poignant songs, including the hauntingly beautiful “What’ll I Do,” “Always” and “Remember” were written for his second wife, the heiress Ellin Mackay.

Berlin died on September 22, 1989 in New York City at the ripe old age of 101. He had received awards ranging from an Oscar to a Gold Medal presented by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. His songs helped shape the evolution of a genre through his use and adaptation of a variety of styles. His songs gave voice to the fears, regrets and hopes of a generation of Americans. ■

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1. Rosen, p. 65.
 2. Rosen, p. 69.
 3. Rosen, p. 90.
 4. Rosen, p. 113.
 5. Rosen, p. 116.

Rosen, Jody. *White Christmas: The Story of an American Song*. New York: Scribner, 2002.

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/broadway/stars/berlin_i.html

ADAPTERS OF THE STAGE MUSICAL

DAVID IVES AND PAUL BLAKE

Born in Chicago, David Ives attended Northwestern University and the Yale School of Drama where he received an MFA in playwriting. In the interval between Northwestern and Yale he worked for three years as an editor at *Foreign Affairs* magazine.

Ives' first play in New York was *Canvas*, staged at the Circle Repertory Company in 1972, followed at the same theatre by *Saint Freud* in 1975. In the late 1980s, his one-act comedies began to appear annually in the Manhattan Punch Line's yearly one-act play festival, among them: *Sure Thing*, *Words, Words, Words*, *Variations on the Death of Trotsky*, *Philip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread* and *The Universal Language*. All these plays became part of *All in the Timing*, which originated as an evening of one-act comedies that premiered at Primary Stages in 1993 and moved to the larger John Houseman Theatre where it ran for 606 performances.

In 2008 he had two plays running in New York; his adaptation of a Mark Twain play, *Is He Dead?*, and *New Jerusalem*, which concerned the excommunication of Baruch Spinoza. In 2010 *Venus in Fur* opened at the Classic Stage Company starring Nina Arianda and Wes Bentley. That same year he adapted Pierre Corneille's comedy *The Liar* for The Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. It won the Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play at the Helen Hayes Awards in Washington the following year. In the fall of 2011, *Venus in Fur* had its Broadway premiere at the Manhattan Theatre Club with Nina Arianda in her original role and Hugh Dancy in the role originated by Bentley.

In the 1990s Ives began working in musical theatre. He became a regular adapter in New York's celebrated "Encores!" series of classic American musicals in concert staging, working on two or three a year for the next fifteen or more years. He collaborated with Paul Blake in co-writing *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*. He lives in New York City with his wife Martha. ■

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Ives.

Paul Blake has served as Executive Producer of the the St. Louis Municipal Opera in Forest Park, since 1990; with 11,350 seats the “Muny” is America’s largest theatre. At the Muny, where *Irving Berlin’s White Christmas* began in summer, 2000, Mr. Blake has produced over 150 productions which featured such talents as Phyllis Diller, Captain Kangaroo and the Radio City Rockettes. His new musical, *Roman Holiday*, with a score by Cole Porter, had its American premiere at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis in summer 2012. ■

http://www.rnh.com/bio/156/Paul_Blake

A SYNOPSIS OF THE FILM

White Christmas is a 1954 Technicolor musical film starring Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Vera-Ellen and Rosemary Clooney and features the songs of Irving Berlin. It was directed by Michael Curtiz and distributed by Paramount Pictures.

The story is about two World War II U.S. Army buddies, one a Broadway entertainer, Bob Wallace (Crosby), the other a would-be entertainer, Phil Davis (Kaye). It begins on Christmas Eve, 1944, somewhere in Europe. Captain Wallace is performing for the troops of the 151st Division with the help of Private Davis singing “White Christmas”. The mood is somber; word has come down that their beloved commanding officer, Major General Thomas F. Waverly (Dean Jagger), is being relieved of command. He arrives for the end of the show and delivers an emotional farewell; the men give him a rousing send-off (“The Old Man”). An enemy artillery barrage ensues and Davis saves Wallace’s life by carrying him out of the way of a toppling wall, wounding his own arm slightly in the process. Using his “wounded” arm as a sort of blackmail, Phil convinces Bob to join forces as an entertainment duo when the war is over.

After the war the pair make it big in nightclubs, radio and then on Broadway. They eventually become successful producers mounting a hit musical called *Playing Around*, but Phil is concerned that his pal Bob has not met a woman he can marry. Several clumsy attempts to set him up with showgirls fail. In mid-December, after two years on Broadway, their show is in Florida where they receive a letter from a mess sergeant they knew in the war asking them to audition his two sisters. When they visit the club to audition the act (“Sisters”), Phil notices that Bob is smitten with Betty (Rosemary Clooney), while Phil has eyes for her sister, Judy (Vera-Ellen). Following their number, the girls join Bob and Phil at their table. Phil and Judy head to the dance floor (“The Best Things Happen While You’re Dancing”) while Bob and Betty get to know each other. Judy tells Phil that she and Betty are headed for the Columbia Inn in Pine Tree, Vermont, where they are booked for the holidays. Meanwhile, back at the table, Betty reveals to Bob that Judy, not her brother, sent them the letter. The two have a brittle argument and the prospects for a romance seem doubtful.

However, when Bob and Phil learn that Betty and Judy may be arrested (their corrupt landlord claims the sisters burned a \$200 rug), Phil helps the girls escape and convinces Bob to don the girls’ left-behind costumes and lip-sync “Sisters” from a record, to give the girls time to make it to the train. When Bob and Phil

arrive on the train and reunite with Betty and Judy, Phil again uses his “arm” to convince Bob to travel with the girls to Vermont for the holidays (“Snow”). When they arrive in an unseasonably warm and snowless Pine Tree, they discover that the inn is run by their former commanding officer, Gen. Waverly, and is in danger of failing because of the lack of snow and consequent lack of patrons. The general has invested all his savings and pension into the lodge.

Deciding to help out and bring business to the inn, Wallace and Davis bring *Playing Around* with their entire Broadway cast up to the inn and add Betty and Judy wherever they can. At the same time, Bob and Betty’s relationship starts to bloom (“Count My Blessings”). Meanwhile, Bob discovers the General’s rejected attempt at rejoining the army and decides to prove to the General that he is not forgotten.

Bob calls Ed Harrison (Johnny Grant), an old army buddy, now the host of a successful variety show (patterned on Ed Sullivan’s). Bob tells Ed that he wants to make a pitch on Ed’s show to all the men under the command of the General in the war, asking them to come to the inn on Christmas Eve. In response, Harrison suggests they go all out and put the show on television, playing up the “schmaltz” factor of the General’s situation and generating lots of free publicity for Wallace and Davis. What Bob doesn’t know is that the nosy housekeeper, Emma Allen (Mary Wickes) has been listening to the phone conversation but has only heard Ed’s suggestion, and hangs up before Bob rejects the idea. Mistakenly believing that her beloved boss will be presented as a pitiable figure on national TV, Emma reveals what she heard to a shocked Betty.

The misunderstanding causes a disillusioned Betty to grow suddenly cold to Bob’s baffled advances. Unaware of the reason for Betty’s change of behavior, Judy becomes convinced that Betty, ever-protective of her little sister, will never take a relationship farther until Judy is engaged or married. She pressures a reluctant Phil to announce a phony engagement. The plan backfires when Betty abruptly departs for New York City where she has a job offer. Phil and Judy reveal to Bob that the engagement announcement was a phony, and Bob, unaware of the real reason Betty is upset, heads to New York to explain about Judy and Phil. Bob goes to see Betty’s new act (“Love, You Didn’t Do Right By Me”) and reveals the truth about the engagement, but is called away by Ed Harrison before he can find out what is really troubling her. Meanwhile, back at the Inn, Phil fakes an injury to distract Gen. Waverly, so he does not watch the Ed Harrison show and see Bob’s announcement.

On the Ed Harrison Show, Bob asks all the veterans of the 151st Division to come to Pine Tree, Vermont on Christmas Eve (“What Can You Do With a General?”). Meanwhile, Betty, back in New York, watches the TV show in the green room between performances and realizes she was mistaken. She immediately returns to Pine Tree just in time for the show on Christmas Eve. Emma convinces Gen. Waverly that all of his suits are at the dry cleaners and suggests he wear his old uniform to the opening of the show. Initially reluctant, he agrees. When the General enters the lodge where the show is to take place, he is greeted by his former division who sing a rousing chorus of “The Old Man.” Just as the song ends, he learns that snow is falling.

In the finale Bob and Betty declare their love as do Phil and Judy. The background of the set is removed to show the snow falling in Pine Tree. Everyone raises a glass, toasting, “May your days be merry and bright; and may all your Christmases be white.” ■

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Christmas_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Christmas_(film))

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MOVIE AND STAGE VERSIONS

There are some minor plot differences between the stage musical and the film,. for example Davis doesn't injure his arm when a wall falls on him and is rescued by Wallace. The main differences between the two versions have to do with the songs that were added to or cut from the film version in creating the stage adaptation.

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The following songs that were added are by Irving Berlin and many were taken from other musicals:

"Happy Holiday"	(1942 film <i>Holiday Inn</i>)
"Let Yourself Go"	(1936 film <i>Follow the Fleet</i>)
"Love and the Weather"	(1947 popular song)
"Let Me Sing and I'm Happy"	(1930 Al Jolson film <i>Mammy</i>)
"I Love a Piano"	(1915 musical <i>Stop, Look and Listen</i>)
"Falling Out of Love Can Be Fun"	(1949 musical <i>Miss Liberty</i>)
"How Deep is the Ocean"	(1932 popular song)
"I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm"	(1937 film <i>On the Avenue</i>)

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The following songs were cut from the film version:

"Mandy"
"Gee, I Wish I Was Back in the Army"
"Heat Wave"
"Abraham"

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TRIVIA ABOUT THE MOVIE

White Christmas was the first film produced in Paramount's "VistaVision" process with color by Technicolor and introduced the Perspecta directional sound system. Originally, the film was to star Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire, as they had been successful in *Holiday Inn*. Astaire refused, as he had "retired" at that time, so the part was reworked for Donald O'Connor. O'Connor pulled out because of illness, so the part was rewritten for Danny Kaye.

Vera-Ellen did not sing any of the songs for the movie. Rosemary Clooney sang both parts for "Sisters" while Trudy Stevens sang the rest. Vera's own singing voice is heard only in the "arrival in Pine Tree" scene at the railroad station where the quartet reprises the opening lines of "Snow". In addition, the "Sisters" comedy act that Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye perform was not originally in the script. They were clowning around on the set and the director thought it was so funny that it was written in.

Rosemary Clooney was not allowed to sing on the soundtrack album because it was being released by a record company (Decca) other than hers (Columbia). She was replaced on the album by Peggy Lee. According to Clooney the "midnight snack" scene in which Bob Wallace expounds on his theory of which foods cause which dreams was almost entirely improvised. Many of Bob Wallace's more unusual turns of phrase were lifted straight from Crosby's own speech patterns.

The "Ed Harrison TV Show" that Bing Crosby appears on is a reference to *The Ed Sullivan Show* that featured known stars, new talent and vaudeville acts. Ed Harrison was played by Johnny Grant who did not have a long acting career in the movies, but was the honorary Mayor of Hollywood, California who officiated over the unveilings of Stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame from the early 1960s until his death in 2008.

White Christmas was 1954's most successful film. The second most successful was *The Caine Mutiny* which featured Rosemary Clooney's husband Jose Ferrer.

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<http://tv-movie=reviews.knojl.com/irving-berlins-white-christmas-1954-holiday-movie-trivia-interesting-facts/>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0047673/trivia>

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WORLD WAR II

The instability created in Europe by World War I (1914-1918) set the stage for World War II, which broke out two decades later and proved even more devastating. Historians cite three reasons for the eruption of the conflict: problems left unsolved by World War I, the rise of dictatorships and the desire of Germany, Italy and Japan for more territory.

After becoming Reich Chancellor in 1933, Hitler swiftly consolidated power, anointing himself Führer (supreme leader) in 1934. Obsessed with the idea of the superiority of the “pure” German race, which he called “Aryan”, Hitler believed that war was the only way to gain the necessary “Lebensraum”, or living space, for that race to expand. In the mid 1930s, he began rearming Germany, secretly and in violation of the Versailles Treaty. After signing alliances with Italy and Japan against the Soviet Union, Hitler sent troops to occupy Austria in 1938 and the following year annexed Czechoslovakia. Hitler’s aggression went unchecked as the United States and Soviet Union were concentrating on internal politics at that time. In addition, neither France nor Britain (the two other nations most devastated by the Great War) was ready for confrontation.

In late August 1939, Hitler and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin signed the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, which incited a frenzy of worry in London and Paris. Hitler had long planned an invasion of Poland, a nation to which Great Britain and France had guaranteed military support if it was attacked by Germany. The pact with Stalin meant that Hitler would not face a war on two fronts once he invaded Poland, and would have Soviet assistance in conquering and dividing the nation itself. On September 1, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland from the west; two days later France and Britain declared war on Germany, beginning World War II.

On September 17, Soviet troops invaded Poland from the east. Under attack from both sides, Poland fell quickly and by early 1940, Germany and the Soviet Union had divided control over the nation, according to a secret protocol appended to the Nonaggression Pact. Stalin’s forces then moved to occupy the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and defeated a resistant Finland in the Russo-Finish War. During the six months following the invasion of Poland, the lack of action on the part of Germany and the Allies in the west led to talk in the news media of a “phony war.” At sea, however, the British and German navies faces off in a heated battle, and lethal German U-boat submarines struck at merchant shipping bound for Britain, sinking more than

100 vessels in the first four months of World War II.

On April 9, 1940 Germany simultaneously invaded Norway and occupied Denmark; the war erupted in earnest. On May 10 German forces swept through Belgium and the Netherlands in what became known as “Blitzkrieg” or lightning war. Three days later, Hitler’s troops crossed the Meuse River and struck French forces at Sedan, located at the northern end of the Maginot Line, an elaborate chain of fortifications constructed after World War I and considered an impenetrable defensive barrier. In fact, the Germans broke through the line with such force with their tanks and planes that the line was rendered useless. The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) was evacuated by sea from Dunkirk in late May, while in the south French forces mounted a doomed resistance. With France on the verge of collapse, Benito Mussolini of Italy put his Pact of Steel with Hitler into action; Italy declared war against France and Britain on June 10.

On June 14 German forces entered Paris; a new government formed by Marshal Philippe Petain (France’s hero of World War I) requested an armistice two nights later. France was subsequently divided into two zones, one under German military occupation and the other under Petain’s government installed at Vichy. Hitler now turned his attention to Britain, which had the defensive advantage of being separated from the Continent by the English Channel. To pave the way for an amphibious invasion (dubbed Operation Sea Lion), German planes bombed Britain extensively throughout the summer of 1940, including night raids on London and other industrial centers that caused heavy civilian casualties and damages. The Royal Air Force (RAF) eventually defeated the Luftwaffe (German Air Force) in the Battle of Britain; thus, Hitler postponed his plans to invade England. With Britain’s defensive resources pushed to the limit, Prime Minister Winston Churchill began receiving crucial aid from the United States under the Lend-Lease Act, passed by Congress in early 1941.

By early 1941, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria had joined the Axis and German troops overran Yugoslavia and Greece that April. Hitler’s conquest of the Balkans was just a precursor for his real objective: the invasion of the Soviet Union, whose vast territory would give the German master race the living space it needed. The other half of Hitler’s strategy was the extermination of the Jews from throughout German-occupied Europe. Plans for the “Final Solution” were introduced around the time of the Soviet offensive and over the next three years, more than six million Jews would perish in the death camps established in occupied Poland.

On June 22, 1941 Hitler ordered the invasion of the Soviet Union,

codenamed “Operation Barbarossa”. Though Soviet tanks and aircraft greatly outnumbered the Germans, their air technology was largely obsolete. In addition, the impact of the surprise invasion helped Germans get within 200 miles of Moscow by mid-July. Arguments between Hitler and his commanders delayed the next German advance until October when it was stalled by a Soviet counteroffensive and the onset of harsh winter weather.

With Great Britain facing Germany in Europe, the United States was the only nation capable of combating Japanese aggression which by late 1941 included an expansion of its ongoing war with China and the seizure of European colonial holdings in the Far East. On December 7, 1941, 360 Japanese aircraft attacked the major U. S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, taking the Americans completely by surprise and claiming the lives of more than 2,300 troops. The attack on Pearl Harbor served to unify American public opinion in favor of entering World War II. On December 8, Congress declared war on Japan with only one dissenting vote. Germany and the other Axis Powers promptly declared war on the U. S.

After a long string of Japanese victories such as Guam and Wake Island, the U. S. Pacific Fleet won the Battle of Midway in June 1942, which proved to be a turning point in the war. On Guadalcanal, one of the Southern Solomon Islands, the Allies also had success against Japanese forces in a series of battles from August 1942 to February 1943, helping turn the tide further in the Pacific. In mid-1943, Allied naval forces began an aggressive counterattack against Japan, involving a series of amphibious assaults on key Japanese-held islands in the Pacific. This “island-hopping” strategy proved successful and Allied forces moved closer to their ultimate goal of invading the Japanese homeland.

In North Africa, British and American troops had defeated the Italians and Germans at Tobruk, Libya by 1943. An Allied invasion of Sicily and Italy followed as the Allies used Sicily as a springboard for invading Italy. Mussolini’s government fell in July 1943, though Allied fighting against the Germans in Italy would continue until 1945.

On the Eastern Front, a Soviet counteroffensive launched in November 1942 ended the bloody battle of Stalingrad which had seen some of the fiercest combat of the war. The approach of winter, along with dwindling food and medical supplies, spelled the end for German troops there and the last of them surrendered

on January 31, 1943. Meanwhile, British and American air forces began saturated bombing of Germany. On June 6, 1944—celebrated as D-Day—the Allies began a massive invasion of Europe, landing 156,000 British, Canadian and American soldiers on the beaches of Normandy, France. In response, Hitler poured all the remaining strength of his army into western Europe, ensuring Germany's defeat in the east. Soviet troops soon advanced into Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, while Hitler gathered his forces to drive the Americans and British back from Germany in the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945), the last major German offensive of the war. An intensive aerial bombardment in February 1945 preceded the Allied invasion of Germany, and by the time Germany finally surrendered on May 8, Soviet forces had occupied much of the country. Hitler was already dead, having committed suicide in his Berlin bunker.

At the Potsdam Conference of July-August 1945, U.S. President Harry S. Truman (who had become President after Roosevelt's death in April), Churchill and Stalin discussed the ongoing war with Japan as well as the peace settlement with Germany. Post-war Germany would be divided into four occupation zones, to be controlled by the Soviet Union, Britain, the United States and France. Stalin reported that he had received a message from Japan indicating Japan's willingness to negotiate. The three leaders issued an ultimatum calling for unconditional surrender and a just peace. When Japan ignored the ultimatum, Truman decided to use the atomic bomb. In addition, the heavy casualties sustained in the campaigns at Iwo Jima (February 1945) and Okinawa (April 1945) and fears of an even costlier invasion of Japan swayed Truman's decision. The bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in early August. On August 10, 1945, the Japanese government issued a statement declaring they would accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration and on September 2, U. S. General Douglas MacArthur accepted Japan's formal surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo B. ■

Ropp, Theodore. *The World Book Encyclopedia*. Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1972.

Young, Peter. *A Short History of World War II. 1939-1942*. New York: Thomas J. Crowell Co., 1966.

<http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii>

OTHER POPULAR SECULAR CHRISTMAS SONGS

“Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer” was created as a story by Robert L. May in 1939 as an assignment for Montgomery Ward. The store had been giving away coloring books for Christmas every year, but decided that creating their own story would be cheaper. Rudolph first appeared as a booklet in 1939. May’s brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, adapted the story into a song recorded by Gene Autry in 1949.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolph_the_Red_Nosed_Reindeer

“I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus” has music and lyrics by Tommie Conner. The song was commissioned by Saks Fifth Avenue to promote the store’s Christmas Card for the year 1952. The original recording by Jimmy Boyd reached #1 on the Billboard charts in December 1952.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Saw_Mommy_Kissing_Santa_Claus

“Frosty the Snowman” was written by Walter “Jack” Rollins and Steve Nelson for Gene Autry after his success with “Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer”. The song was subsequently recorded by Autry and the Cass County Boys in 1950. It was adapted to other media including a television special.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frosty_the_Snowman

“Jingle Bell Rock” was composed by Joseph Carleton Beal and James Ross Booth and recorded by Bobby Helms in 1957 in a rockabilly style.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jingle_Bell_Rock

“Silver Bells” was first performed by Bob Hope and Marilyn Maxwell in a film *The Lemon Drop Kid* (1951). It was written by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silver_Bells

“Santa Claus Is Coming to Town” was written by John Frederick Coots and Haven Gillespie and first sung on the Eddie Cantor radio show in 1934. It has been recorded by numerous artists from Lena Horne to the Beach Boys.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Claus_is_Coming_to_Town

“Winter Wonderland” was written by Felix Bernard (music) and Richard B. Smith (lyrics) in 1934. It was first recorded by Richard Himber and his Hotel Ritz Carlton Orchestra.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winter_Wonderland

“Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” was written by Ralph Blane and Hugh Martin. It was introduced by Judy Garland in the 1944 MGM musical *Meet Me In St. Louis*. Judy Garland sings the song to Margaret O’Brien when they learn the family must move to New York City for a job promotion, leaving their beloved home in St. Louis.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Have_Yourself_a_Merry_Little_Christmas

“Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” was written by Johnny Marks and recorded by Brenda Lee in 1958 when she was only 13 years old in a country music style.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rockin'_Around_the_Christmas_Tree

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Dramatic Learning: Teaching Artists from the Academy bring the creative process into classrooms to support and enhance core curriculum. Workshops and residencies in any discipline are tailored for each classroom. Dramatic Learning benefits more than 90 schools and 5,000 students annually. Call 303/446-4897 for more information.

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Family Fun Forum: This event is FREE. Families juggle, sing opera, and hula-hoop on the tightrope. These are just a sampling of the zany and fun things families learn in this two-hour skills hunt presented by Denver Theatre Academy teaching artists. Families will rotate from classroom to classroom, learning new skills and winning tokens for the entire family. Families spend their “earnings” on face painting, balloon animals, fun food and much more. Call 303/446-4892 for more information.

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For more information also check out our website at

www.denvercenter.org