

Crossroads Talk

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter July, 2015



*Summertime,
And the livin' is easy
Fish are jumpin'
And the cotton is high.....*

What is it about this song?! Since it was composed in 1934, there have been at least 30,000 cover versions recorded by some of the greatest, and not so great, musicians of the last 80 or so years. From opera (you can catch Maria Callas' version here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=alrBe2XF0IA) and classic performances through jazz (here's Ella Fitzgerald singing *Summertime*: www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2bigf337aU), blues, gospel, hip-hop, folk, rock n' roll (Janis Joplin did a very unique



blues-rock version: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn5TNqjuHiU), reggae and every Latten American rhythm you can think of, to versions in many languages and in all conceivable genre. There is an Indian version sung by Amit Chaudhuri (www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tJyFE9cqTE) and even a West African version sung in *Fon* by Angelique Kidjo (www.youtube.com/watch?v=DejCPc57c5o) And, yes, there is a Japanese version by Norimasa Fujisawa too! (www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e0BruUAfJA). It seems as though everyone wants to sing this song! But why?



The music for *Summertime* was written by George Gershwin as the opening aria for his folk-opera "Porgy and Bess". The lyrics were composed by DuBosa Hayward in collaboration with Gershwin's older brother Ira, and the opera's story is based on Hayward's novel, "Porgy".

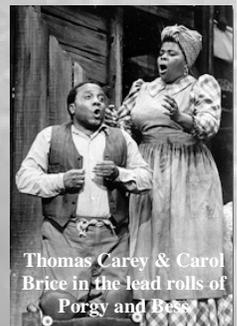
Hayward was a native of Charleston, South Carolina. Gershwin and his brother joined him there in 1934 so they could assimilate the local dialect and musical traditions of the area and incorporate them in the music they were writing for "Porgy and Bess". They lived and wrote among the local African-American community in that area during the summer of that year.

Many things have been said about the influences Gershwin was under when he wrote this extraordinary piece of music. Gospel, African-American spirituals, blues, "negro" folk, and even, it has been suggested, Ukrainian Yiddish lullabies.

Summertime (along with the other compositions in "Porgy and Bess") could be said to be a simple amalgamation of all these styles, except there is so much more; there is the genius of the New York City-born second son of Russian Jewish immigrants, George Gershwin.

Gershwin was already famous before he penned "Porgy and Bess". Some of his earlier numbers are among the most popular songs ever written. But, even he expressed wonder at what he had created with *Summertime*...

*..... Oh, Your daddy's rich
And your mamma's good lookin'
So hush little baby
Don't you cry.....*



Net News

NET LESSONS: Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons through the net!*

Check out the links above and let the music speak for itself!

Some Thoughts for the Month



Joshua Says: Thinking about useful and enjoyable ways to study English, I have often suggested to students to try listening to English songs, even sing English songs, during their spare time. Although the lyrics are sometimes written in less than “perfect” English and are, more often than not, hard to follow, the rhythms and stresses singers use are a great help in learning how to “feel” language. And it works! As an experiment, try singing “Summertime” next time you go to a Karaoke club!

Junko Says: Thank you all for supporting our 1st semester survey, December to May. Your answers and comments have been put together for each class and you should see some effects from the middle of this month. I would very much appreciate your feedback on the changes you notice. The importance of English in Japan has only grown - for business, schools and even Japanese society as a whole. As you know, we offer counseling any time you wish to get advice on your progress and on how to study more effectively.



Mark Says While I love technology and would be lost without my array of modern gadgets I sometimes feel that those devices have taken too much control of our lives. Every day, during my short walk to work, no matter where I look, I can see people transfixed to their smart-phones; while riding their bikes, walking along the footpath or waiting at intersections. Perhaps it's time to look up from our devices and make a bit of eye contact with those around us.

Aaron Says: Tsuyu is not something I have experienced before. I have been to Japan many times, but have never noticed this rainy season called Tsuyu. Where I come from, Texas, it is very, very hot right now, and rain is very rare this time of year. Rain almost everyday during May and June is something very strange and new to me! It is a good thing I like rainy weather, or I might get the blues.



Danielle dit; Ca y est, les examens sont finis en France ! Cela signifie que tous les écoliers et étudiants sont en vacances pendant l'été jusqu'en septembre, même si les étudiants à l'université travaillent souvent pendant cette période pour gagner un peu d'argent. Les travailleurs aussi prennent souvent des vacances pendant l'été. En France, on peut prendre jusqu'à 3 semaines de vacances ! Pratique pour se reposer et profiter des plages.

ACROSS

- 1 join, unite or merge into a whole
- 5 a combination of two or more
- 6 able to be imagined
- 7 an African-America religious song
- 8 a unique use of language
- 9 the words to a song
- 13 the act of working together
- 14 something a little different from the others
- 15 a person who moves to a new country permanently
- 16 a famous music composer from the 1930's

DOWN

- 2 greater than usual or normal
- 3 a distinct class, style or type of art
- 4 to incorporate or become part of
- 10 to have an effect on someone
- 11 a soft, quiet song sung to a child
- 12 a long standing practice

Play A Game!

(print version [here](#))

