1930s BROADWAY
“a portrait”

Book and Mural Artwork by

Penelope Elyse Brown Klaphake

Historical narrative of the people and buildings depicted on the 14-feet-high x 84-feet-wide masterwork mural, also titled:

1930s BROADWAY “a portrait”

Mural Artwork showcased in the grand lobby of the Art Deco-inspired:

Arizona Broadway Theatre
7701 West Paradise Lane
Peoria, Arizona 85382

KLOS Enterprises, LLC
7701 West Paradise Lane
Peoria, Arizona 85382

Candler Theatre

223 W. 41st St.
226 W. 42nd St.
New York, N.Y.

1930s Broadway Shows

The most successful shows included:

1930 *The Last Mile* (John Wexley)
1930 *The Greeks Had a Word for It* (Zoe Akins)

Apollo/Times Square Theatres

215 W. 42nd St.
223 W. 42nd St.
New York, N.Y.

1930s Apollo Broadway Shows

The most successful shows included:

1930 *Strike Up the Band* (George Gershwin, Morrie Ryskind)
1931 *Private Lives* (Noël Coward, Gertrude Lawrence)

1930s Times Square Broadway Shows

The most successful shows included:

1930 *Flying High* (Lew Brown, B.G. DeSylva, Kate Smith)
1931 *George White's Scandals 1931* (Lew Brown, Irving Ceasar, George White)
1932 *Take a Chance* (B.G. DeSylva, L. Schwab)

Candler makes way for Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum

Coca-Cola mogul Asa Candler hired architects Wilauer, Shape & Bready to design the 28-story skyscraper and architect Thomas W. Lamb to design the 1,051-seat theatre, which opened 5-7-1914 for films and 10-25-1916 for plays. Candler leased the theatre to entertainer George M. Cohan and producer Sam H. Harris, who renamed it the Cohan and Harris Theatre until 1920 when Harris took over and renamed it the Sam H. Harris Theatre. In 1926, the Shubert Brothers bought the theatre but it went bankrupt in 1933. For the next 45 years until1978, the theatre showed films. In 1996, workers razed it and by 2000, Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum took its place. The biggest hits include the theatre's opening show, 1914 *On Trial* (Elmer L. Rice), and the following: 1915 *The House of Glass* (Max Marcin); 1917 *A Tailor-Made Man* (Harry James Smith); 1919 *The Royal Vagabond* (William Carey Duncan, Stephen Ivor-Szinney); 1920 *Welcome Stranger* (Aaron Hoffman); 1921 *Six-Cylinder Love* (William Anthony McGuire); 1923 *The Nervous Wreck* (Owen Davis); and 1925 *Alias The Deacon* (LeRoy Clemens, John B. Hymer). Successful 1930s shows appear in box at left.



Both side-by-side theatres decline in 1930s

Theatre producers Arch and Edgar Selwyn hired architect Eugene DeRosa to design and build two, side-by-side theatres—the 1,057-seat Times Square Theatre, opening 9-30-1920 with Edgar Selwyn's *The Mirage* and the 1,194-seat Apollo Theatre, opening 11-17-1920 with *Jimmie* (Oscar Hammerstein II, Frank Mandel). Both theatres ran live shows through the early 1930s, and by the 1990s, they became part of the New York City 42nd Street Development Project where workers preserved some architectural elements, encorporating them into the new theatres. **Apollo:** Burlesque played from 1934 to 1937, then movies arrived and played until 1979 when officials renamed it the New Apollo Theatre. It had a four-year return to live theatre, staging a hit that ran longer than a year—1980 *Fifth of July* (Lanford Wilson). In 1983, the name changed to the Academy Theatre, a venue for a cabaret and then rock concerts. In 1996, the theatre became the 1,839-seat Ford Center for the Performing Arts (FCPA), which also included the Lyric Theatre. The FCPA became the Hilton Theatre in 2005, the Foxwoods Theatre in 2010, and the Lyric Theatre in 2014. **Times Square:** By 1934, the theatre became a movie house and retail store but closed in the 1980s due to fire damage and neglect. In 2018, developers signed a 25-year lease to convert the multi-floor property into high-end retail space.





Dream of opera school turns into theatre, later razed for major venue

Developer Eugene C. Potter, with architect Victor Hugo Koehler, originally built the structure for prolific opera composer Reginald DeKoven's American School of Opera. Unfortunately, his school went bankrupt prior to the theatre's completion, and the Shubert Brothers took over and had their offices upstairs. The 1,350-seat theatre opened on 10-12-1903 with Wilhelm Meyer-Foerster's *Old Heidelberg*, followed by 189 more shows until the theatre's transformation into a movie house in 1934. It languished for another 62 years, but by 1996 as part of the New York City 42nd Street Development Project, workers saved the facades on 42nd and 43rd Streets and razed the rest of the theatre, including the adjoining Apollo Theatre (part of the Times Square/Apollo Theatre). It made way for the 1,839-seat Ford Center for the Performing Arts, later renamed the Hilton Theatre in 2005, the Foxwoods Theatre in 2010, and then back to the original name, Lyric Theatre, in 2014. Notable Lyric Theatre hits include: 1922 *For Goodness Sake* with Fred Astaire (George Gershwin, Fred Jackson); 1925 *The Cocoanuts,* with the four Marx Brothers (Irving Berlin, George S. Kaufman); and 1928 *The Three Musketeers*, produced by Florenz Ziegfeld Jr., one of his last hits (William Anthony McGuire).

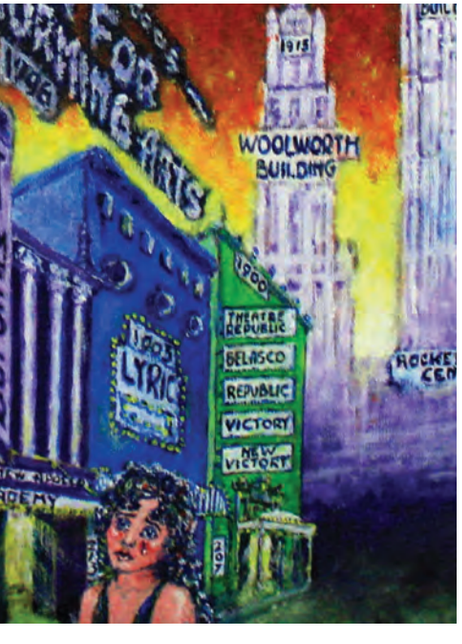
Lyric Theatre

213 W. 42nd St.
214 W. 43rd St.
New York, N.Y.

1930s Broadway Shows

The most successful shows included:

1929	*Fifty Million Frenchmen* (Herbert Field, Cole Porter)
1933	*Run, Little Chillun* (Hall Johnson)
1933	*Teatro Dei Piccoli* (S. Hurok, Italian marionette troupe)



New York City's oldest operating theatre rises, declines and rises again

Producer Oscar Hammerstein I had architect Albert E. Westover design and build the 982-seat Theatre Republic, which opened on 9-27-1900 with James A. Herne's *Sag Harbor*. After only two years, he gave up and leased it to the flamboyant impresario David Belasco, who renamed it the Belasco Theatre. Belasco reopened his namesake theatre on 9-29-1902 to his production of *Du Barry*. The 1907 *The Warrens of Virginia* (William C. DeMille [film producer Cecil B. DeMille's older brother]) pleased audiences with 380 performances. In 1910, Belasco reinstated the Theatre Republic name, and by 1922, it had a five-year run of the smash hit, *Abie's Irish Rose* (Anne Nichols), which had an uninterrupted 2,327 performances. After that, the theatre went through a decline, first in 1931 when it became Billy Minsky's Republic Burlesque, then in 1942, it became the Victory Theatre, a second-run movie house. Between the 1970s and 1990s, it showed pornographic films but by 1995 as part of the New York City 42nd Street Development Project, the theatre underwent another name change to the New Victory Theatre and became a restored venue for family entertainment and also the distinction of being New York City's oldest operating theatre.

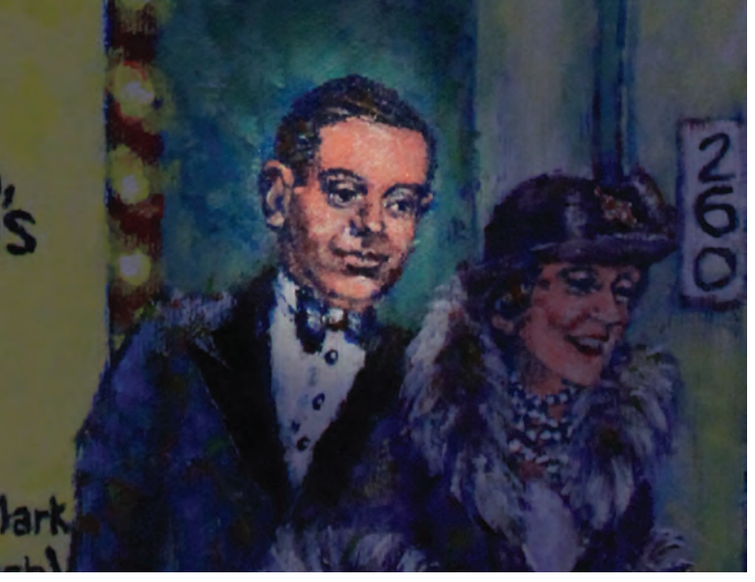
Theatre Republic

207 W. 42nd St.
New York, N.Y.

1930s Broadway Shows

The most successful shows included:

1929	*It Never Rains* (Aurania Rouverol)
1930s	Minsky Brothers Burlesque Acts



Cole Porter

(Cole Albert Porter)
Composer, Lyricist

Born 6-9-1891
Peru, Ind.

Died 10-15-1964 (73)
Santa Monica, Cal.
Kidney Failure, following Kidney Surgery

Marriage: 1919-1954 Linda Lee Thomas, her death
Relationships: Numerous male lovers

Irrepressible talent composes nearly 1,000 songs

After being introduced to music at a young age, the kind, gentle and captivating Cole Porter went on to become a world-famous, award-winning composer and lyricist—some say possibly the greatest popular songwriter of the 20th century. His meticulous musical craftsmanship, harmonic richness and emotional power became a genre known as the "Cole Porter Song" and won the esteem of his peers. Playwright/composer Richard Rodgers (on mural) once said, "Few people realize how architecturally excellent his music is. There's a foundation, a structure and an embellishment. Then you add the emotion he's put in and the result is Cole Porter."

His nearly 1,000 songs epitomized wit and sophistication, mixed in with sexual innuendo, eroticism, double entendres, delicate truths, love and romance—all written from his heart—some of his lyrics so risqué, they wouldn't have been allowed on the burlesque stage. His superb insight of combining both melody and words led many of his songs to become standards such as "Don't Fence Me In," "Just One of Those Things" and many others.

GROWING UP

Born to Samuel Fenwick Porter and Katie Cole, Cole Albert Porter entered their world in 1891 in a large Victorian house in the small town of Peru, Ind., located 75 miles north of Indianapolis. Best known as a circus town, Peru saw the Hagenbeck and Wallace Circus hold numerous extravaganzas there, and Cole's father, a successful drugstore owner, used to play the calliope in the town's parades. A compassionate and quiet man, Samuel played guitar, piano and sang. Before Cole's birth, his well-educated and wealthy mother gave birth to two other children, a daughter and a son, both of whom died in infancy. Perhaps his parents, but mostly his mother, doted on Cole because of those painful earlier losses.

The very shy Cole worshipped his mother, who provided him with his first exposure to music—the violin which he could play at age 6, and piano, which he could play by age 8. The following year, he wrote his first song, "The Song of the Birds," and by age 10, he composed his second song, "The Bobolink Waltz," which his mother liked so much she had it published in Chicago. His parents also made sure he learned to dance and to speak French. In the summer, he would play piano and sing with his talking, one-toned voice aboard steamer boats on Indiana's Lake Maxinkuckee, 30 miles from Peru. Audiences loved him. When he turned 14 in 1905, he left Indiana to study at the Worcester Academy, a boarding school in Worcester, Mass., where his fellow students quickly became fond of Cole's piano style. Then in 1909, he went off to Yale University in New Haven, Conn., where he composed more than a hundred songs, in addition to two of the most famous of all college songs, "Bingo Eli Yale" and the "Yale Bulldog Song." He accomplished significant work while there by writing several musical comedies, the genre of which evolved into a university tradition.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

With a Yale friend, Cole wrote his first professional musical, *See America First*, which opened on Broadway in 1916, closing after 15 performances to bad reviews—whereupon he held

numerous masquerade parties at his East 19th Street New York apartment, perhaps to cover up for his humiliation. The following year, he left for Paris, claiming to have joined the French Foreign Legion.

At a wedding in 1918, he met the beautiful and socially well-connected Linda Lee Thomas (on mural). They married the following year and honeymooned on the French Riviera, Italian Riviera and Sicily. After settling in Paris, Linda urged Cole to attend the renowned music school Schola Cantorum for two years to study harmony, counterpoint and orchestration. By 1923, he wrote his only serious composition, *Within the Quota*, an American ballet incorporating ragtime and jazz about a Swedish immigrant who faces many obstacles until he finally becomes accepted at the end. It played at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées to rave reviews.

Unabashedly, Cole claimed Linda as the most important relationship in his life. He loved her, adored her, respected her. Linda knew Cole's sexual nature when they married in 1919, yet she felt the same way about him. Their nearly 35-year, probably platonic, marriage served them both—she having a safe and loving marriage with a kind, gentle, funny and witty companion and he having a sophisticated, beautiful and protective life partner to join him in a carefree life, romping around Europe and keeping his secret.

This trim, small, dark-haired man with big, round distinctive eyes, who dressed impeccably and spoke with a quiet reserve suggested a serious manner, yet he and Linda lived an active, fun-filled and untroubled life in Europe. They entertained many popular aristocrats and international expatriates for nearly 20 years among their various homes in Paris, Venice and the French Riviera, but they mostly lived at their 13 rue Monsieur house near the Eiffel Tower. While in Europe and during their many travels, Cole wrote numerous songs, reflecting his own opulent manner of living and the "era," which challenged conventional wisdom and saw sexual emancipation, uninhibited humor and freedom of behavior. Cole experimented with and matured musically during the 1920s, especially after the advice of his friend, Irving Berlin (on mural), who told him to listen to his own style and not try to emulate others. He finally experienced his first real hit, *Paris*, debuting on Broadway at Irving's Music Box Theatre in October 1928. While in Europe, he wrote most of the music for the smash hit *Anything Goes* in 1934.

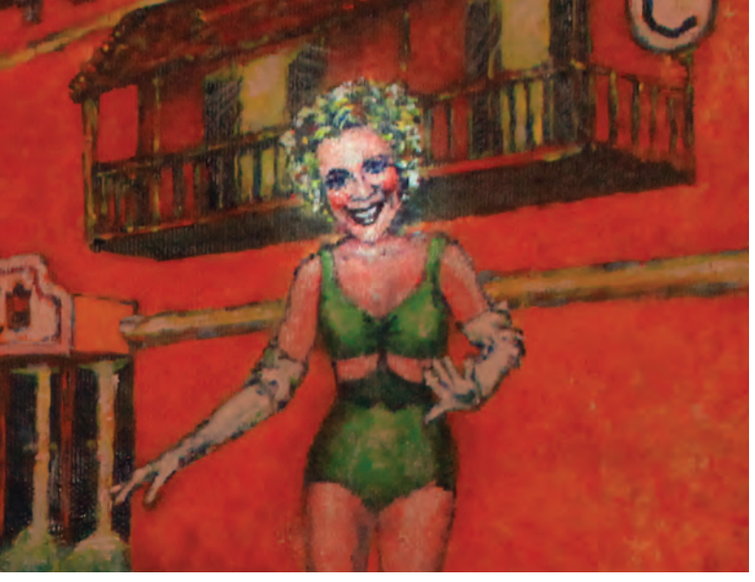
Soon after returning to the United States with Linda in the mid-1930s, they moved to the 41st floor of the Waldorf Towers into spacious and separate apartments across the hall from each other. Cole composed many songs from there on his grand piano and won great success. In 1935, the Porters went to Hollywood where Cole had an MGM contract. Cole loved California. Linda hated it, due to Cole's becoming more open in his homosexual attachments, which Linda saw as an affront to her feelings. They rented various houses over the years but in 1943, they rented a home at 416 N. Rockingham in Brentwood, Cal., (a scant two doors down from where the notorious former football player O.J. Simpson would live a few decades later—360 N. Rockingham, which workers later tore down). Linda eventually went back to New York, and for the rest of Cole's life, he split his time between California and New York.

"I don't know how my music gets that way. I simply can't analyze it. I can analyze the music of others. The word for Dick Rodgers' melodies, I think, is holy. For Jerome Kern, sentimental. For Irving Berlin, simplicity. For my own, I don't know." **—Cole Porter**

He had several discrete emotional love affairs throughout his life, some of which inspired his most tender love songs like "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To," "Dream-Dancing" and countless others. Cole came alive when he discovered the freedom and pleasure-seeking life Hollywood had to offer. He threw several pool parties at his home for his male friends only. Cole often used homosexual references in his work, sometimes so discreetly that no one knew except the "in" crowd.

In 1937, Cole went out riding at a friend's Long Island home when he fell off his horse which landed on him, breaking both his legs and injuring his nervous system. His mangled legs never healed but it didn't stifle his creativity or his sexual appetite. He had more than 30 operations over the next 20 years, living a daily life of pain. He produced great work in the 1940s and 1950s such as *Panama Hattie* 1940, *Let's Face It* 1941, *Something for the Boys* 1942, *Mexican Hayride* 1943, *Kiss Me Kate* 1948 (his most successful musical and greatest hit, which ran for 1,077 performances), *Can-Can* 1953 and *Silk Stockings* 1955. In addition to Broadway, he also wrote dozens of songs for movie musicals and television specials. In later life, Cole said his song, "Old Fashioned Garden" from *Hitchy-Koo of 1919*, constituted his greatest popular hit. He accomplished all this even though he didn't sing or play the piano very well.

His mother died in 1952 and two years later, Linda joined her. Linda's death left him despondent. He had moved from his Waldorf Towers 41st floor apartment down to a 31st floor, nine-room, memorabilia-filled apartment, where he continued to freakishly crave sex even while his right leg continued to painfully deteriorate. By 1958, he had it amputated, and after that, he never wrote another song.



Eleanor Powell

(Eleanor "Ellie" Torrey Powell)
Actor, Dancer, Singer

Born 11-21-1912
Springfield, Mass.

Died 2-11-1982 (69)
Beverly Hills, Cal.
Cancer

Marriage: 1943-1959 Glenn Ford, 1 child, divorced

High-speed tap dancer astonishes audiences

Nicknamed "The Queen of Tap Dancing," Eleanor Powell delighted audiences from the 1920s to the 1960s with her exquisite tap-dancing performances. This brilliant tapper, with her poise, charm and girl-next-door beauty, flew across stages in Vaudeville, seven Broadway shows, 20 films, and numerous television, radio and nightclub shows, often wearing feminized versions of male attire like formal coat, tails and hat. As the creator of her own choreography, long-legged Eleanor performed complex and impeccably timed dance routines, making them seem effortless, and although she occasionally had dance partners, her fame came from her solo machine-gun, tap-dancing style of up to five taps per second. Yet she only became a tap dancer from necessity because Vaudeville wanted tap dancers to grace their stages. She learned, taking just 10 lessons that soon brought her fame.

Characterized by her high ethical standards and dignity, she graced seven magazine covers and received multiple awards, honors and recognitions, such as the 1965 Dance Masters of America award, naming her "The World's Greatest Dancer." She later hosted a Sunday morning TV program for youth, an interfaith and interracial religious program, which featured appearances from film and sports stars. *The Faith of Our Children* show lasted three seasons with Eleanor earning five local Los Angeles Emmy Awards.

GROWING UP

Eleanor "Ellie" Torrey Powell's parents, Blanche Torrey and Clarence Powell, separated a few months after her birth in November 1912, eventually divorcing two years later. Her mother worked as a bullet loader for Smith & Wesson, bank teller, and hotel chambermaid while they lived with Eleanor's maternal grandparents in Springfield, Mass., where Eleanor attended public school.

Due to her intense shyness, her mother enrolled her in ballet and acrobatic dancing classes, which soon boosted her self-confidence. While on a 1924 summer family visit to her maternal great aunt's home in Atlantic City, N.J., 11-year-old Eleanor spent long days at the beach practicing her ballet and acrobatic stunts, which soon caught the attention of veteran theatrical producer Gus Edwards of Vaudeville Kiddie Revues. He instantly hired her to perform during his dinner show at the new Ambassador Hotel, which had opened just four years earlier. Thrilled at having her first real job, she danced two to three times a week in an orange and rhinestone-trimmed costume that her grandmother had sewn for her. Ellie's dance routine impressed audiences so much that Gus asked her to return the next summer, where she appeared in her first night club act, which led to her third Atlantic City job the following summer.

Based on this initial success, her mother took Eleanor out of school and they moved to New York City in 1927 into a 42nd Street hotel during the glitzy and exciting Roaring Twenties. At bandleader Ben Bernie's nightclub, 14-year-old Eleanor performed with his orchestra.

Eleanor then performed in Vaudeville and at private parties with legendary Black tap-dancing star Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. After auditioning and losing a number of musical roles because she couldn't tap, she realized she needed to learn, so in 1928 at age 15, Eleanor took lessons at the Jack Donahue Dance School in New York City, with private lessons from Jack himself, one of the foremost dancers of the

time. After being weighed down with sandbags tied to an Army surplus belt, she quickly learned to keep her feet close to the dance floor. "You're a percussion instrument with your feet," Jack Donahue later told her. The theatrical William Morris Agency agreed to represent 15-year-old Eleanor and contracted her to appear in a minor role in the 1928 Melville Gideon musical revue, *The Optimists*, at the Casino de Paris built the year before on West 54th Street.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

In 1929, Eleanor appeared in her first Broadway show, the Shubert Brothers' (both on mural) musical comedy *Follow Thru*, and charmed audiences with her singing and athletic tap-dancing ability. The show ran almost an entire year from January through December. She became a celebrity in the following Broadway shows—the Morris Green and Lewis E. Gensler production of musical comedy *Fine and Dandy* 1930 with music by Kay Swift (on mural); Billy Rose's production of *Crazy Quilt* 1931 with Fanny Brice (on mural); Florenz Ziegfeld Jr.'s (on mural) musical *Hot-Cha!* 1932; and *George White's Music Hall Varieties* 1932 revue.

Eleanor made her final appearance on Broadway in the Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz *At Home Abroad* 1935 musical revue, but her work schedule proved strenuous as she transitioned to Hollywood that same year. MGM film producer Louis B. Mayer viewed a screen test of Eleanor and wanted her to star in playwright Moss Hart's (on mural) *Broadway Melody of 1936* opposite Jack Benny and Robert Taylor, which needed to be filmed in 1935. The movie would later became one of the top 10 best films of 1935. However, Eleanor already had a contract with Lee Shubert to appear with Ethel Waters and Beatrice Lillie (all three on mural) in *At Home Abroad*, scheduled to open that fall. Lee threatened to sue her if she broke the contract. Eleanor managed to juggle her first film with her last Broadway show. After finishing up filming in Hollywood, she rushed back to New York, exhausted from the long cross-country trip. But she immediately went to the *At Home Abroad* rehearsals and worked for 14 hours nonstop. When she completed the show, she and her mother moved to Hollywood where Eleanor began a multi-year contract with MGM.

Between 1935 and 1943, she performed in several big-budget musical films, enchanting audiences with her endless energy and enthusiasm. She made her first starring role opposite James Stewart in *Born to Dance* 1936, a Jack Cummings production enhanced with Cole Porter's (on mural) Oscar-nominated music. While aboard a battleship, she performed an intricate and stunning dance number, "Swingin' the Jinx Away." Audiences and critics loved her, and she quickly became MGM's first true musical star. Few male dancers could match Eleanor's dominating style and formidable virtuosity. Thus, producers showcased her in "independent woman" solo dances. Only Fred Astaire (on mural) could match her abilities. In the romance, *Broadway Melody of 1940*, he danced with her and considered her the most exhilarating partner he had ever encountered, including Ginger Rogers (on mural). They danced to Cole's "Begin the Beguine," her most famous number, and Hollywood historians considered their tap dancing duet the most exciting ever filmed. They blended perfectly as a team due to both of their rational and common-sense approaches to dance.

***"What we are is God's gift to us, what we become is our gift to God."* —Eleanor Powell**

In the 1942 romantic comedy *Ship Ahoy* with Tommy Dorsey, she taps a message in Morse code to "On Moonlight Bay." In 1943, she performed in the comedy *I Dood It*. The film opened with the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra performing Count Basie's "One O'Clock Jump" followed by the comedy/drama *Thousands Cheer*, another lavish musical extravaganza with stars like Gene Kelly and Mary Astor (previous five all on mural).

In 1943, she left MGM after that filming and married Canadian-born actor Glenn Ford. Her last role in a full-length film, the 1944 United Artists' musical production of *Sensations of 1945*, featured a mixture of Vaudeville and circus acts where she danced in a giant pinball machine. W.C. Fields, his last film as he died in 1946, and Sophie Tucker (both on mural) also appeared in the film.

Eleanor spent most of the next few years as a homemaker and mother to son, Peter, born in 1945, the same year the U.S. Marines released Glenn from duty. In 1946, the family moved into a 22-room Beverly Hills mansion next door to famed actor Charlie Chaplin. Regular visitors to their home included Eddie Cantor (on mural) and Sophie Tucker from Eleanor's Broadway days, and Hollywood actors like Bette Davis, Clark Gable, James Mason and Barbara Stanwyck.

Her husband's film career took off quickly but she found it difficult to cope with rumors of his many affairs, yet her strong religious beliefs kept the marriage together for 16 years. When the marriage eventually ended in 1959, she got busy creating a nightclub act that played to sold-out audiences between 1961 and 1964 at The Sands Hotel in Las Vegas, the Latin Quarter in New York City, and the London Palladium. Her act led to television appearances on *The Ed Sullivan* (on mural) *Show*, *The Perry Como Show*, *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson and *Hollywood Palace*, a variety show. The huge success of the 1974 film, *That's Entertainment*, which contains a collection of clips from great movie musicals, confirmed Eleanor Powell's position as Hollywood's all-time greatest female dancer. A year before her death, she made her last public appearance at the American Film Institute in Washington, D.C., where she paid tribute to Fred Astaire, her co-star in *Broadway Melody of 1940*.



Angela Lansbury

(Angela Brigid "Bids" Lansbury)
Actor, Producer, Singer, Writer

Born 10-16-1925
Poplar,
London, England

Marriages: 1945-1946 Richard Cromwell, divorced
1949-2003 Peter Shaw, 2 children, his death

Millions adore eminent Broadway, film star

The public probably best remembers this highly acclaimed actor of stage and screen through her work as the star in the original 1966 Broadway blockbuster musical, *Mame*, earning her the first of five Tony Awards. Thirty years later, Broadway held a one-evening performance at the Majestic Theatre as a tribute to Angela on Nov. 17, 1996, with 50 performers, mostly those from *Mame*. But she didn't receive widespread fame until she starred in her long-running television series, *Murder, She Wrote* 1984-1996, which earned her four Golden Globe Awards and six nominations.

Angela's personal life included two marriages—the first lasted less than a year but the second marriage to Peter Shaw lasted a happy 54 years until his death in 2003. In 1946, she had met the handsome, 6-foot, 3-inch Englishman when he gave her a lift to a party some 80 miles away, and upon arriving, the spark of love had been lit. They soon fell in love and married three years later. "The thing that we share is our Britishness," Angela said. "That is the most comfortable, comforting part of our relationship." They went on to have two children.

GROWING UP

Born in central London in mid-October 1925, Angela Brigid Lansbury, called Brigid or "Bids," joined her upper middle-class family, including her beautiful Irish mother, Charlotte Lillian McIldowie; her loving English father, businessman Edgar Lansbury; and her half-sister, Isolde, as her mother had a short-lived first marriage in Ireland. Four years later, twin brothers followed, so the family moved to a large comfortable home complete with a nanny, maids and cooks. Her actor mother, who had taken the stage name Moyna Macgill, regularly appeared in theatres in London's West End, such as playing opposite John Gielgud in *The Great God Brown* by playwright Eugene O'Neill (on mural) and as Desdemona opposite Basil Rathbone in William Shakespeare's tragedy, *Othello*. Meanwhile, Bids' father ran the family business, the Stratford Veneer Mills, which supplied high-quality wood veneers to customers, such as for the *RMS Queen Mary*.

Bids' mother would often hold salons in their home for actors, artists, directors, musicians and writers, which greatly influenced her early interest in becoming an actor. Her parents arranged for her and Isolde to take, tap dancing lessons at their own home, and the sisters would dance to the music of popular singers like Bing Crosby (on mural). They also would perform in their own made-up skits and dances for the family. But the carefree life changed as the Great Depression affected her father's business. They needed more help so Bids' maternal grandmother assisted them. But it got even worse. In 1934, her 48-year-old father died, leaving behind a 36-year-old widow and four children.

After several months, her mother began an affair with Leckie Forbes, a stern, possessive former military officer—whose son, Malcolm Forbes, founded *Forbes* magazine, and became good friends with Bids. Together, they moved into a house Leckie had rented for the family. In 1939 when World War II began intruding on the lives of the English, many London parents sent their children north for their safety. But instead of going with the other children, 14-year-old Bids stayed with her mother and attended dancing, singing and drama schools, while her mother drove an ambulance. In 1940, Isolde married actor Peter Ustinov, who helped the entire family escape from Leckie's controlling grasp. They sailed to America even though German U-boats skulked in the

North Atlantic. They landed in Montreal in mid-August, then took a four-day train ride down to New York City. Meanwhile, the ship they came in on had headed back to England when Germans torpedoed it, sending it to the bottom of the ocean. In New York, her mother's first husband, the gentlemanly Reginald Denman, met them at Grand Central Station and took them to Manhattan's Algonquin Hotel on 44th Street, where the famous sophisticated wits of The Algonquin Round Table (TART) used to meet almost daily for lunch throughout the entire 1920s. (See Dorothy Parker, on mural, for more TART information in Chapter 3.) They then went to live with their generous American millionaire sponsors in a cottage on their expansive grounds.

Bids got a scholarship to the Feagin School for Drama and Radio, acting in many plays and graduating in 1942. Only 16 and claiming she was 19, she got her first professional singing job in a Montreal nightspot, while her mother toured in a Broadway show, *Tonight at 8:30*, by actor/playwright Noël Coward (on mural). Her mother soon moved to Los Angeles for more acting opportunities, and Bids and the twins later joined her there. Her mother went on to perform in 25 films and 10 television series. When Bids turned 17, she insisted on being called Angela.

"I'm eternally grateful for the Irish side of me. That's where I got my sense of comedy and whimsy. As for the English half—that's my reserved side ... but put me on stage, and the Irish comes out. The combination makes a good mix for acting." **—Angela Lansbury**

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Angela made the rounds of the studios, auditioned as often as possible and networked at her mother's many parties. It paid off and she began getting parts in 1944 with *Gaslight* and *National Velvet*. Then she and her mother got cast in the 1945 film, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, based on Oscar Wilde's novel, in which Angela won a Golden Globe Award. After that, she starred in 18 films and numerous television series until 1957 when she made her debut on Broadway in the intricate French farce, *Hotel Paradiso*. She then divided her time between the West and East Coasts. In Hollywood, she starred in such movies as *The Manchurian Candidate* 1962, winning another Golden Globe Award; *The Greatest Story Ever Told* 1965; *The Adventures of Moll Flanders* 1965 and *Harlow* 1965. In New York City, she appeared in several more Broadway shows. Her five greatest Broadway shows earned her a Tony Award for each one. They include:

• *Mame* 1966—a musical comedy with Jerry Herman music and lyrics, and based on the 1955 Patrick Dennis best-selling book, *Auntie Mame: An Irreverent Escapade*—about his paternal aunt. Angela starred as Mame Dennis, an eccentric and flamboyant character who lives an adventure-filled life in New York City during the Great Depression. Angela had 28 costume changes, and for one particular dress, she had only 45 seconds to get into it for the final scene of her flowing down the stairs during the curtain call—the gorgeous Bob Mackintosh designed white "bow" dress of white chiffon with a big billowing skirt, a spectacular dress, symbolizing stardom. Theatre critic Rex Reed, who was a college student at the time, wrote about Angela's performance for *The New York Times* Sunday edition, " ... A happy caterpillar turning, after years of being nose-thumbed by Hollywood in endless roles as baggy-faced frumps, into a gilt-edged butterfly." Angela remained in the role for two years, where the smash hit eventually ran until 1970 with 1,508 performances. After this success, Angela only took the leading roles in Broadway shows.

• *Dear World* 1969—a musical based on the 1943 poetic satire, *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, by French playwright Jean Giraudoux, with Jerry Herman music and lyrics—involves three countesses who conspire to stop the evil corporation from drilling oil in their Paris neighborhood. Angela starred as the slightly deranged Countess Aurelia.

• *Gypsy* 1974—a musical comedy/drama based on stripper Gypsy Rose Lee's (on mural) 1957 autobiography, *Gypsy, A Memoir*, with composer Jule Styne and lyricist Stephen Sondheim (on mural) music—starred Angela as the disreputable Rose, Gypsy's mother.

• *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* 1979—a cheerfully macabre and offbeat musical based on the 1973 play by Christopher Bond, with Stephen Sondheim music and lyrics—saw Angela star as the addled-brained Mrs. Nellie Lovett, the owner of a meat pie shop in 19th-century London. She conspires with her renter, the rage-filled murderous barber, to make her pies out of the people he kills for revenge upstairs in his barber shop. Even though the show has a huge cast, the story revolves around Nellie and the barber. Stephen's music required Angela to sing more challenging songs with unusual rhythms, sometimes inharmonious, and clashing of keys. " ... It was a pretty grim subject matter, let's face it, but I had my moments where I was able to run with my piece of material and make it fun and ridiculous. I think the people got that, and they got the deep seriousness that was inside this woman," she said, taking her performance beyond what she had ever done before as an actor. Angela also performed the same role in the 1982 television movie version.

• *Blithe Spirit* 2009—a 1941 comedy/farce with a small seven-member cast written in only one week by playwright Noël Coward—involves an old haunted house where Angela stars in the 2009 version as the peculiar clairvoyant, Madame Arcati. She holds a séance and summons violent and disruptive spirits. Again, Angela studies her unusual character, playing it with great skill.

After her 1983 Broadway revival of *Mame*, she spent the next 12 years on television, portraying mystery writer and clever amateur sleuth Jessica Fletcher in the hour-long serious *Murder, She Wrote*. Angela's own persona reached into people's homes where she showed the warmth and intelligence of her character, and the American public soon came to love her. It kept getting higher ratings until it was in first or second place and remained there for years. Then between 2007 and 2012, she was back on Broadway, starring in four more Broadway shows.



Duke Ellington

(Edward Kennedy Ellington)
Big Bandleader, Composer, Jazz Pianist, Lyricist

Born 4-29-1899
Washington, D.C.

Died 5-24-1974 (75)
Bronx, N.Y.
Lung Cancer

Marriage: 1918-1966 Edna Thompson, 1 child, her death
Relationships: Numerous
1929-1939 Mildred Dixon, lived together
1939-1953 Beatrice "Evie" Ellis, lived together, died 1976, buried next to Duke Ellington

Master expands boundaries of many genres

A loving family, a middle-class African-American community, the Baptist church and music helped shape Duke Ellington to forge a highly successful half-century career as a bandleader. In the process, he became a forerunner in the evolution of jazz, including swing, one of the best-loved jazz forms on America's music scene. Some have referred to him as "America's greatest composer" with his total achievements consistently progressing from the 1920s to the 1970s. He composed more than 3,000 songs (some say as many as 5,000), including ballet, choral, classical and concert works, film scores, musicals and orchestral suites, many of which have been recorded and also used in hundreds of films and on television. Over his career, he performed in the United States, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia, making him an international music legend. After meeting Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain, he composed the six-part "The Queen's Suite" in 1959, with the queen receiving the only copy (until more were produced after Duke's death).

A private, hard-to-know man, yet warm, witty and charismatic with a magnetic presence, he possessed a cool dignity that garnered respect from those around him. These qualities may have led to Duke's ability to meticulously and effectively manage a group of sometimes temperamental musicians he called "18 maniacs" by customizing his compositions to the rich tonal qualities coming from his individual soloists. This accomplishment resulted in an orchestra with a distinctive sound. He would also reuse older compositions and create new ones just by changing the beat and tempo to accommodate various dance styles such as a one-step, two-step, fox-trot, tango and waltz. Until the end of his life, Duke continually composed music—a remarkable and total commitment to "his greatest mistress." His boundless awards include 13 Grammy Awards and its Lifetime Achievement Award, the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom and Gold Medal, a Pulitzer Prize, a French Legion of Honor, and other honors.

GROWING UP

Born into a middle-class African-American home filled with love, encouragement and opportunities, Edward Kennedy Ellington remained an only child until his sister, Ruth, arrived 16 years later. Both his deeply religious mother, Daisy Kennedy, (born in Washington, D.C., to a police captain and her warm mother) and his father, James Edward "J.E." Ellington, (born in Lincolnton, N.C.) played piano—she, semi-classical pieces and parlor songs; he, operatic arias played by ear. His father held various jobs including coachman, chauffeur, butler, White House caterer and lastly, as a blueprint maker at the Washington Navy Yard, one of the oldest operating Naval facilities in the United States. At around age 7, Edward started taking piano lessons from his mother, who believed the arts enhanced a genteel Victorian education. His family and teachers continually reinforced character-building aspects such as respecting oneself and others, good manners, elegant taste, dapper dress and proper speech. Because Edward took on these noble attributes, a childhood friend nicknamed him "Duke."

Duke, however, had a spotty record as a piano student. He'd rather play baseball with his chums, and at times, President Theodore Roosevelt would amble over from the White House on his horse to watch them. Later, Duke got his first job selling peanuts at Washington Senators' baseball

games. He got a taste of "adult" show business by age 12 when he and his friends would slip into the Gayety Theatre where racy and raunchy burlesque played in the entertainment district on 9th Street.

At age 14, music crept back into his life when he would sneak into Frank Holliday's pool hall to listen to many remarkable pianists who played a syncopated new sound called ragtime. Later, while working at the Poodle Dog Cafe, he created his first tune, "Soda Fountain Rag" (aka the "Poodle Dog Rag") and "What You Gonna Do When the Bed Breaks Down?" Along with listening to and imitating many proficient ragtime pianists, he continued to take private lessons, learning to read music and harmonize, acquiring a good technique and projecting a professional style.

"You've got to find some way of saying it without saying it." —Duke Ellington

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Uninterested in a formal education, Duke left Armstrong Technical High School in Washington, D.C., where he had been studying commercial art just a couple of months shy of graduation. By this time, his piano skills had improved so much that he played gigs with various bands in cafés and clubs in the Washington, D.C., area. He loved the life so much that in 1916, he turned down a scholarship from the art school, Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, and embarked on his soon-to-be-famous musical career.

Late in 1917, Duke formed his first group, The Duke's Serenaders, consisting of two to four members. They played at pool halls, country clubs, cabarets, in addition to society balls, embassy parties and after fox hunts and horse shows in the Washington, D.C., and Virginia areas. He not only played in the band but he also booked the gigs for both White and Black audiences, an uncommon occurrence at that time. With his education in commercial art, he painted commercial signs during the day, and if customers needed entertainment for their events, he would suggest his band. The band thrived. Duke, now 19, moved out of his parents' home, bought a house and a car, and married his childhood sweetheart, Edna Thompson. Their son, Mercer, arrived a few months later and would be Duke's only child. They drifted apart but never divorced, and he went on to have a few meaningful relationships and numerous affairs.

Four years later while Duke tried building a career in New York, Edna and Mercer had moved into Duke's parents' home in Washington, D.C. Duke went to and from New York City, barely hanging on professionally until 1923 when his luck improved due to the growth and popularity of hot jazz. Now seven members strong, he changed the band's name to The Washingtonians and worked for a variety of clubs, including The Hollywood Inn (name changed to The Kentucky Club after a fire). New Yorkers considered the club, owned by gangsters, as one of the hot spots of the day. Duke started composing music seriously.

By 1926, Duke hired Irving Mills as his agent, who got his music on a major record label and on regular radio broadcasts, which vastly expanded the band's popularity to wider audiences. Band members changed from the "sweet sound" to the "hot jazz sound," and as band members left, Duke replaced them with musicians who played in the New Orleans jazz style. In 1927 at age 28, he played at the chic Cotton Club, Harlem's most glamorous nightclub, where radio broadcasted them live as he and his band played until 1931 to White audiences only. Ironically, the club prohibited Black people from attending. While there, they perfected an individual style and sound. The band expanded to 12 musicians and again, he changed its name—this time to Duke Ellington and His Orchestra—the final moniker.

By the 1930s, Duke prospered and became a star. Along with writing many more popular tunes, he began producing complex, original arrangements resembling the music of classical orchestras, yet still remained popular among all kinds of musical audiences. Duke formed the first permanent trombone trio as the instrument had not yet been recognized for its unique ballad and lyric style. He toured across America and Europe to much acclaim and made nearly a dozen films, probably more than any other Black bandleader at the time. Other big bands such as Cab Calloway's Orchestra, Benny Goodman's Orchestra, Jimmie Lunceford's Orchestra and the Dorsey Brothers' Orchestra (previous four on mural) extensively recorded Duke's ballads from the decade, with many becoming standards. Across the country, thousands of his records flew off the shelves and women threw themselves at him. Also, at some point, Duke met another "Duke," the heiress Doris Duke (on mural), who was known for her love of African-American jazz. A photo shows him playing a violin to the seated and smiling Doris (Michael Ochs photographer, unknown date/place).

Some people believe Duke reached his most creative peak in the 1940s with such masterpieces as "Concerto for Cootie," "Harlem Airshaft," "Ko-Ko," "Sepia Panorama" and his longest and most ambitious work, the 44-minute long "Black, Brown and Beige: A Tonal Parallel to the History of the Negro in America," which he composed specifically for his 1943 New York Carnegie Hall engagement, where few African Americans had played before. Between the 1950s and his death in 1974, Duke Ellington and His Orchestra produced more music and recorded with the likes of Louis Armstrong, Count Basie (on mural) and others, and collaborated with Frank Sinatra. His last major successes were the nine-part "The Far East Suite" in 1967 and the five-part "The New Orleans Suite" in 1969-70.

Cleo Patra Brown



Broadway Shows
1927 *Lovely Lady*
1928 **Animal Crackers*

Notable Songs
"Breakin' in a New Pair of Shoes"
"Cleo's Boogie"
"Give a Broken Heart a Break"
"Lazy Bones"
"Lookie Lookie Lookie (Here Comes Cookie)"
"Love in the First Degree"
"Mama Don't Want No Peas and Rice and Coconut Oil"
"Me and My Wonderful One"
"My Girl Mezzanine"
"My Handy Andy"
"Pelican Stomp"
"Pinetop's Boogie-Woogie," her greatest hit
"The Stuff is Here and It's Mellow," her theme song
"When Hollywood Goes Black and Tan"
"Who'll Chop Your Suey When I'm Gone?"
"You're a Heavenly Thing"
"You've Got Me Under Your Thumb"

*Adapted to film
NOTE: Her greatest hit and theme song are listed above.

Mildred Bailey



Notable Songs
"Bob White (Whatcha Gonna Swing Tonight?)"
"Born To Swing"
1"Darn That Dream"
"Honeysuckle Rose"
"I Don't Stand a Ghost of a Chance With You"
"I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart"
"I'd Love To Take Orders From You"
"I'm Glad There is You"
"It's So Peaceful in the Country"
"It's The Natural Thing To Do"
"The Lamp is Low"
"Long About Midnight"
"Love's A Necessary Thing"
1"Please Be Kind"
g"Rockin' Chair" her signature song,
1"Says My Heart"
"Someday, Sweetheart"
"Squeeze Me"
"Thanks for the Memory"
"Trust In Me"
"When Day Is Done"

gGrammy Award
1 No. 1 Hits
NOTE: She appeared in several films as herself, and the 2017 documentary *Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World.*

Bing Crosby



Broadway Shows
1976 *Bing Crosby on Broadway*
1987 *Stardust*

Songs -1930s No. 1 Hits
"Alexander's Ragtime Band"
"Bob White, Whatcha Gonna Swing Tonight?"
g"Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?"
"Dinah"
"It's Easy To Remember"
"I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams"
"June In January"
"Just One More Chance"
"Little Dutch Mill"
"Love In Bloom"
"The Moon Got In My Eyes"
"Out Of Nowhere"
g"Pennies From Heaven"
"Please"
"Red Sails In The Sunset"
"Remember Me?"
"Shadow Waltz"
"Soon"
"Sweet Leilani"
"Three Little Words"
"Too Marvelous For Words"
"You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby"
"You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me"

Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. Bing was first one honored.
gGrammy Awards
NOTE: He had No. 1 hits for decades, including three in the 1920s, 23 in the 1930s (above) and 17 in the 1940s. Some recordings remained No. 1 hits for subsequent years.

Bessie Smith



Broadway Shows

1929 *Pansy*
1982 *Blues in the Night*
Bessie's songs and lyrics
2002 *One Mo' Time*
Bessie's songs and lyrics

Film Examples

1929 *St. Louis Blues*
1975 *Brother Can You Spare a Dime*
Great Depression documentary
2003 *The Blues*
television documentary
2015 *Bessie*, biographical film starring Queen Latifah

Notable Songs

"A Good Man is Hard to Find"
"After You've Gone"
"Aggravatin' Papa"
"Alexander's Ragtime Band"
"Baby Won't You Please Come Home"
"Blackwater Blues"
"Careless Love Blues"
"Cold in Hand Blues"
g"Down Hearted Blues"
g"Empty Bed Blues"
"Gulf Coast Blues"
"I Ain't Gonna Play No Second Fiddle"
"I Ain't Got Nobody"
"Lost Your Head Blues"
"Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out"
g"St. Louis Blues"
"T'ain't Nobodys Biz-Ness If I Do"

gGrammy Awards
NOTE: Between 1929 and 2019, Bessie's music has been featured in 42 films: movies, documentaries or television series

Ella Fitzgerald



Broadway Shows

1975 *Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie Special Concert*, starring all three artists
1986 *Uptown...It's Hot!* Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie

Films

1942 *Ride 'Em Cowboy*
1955 *Pete Kelly's Blues*
1958 *St. Louis Blues*
1959 *But Not For Me*
1960 *Let No Man Write My Epitaph*

Notable Songs

"Airmail Special"
"A-Tisket, A-Tasket"
"Bewitched"
"But Not for Me"
"Cheek to Cheek"
"Darn That Dream"
"Dream A Little Dream of Me"
"East of the Sun (West of the Moon)"
"Easy Living"
"How High the Moon"
"Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall"
"The Lady is a Tramp"
"Mack The Knife"
"Misty"

NOTE: Between 1938 and 2019, 200 films and television shows, series and documentaries have featured her music. Ella also appeared in several television commercials with one that stood out–Memorex cassette tapes. She sings a note that breaks glass while she records her voice on the tape. Then after playing the tape back, another glass breaks. The famous line was: "Is it live, or is it Memorex?"

Billie Holiday



Broadway Shows

1948 *Holiday on Broadway*
1976 *Bubbling Brown Sugar*
1976 *An Evening With Diana Ross* features Billie's songs and lyrics, 16 shows
2014 *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* features Billie's lyrics, 193 shows

Notable Songs

"Any Old Time"
"Crazy He Calls Me"
"Don't Explain"
"Easy Living"
"Fine and Mellow"
"God Bless the Child"
her signature song
"Good Morning Heartache"
"I Cried for You"
"I'm Gonna Lock My Heart"
"I've Found a New Baby"
"Lady in Satin"
g"Lady Sings the Blues"
"Lover Man"
g"My Man,"
"Riffin' the Scotch"
"Strange Fruit"
"T'ain't Nobody's Business If I Do"
"Traveling Light"
"What a Little Moonlight Can Do"

Film Biographies

1951 *'Sugar Chile' Robinson Billie Holiday, Count Basie and His Sextet*
1972 **Lady Sings the Blues*
2001 *"Reputations" Billie Holiday: Sensational Lady*

gGrammy Awards
*Adapted to film from Billie's autobiographical book
NOTE: Billie acted in three films between 1933 and 1950; appeared in 37 television documentaries; starred as herself in 12, mostly television series; and 200-plus films produced between 1935 and 2019 used her soundtracks.