



PBS

PBS' STAR-STUDED SEASON 3 OF *MICHAEL FEINSTEIN'S AMERICAN SONGBOOK* BOASTS SONDHEIM, MINNELLI, LANSBURY AND OTHER MUSIC, DANCE AND THEATER GREATS

**Show Tunes, Song and Dance, and Radio's Star-Making Past
Are Among the Topics in a Three-Episode Arc**



Michael Feinstein (right) interviews stage and screen star Angela Lansbury and surprises her with a video treasure. Credit: HudsonWest Productions

ARLINGTON, VA – March XX, 2013 – Stephen Sondheim, Liza Minnelli, Angela Lansbury, Christine Ebersole and other great stars of American music and musical theatre share the spotlight with the country's most passionate music preservationist as **MICHAEL FEINSTEIN'S AMERICAN SONGBOOK** returns to PBS for a new star-studded, three-part season Friday, April 5, 2013, 9:00 p.m. ET.

Season Three finds Feinstein exploring the enduring popularity of show tunes, the *pas de deux* between music and choreography on stage and the big screen, and the indelible impact that radio – in its star-making heyday – had on the American musical canon.

– more –



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While crisscrossing the country on a seemingly endless stream of concert dates, Feinstein conducts candid interviews with revered composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim (*Sweeney Todd*, *West Side Story*, *Follies*) and the multiple Award-winning Broadway and television legend Angela Lansbury. He sings with Tony Award-winning actress Christine Ebersole, reminisces with Liza Minnelli about the great dance stars Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire, hosts superstar violinist Joshua Bell on his public radio show, and visits with some of the country's most well-versed and colorful collectors of musical recordings and music ephemera.

The acclaimed **MICHAEL FEINSTEIN'S AMERICAN SONGBOOK** airs as part of PBS ARTS, one of broadcast television's only programming blocks dedicated to the best in performing arts, on Fridays, April 5, 2013, 9:00-11:00 p.m. ET and April 12, 2013, 10:00-11:00 p.m. ET on PBS.

"We're thrilled to have Michael Feinstein back on PBS for his entertaining and insightful perspectives on American musical history," said Donald Thoms, Vice President of Programming for PBS.

"Programs like **AMERICAN SONGBOOK** are possible only on public television. PBS continues to be the home for the arts on TV, bringing viewers a front-row seat to the best artists and performances in the world."

Season Three of **MICHAEL FEINSTEIN'S AMERICAN SONGBOOK** features:

"Show Tunes" – *Friday, April 5, 2013 at 9 pm.* Stars in the Broadway universe don't shine much brighter than **Stephen Sondheim**, **Angela Lansbury** and **Christine Ebersole**, all of whom appear in this episode about great American musicals. Sondheim reveals the composers he most admires and shows Feinstein some rare home movie footage of the original Broadway production of the classic *Follies*. Tony Award-winner Ebersole gives a *tour de force* performance of some of the greatest show tunes of all time, and Lansbury reflects on her Broadway career, from *Mame* to *Sweeney Todd* and *Gypsy*. (Feinstein has a surprise for Angela.) Feinstein discusses his personal relationship with Ira Gershwin (also the topic of his recent book) and performs the classic "Lullaby of Broadway," "Let Me Entertain You" and "No One Is Alone."

"Let's Dance" – *Friday, April 5, 2013 at 10 pm.* **Fred Astaire** is Michael Feinstein's favorite singer — but he also was the favorite singer of **Irving Berlin**, **Cole Porter** and **George and Ira Gershwin**. Why was this dancer, first-and-foremost, so beloved by America's great composers? With that question, Feinstein launches into an exploration of the marriage between music and choreography, unearthing rare home movies of Astaire rehearsing on set, and remarkable memorabilia from that other screen-dance icon, **Gene Kelly**. Kelly stuns in never-before-seen footage of his Broadway debut in the original *Pal Joey*, as does the iconic **Cyd Charisse**, seen in her first television performance. **Liza Minnelli**, who knew Kelly and Astaire, discusses their unique styles and techniques. She also is seen in vintage television clips dancing with Kelly and performing some memorably steamy choreography. Feinstein indulges his inner Astaire with private dance lessons, learning differences between the fox trot and the turkey trot, among others. Finally he explores the endless popularity of ballroom dance



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and performs the classics “Change Partners,” “Singin’ in the Rain,” “Shall We Dance” and “Let’s Face the Music and Dance.”

“**On the Air**” – *Friday, April 12 at 10 pm* – Today, “American Idol” is the country’s biggest music star-maker, but decades ago, the Golden Age of Radio fulfilled the idol-making role in the U.S. Feinstein traces the phenomenon with archival clips of **Bing Crosby, Cab Calloway, Kate Smith** and many others. He visits with TV and stage star **Rose Marie** (best known as “Sally Rogers” on “The Dick Van Dyke Show”) and learns about her career as a highly paid child radio star named “Baby” Rose Marie. On his own syndicated public radio program, Feinstein showcases the virtuoso talents of classical superstars, including violinist **Joshua Bell** and pianist **Jeremy Denk**, who perform together and discuss intersections of classical and popular music. This episode includes visits to collectors of vintage radios and radio programs. Finally, he discovers a lost radio program that featured **Rosemary Clooney**, and recalls his own memorable duet with her.

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN’S AMERICAN SONGBOOK is part of the ongoing, multi-platform “PBS Arts” initiative, which highlights PBS’ commitment to the performing and visual arts, and gives millions of viewers a front-row seat and a backstage pass for the best music, theater, dance, art and cultural history programs on-air and online. For more information: www.pbs.org/arts.

The Season 3 DVD set of **MICHAEL FEINSTEIN’S AMERICAN SONGBOOK** is available at shopPBS.org or 1-800-Play-PBS. The set includes three one-hour episodes and more than 90 minutes of bonus material.

FUNDING

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CREDITS

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Producer/director: Amber Edwards
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