

21L 011 The Film Experience
Prof. David Thorburn
Lecture 11

The American Musical Film

1. Numbers

1927-47: 919 films (48 films each year)

1949-58: 23 films per year

1959-80: 7 films per year

2. Themes

Show business: community: the show goes on

High culture, popular culture

Class or position vs. talent, merit

Convention, restraint vs. spontaneity, energy,

“the natural”

3. History

- Revue, Operetta

Love Me Tonight (Rouben Mamoulian, 1932)

- Busby Berkeley & Warner Brothers

42nd Street (1933)

- Astaire, Rogers and RKO

Top Hat (1935)

- MGM and “the integrated musical”

Singin' in the Rain (Donen and Kelly, 1952)

Arthur Freed (1894-1973): The Freed Unit