

## Project History, Information Gathering and Methodology

My research began with assessing the state of and availability of this kind of a collection in the education and commercial marketplace. After reviewing many artist and publishing websites, books, articles on the subject of “what makes a standard a standard” and the availability of this category of repertoire, I reached the conclusion that there was; 1) no absolute definition of what a standard is and, 2) no centralized place to find this material. I quickly realized that creating a new book based on either my assumptions or a rough assemblage of opinion and sources wouldn't be satisfactory. The question of what to include or exclude had to come from the project contributors and the collected music.

What emerged from the research was:

Don't call anything “new standards” or the “modern jazz singer standard” or “jazz vocal standard repertoire post 1960” or.... JUST do not use the word standard. The research confirmed that there are far ranging, diverse opinions defining a jazz standard. I did not want to get into the fray among academics, historians, vocalists or anyone else.

Simply put and with the enormous help of the project contributors, my criteria became finding good songs that have been written after 1960 that are, 1) frequently sung, or 2) rearranged, or 3) new or relatively unknown compositions with lyrics in English and 4) recommended by the project contributors. The collection thus far only includes songs with lyrics and lyrics written in English. There are many beautiful songs composed in other languages or sung without words that could be included and perhaps some day will, but the project needed some clear parameters.

I am trying to be broadminded about what songs would be sung on a “jazz” gig or in a creative improvised music setting. I'm mindful of a jazz police mentality that is thorny and sometimes can stifle creativity. There are many songs that are clearly sung on jazz gigs or recordings or by vocalists who include jazz influenced songs in their repertoire but do not consider themselves exclusively “jazz” singers. What is exciting is the vast diversity of the nominated songs. They include Antonio Carlos Jobim compositions, songs of Kenny Wheeler and Norma Winstone and Fred Hersch. And there are songs that are more closely associated with pop, R&B and fusion from all eras after 1960. Nominations included songs of singer songwriters like Sting (‘Fragile’) and Joni Mitchell, (‘Both Sides Now’) as well as songs from the musical theater that are also often rearranged like the near anthem ‘Feeling Good’ from “The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd”. There are songs influenced by the music of other countries and cultures and many derivative works with lyricists adding words to instrumental compositions like the songs of Wayne Shorter (‘Infant Eyes’), Chick Corea (‘Spain’) and many, many more. While all of the aforementioned songs were nominated they do not all appear in this subset of 100 songs because many are readily available. I wanted to be sure to include songs that are not as well known. What is exciting is that there are so many songs being written now, many by vocalists, with many by the project contributors. This gives us an opportunity as community of contemporary musicians the opportunity to sing,

play, record and share music of today as well as the great repertoire of the past.

And while no one can dispute the incredible craft and quality of lyrics from pre-1960 The Great American Songbook, many of the lyrics in this collection go beyond “I’m in love” or “It’s over and my heart is breaking”. There is nothing wrong with those subjects, but it’s nice to hear new stories.

It also became abundantly clear that the task of publishing a collection of this size would be unfeasible. After much research on a distribution model, the opportunity emerged to create an online database housed at Berklee College of Music’s Stan Getz Library; [library@berklee.edu](mailto:library@berklee.edu). The library website is the perfect venue for disseminating the repertoire globally for all interested users and linking to our international Berklee community for use and further research.

I have enormous gratitude to our supporters. Director of Library and Learning Resources, Heather Reid and Senior Library Director Ernie Gillis have committed to making the project part of Berklee’s Library and Learning Resources permanent collection and a model project for other faculty created indices. Anne Peckham, Chair, and Phil Lima, Assistant Chair of the Voice Department have supported the ongoing development of the index as a resource for our department, the wider Berklee community and external users. The project development team also includes Jenee Force, Associate Director, Archives and Special Collections, Yamil Suarez, Associate Director of Library Systems & Web Development, Jaesung Song, Senior Web Developer, Delfina Cheb Terrab, Project Assistant and Giorgia Renosto (first Project Assistant 2016-2017).

This project team has been essential and immeasurably dedicated to the multiyear task of getting the information into a usable and distributable form. I especially wish to thank my talented students and project assistants Delfina Cheb Terrab and Giorgia Renosto for their thoughtful ears and opinions, wisdom, patience and meticulous organizational skills without which this project would not exist.

Like any creative endeavor, this project became very fluid with regard to the ultimate outcome and is still evolving. My lesson having never undertaken a project quite like this was to let go of the notion of creating a product but rather letting the research and information guide me to the best possible outlets for **using** the material and creating a network of vocalists, composers, lyricists, educators and writers that can continue to contribute and collaborate in the future.

Enjoy exploring this rich, diverse and ever evolving collection of music and the artists that have created and perform the songs. Please sing them!

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