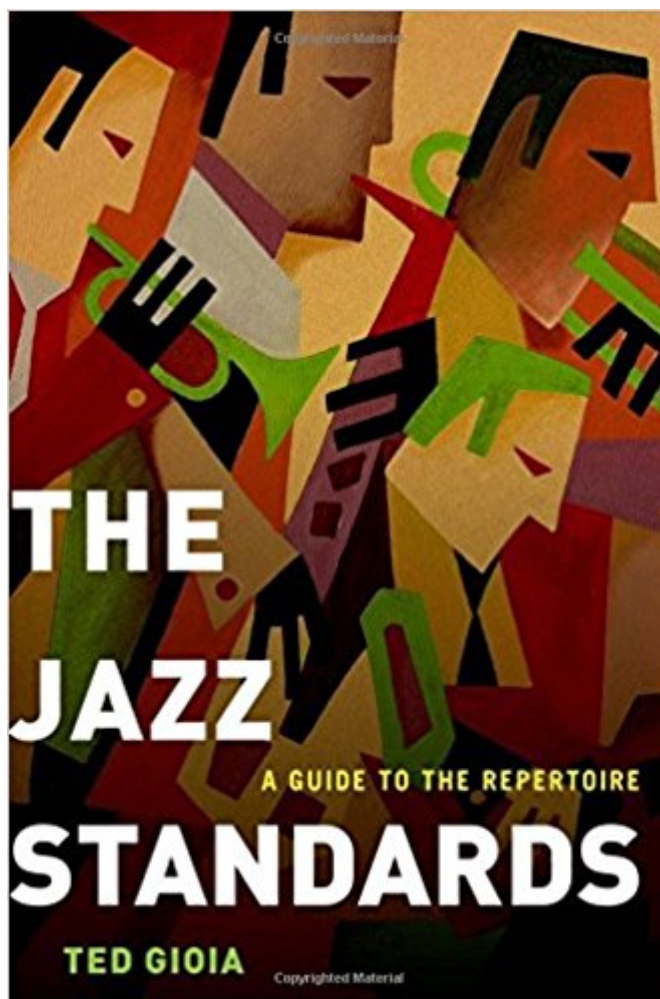


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The Jazz Standards: A Guide To The Repertoire



Synopsis

The Jazz Standards, a comprehensive guide to the most important jazz compositions, is a unique resource, a browser's companion, and an invaluable introduction to the art form. This essential book for music lovers tells the story of more than 250 key jazz songs, and includes a listening guide to more than 2,000 recordings. Many books recommend jazz CDs or discuss musicians and styles, but this is the first to tell the story of the songs themselves. The fan who wants to know more about a jazz song heard at the club or on the radio will find this book indispensable. Musicians who play these songs night after night now have a handy guide, outlining their history and significance and telling how they have been performed by different generations of jazz artists. Students learning about jazz standards now have a complete reference work for all of these cornerstones of the repertoire. Author Ted Gioia, whose body of work includes the award-winning *The History of Jazz* and *Delta Blues*, is the perfect guide to lead readers through the classics of the genre. As a jazz pianist and recording artist, he has performed these songs for decades. As a music historian and critic, he has gained a reputation as a leading expert on jazz. Here he draws on his deep experience with this music in creating the ultimate work on the subject. An introduction for new fans, a useful handbook for jazz enthusiasts and performers, and an important reference for students and educators, *The Jazz Standards* belongs on the shelf of every serious jazz lover or musician.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Which is best: interpretation or song? In any case, jazz and standards are forever locked in loving

embrace. A finely researched work." --Sonny Rollins"A monument to taste and scholarship" --The Atlantic"If you look up just one title in The Jazz Standards, before you realize it you will have spent an intriguing hour or two learning fascinating and new things about old songs that you have known most of your life." --Dave Brubeck"This history is fascinating, a reminder that jazz is at heart a vernacular medium in which the most essential skill for a musician may be the ability to think on his or her feet...What makes 'The Jazz Standards' so engaging is just this sort of anecdotal texture, Gioia's ability to write as an inhabitant of both the tradition and the songs.....to read 'The Jazz Standards,' then, is not unlike listening to Gioia play his way through this music, sharing not just what he likes (and dislikes) but also what he knows." -- The Los Angeles Times"This excellent and entertaining resource would be a fine addition to any library's music collection. It serves as an informative guide to the standard jazz repertoire and would be useful for both novices and aficionados of jazz history. Its best place, however, may not necessarily be on the reference shelves but, rather, out for circulation." --Booklist"This book should be in the library of every gigging jazz musician and every serious jazz fan; to the extent that these 250-plus pieces remain in the repertory, it will be relevant for years to come." --Library Journal"Warning: this book is addictive." --Dallas Morning News"Gioia writes with an endearing blend of erudition and opinionating...that makes the book both a delightful browse and a handy reference and roadmap for jazzophiles." --Publishers Weekly"What a useful and informative book The Jazz Standards is! Explaining the jazz repertory in a way that is accessible for the jazz beginner yet stimulating for the aficionado, Ted Gioia shows once again why he is one the best jazz writers around today." --Gerald Early, Merle Kling Professor of Modern Letters, Washington University in St. Louis; Editor of Miles Davis and American Culture"It's a book to be browsed and enjoyed at leisure. The facts are illuminating, and so are the opinions....The book is wise, often funny--and it always accomplishes the highest mission of writing about music, which is to send you back to the music with wide-open ears." --Kansas City Star

Ted Gioia is a musician, author, jazz critic and a leading expert on American music. His previous books The History of Jazz and Delta Blues were both selected as notable books of the year in The New York Times. He is also the author of West Coast Jazz, Work Songs, Healing Songs and The Birth (and Death) of the Cool.

For someone who is unfamiliar with most of the tunes in Fakebooks aka the Realbook this is a great reference that gives a bit of history for many of the tunes as well as recommended recordings. Of

course it is not a 1 to 1 match vs the tunes in the RealBook 6th edition but it has a great deal of overlap and is a great starting point to find what you should listen to in order to learn jazz. I worked through this book and created a playlist on Spotify based on the discography/recommended recordings of the songs in this book. For the vast majority I was able to find the specific recordings referenced. I find it very educational to listen to the same tune by different artists in a row to get the essence of the tune and see how differently it can be interpreted and arranged. But you can also use shuffle to mix up the list and just enjoy a random stream of really great jazz recordings. For those that don't know Spotify is a free service you can install their player on your computer and listen to just about anything you want though there are commercials every few songs. I created this playlist as a companion especially for this book so thought I should post a link here to the playlist: <http://open.spotify.com/user/1213453431/playlist/3C296bXroVSMGoyqWWnAjw>

This book is exactly what it claims to be, a guide to what the author considers the central repertoire of jazz. As he explains in his introduction, which is about his history and his teaching of younger jazz musicians, the book is designed to help a musician learn the repertoire he or she needs to get and keep a job. This is not a history of jazz, nor a comprehensive encyclopaedia of jazz works. It is about the 250 or so works the author considers central to the jazz repertoire. Each work included is covered in 2-3 pages of detail. You learn who created the work and why. There are the early recordings, and how the work waxed and waned over time. Discussion of who played it, how they played it, and who didn't play it. How tempos and approaches to the work have changed over time. And how it is seen today. Each section ends with a list of suggested recordings over the years. As an example of what you can learn from this book, consider the following two successive entries. The Basin Street Blues were named after a street which had changed name by the time the song appeared; the name was changed back to Basin Street because of the song. The Beale Street Blues were named after a Beale Avenue; its name was changed to Beale Street because of the song. Cool! This is a long book, and probably only jazz musicians, jazz scholars, and jazz fanatics will enjoy plowing through the book cover to cover. Many others will enjoy browsing it to find out more about their favorite songs, or to check on something they heard. Keep in mind that it is an in-depth look at key works, not a comprehensive survey, and you should be satisfied.

Recently I've read quotes by two major jazz artists (both piano-playing vocalists) who appear to disparage and dismiss the "Great American Songbook" by claiming their original music goes beyond its "limits." No history of the indigenous art form we recognize as "jazz" would even approach

completeness without equal attention to the art of of American Popular Song and to the library that has become known as "The Great American Songbook." Not merely a repository but a living library of material that has been performed from the 1920s into the second decade of the 21st, it shares a symbiotic relationship with the music that inspired it and in turn was shaped by it. Simply put, there would be no jazz without the American popular song just as there would have been no American popular song without jazz. Yet the American popular song is taken for granted, treated more shabbily than the music itself. (Try to find, among the hundred or more categories of music at iTunes or , a category that's listed, simply, as "The Great American Songbook." It's time for Ken Burns to get on this enormously vital project and bring it to the public's attention through a PBS series similar to the one he did on jazz almost 15 years ago.) Alec Wilder's book, *An American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900-1950*, was the pioneer study, remaining largely unchallenged and non-supplemented for the next 40 years while, beginning in the 1960s, the composer and performer began to become indistinguishable from one another. Song-writing was no longer the domain of the "professionals"--Berlin, Porter, Gershwin, Kern, Arlen, Rodgers, Hart, Mercer, Ellington, Strayhorn--but had reverted largely to the past-time of amateur composer-performers. Their product, while representative of a broader, more diverse public, was at the same time a distant, faint shadow of the material that had passed the litmus test of the "standards" comprising "The Great American Songbook." Without Louis and Bing, along with predecessors like W.C. Handy and successors like Frank Sinatra, there would have been no Songbook just as without the Songbook there would be no jazz as we know it. Even the influence of a single composer--Richard Rodgers--can be demonstrated to have had a profound influence on a seminal jazz performer like John Coltrane, both during Rodgers period with Lorenz Hart and his subsequent period with Oscar Hammerstein. For those brought up to proclaim jazz an "African-American Art Form" the discovery of the Songbook practically calls for a revaluation and redefinition. Jazz is as much a "Jewish-American," as an African-American, art form once the critical importance of the Songbook is acknowledged. (See Gioia's discussion of "Easy to Love.") Or, if such a designation would seem injurious to the contributions of a Cole Porter (who was, as Gioia reports, an Episcopalian, even though he described his compositions as "Jewish music"), better that the historical definition of the music be broadened to a greater degree: jazz is an "American" art form. Gioia's book is not without flaws. For example, his impressionist and personal statements often seem dispensable (e.g. "I personally find "Easy Living" an old-fashioned song" or his compulsion to tell us whether or not he plays a particular song). He claims that Coltrane's is one of the most faithful readings of Cole Porter's "Every Time We Say Goodbye" (on my two recordings, Coltrane "flubs" the last several

measures of the final chorus, at the critical matching of the harmonic progression with the lyric ("from major to minor"), each time around, causing me to wonder if he ever looked at Porter's music). He references the Getz album "West Coast Jazz," which features arguably Getz's greatest recorded solo, on the tune "Shine." Yet when he gets to the separate discussion of "Shine" and its recorded history, he makes no mention of Stan's breath-taking solo! In search of a more "serious" interpretation of "Everything Happens to Me" than the Dorsey/Sinatra hit version, he points to the sensitive reading by Billie Holiday but shows no awareness of the two later recordings by Sinatra (on Capitol and Columbia), both of which contain as much Sinatra "gravitas" as the song can bear. He explains some of the punning in Monk's "Evidence" and its relation to the word "justice," but neglects any mention of perhaps the most important detail: when Art Blakey recorded the song (featuring a brilliant, "career-making" solo by Lee Morgan), the song was literally known as "Justice" and listed as such on the back cover of *Meet You at the Jazz Corner of the World*. Moreover, Gioia would do the jazz world by pointing out that Coltrane's favorite tune, which he worked and reworked, was Billy Eckstine's "I Want to Talk About You" (see *Live at Birdland*, which is perhaps the definitive version, with a cadenza I would have not believed had I not been in Birdland in 1963 to witness it. Perhaps most importantly, Gioia's organization does not lend itself to an understanding of the lives, careers, and signature musical characteristics of the major contributors to the songbook: Berlin, Kern, Gershwin, Arlen, Porter, Rodgers and Hart/Porter. This is not meant as a criticism of Gioia's book as much as an acknowledgment of complementary resources that readers--musicians and enthusiasts alike--have available to them for a more complete picture of "The Great American Songbook," its highlights, and its major authors. For the "story" of American Popular Song--including its most noteworthy achievements and its chief composers (including their public and intimate private lives)--the best one-volume study that I've found is Gerald Mast's *Can't Help Singin'*. A prolific film scholar during his abbreviated lifetime, Mast would have been the ideal consultant for that Ken Burns' PBS series that many of us have been waiting for: "The American Popular Song and Its Great Composers" (One composer per episode--but no fewer than 24 complete episodes--would constitute a terrific introduction). Just as astute jazz followers instantly identify seminal voices like Louis', Prez', Hawks', Bird's and Trane's, it's possible to identify the major composers by the unique approach of each to writing popular songs, each as distinctive and personal as major poets' (e.g. Shakespeare's and Milton's differences within the same 14 lines of the iambic pentameter sonnet form are as striking as the contrast between Gershwin's motivic melodies and Rodgers' scale-based melodies in the 32-bar American popular song). Besides books like Mast's, readers who are serious about the American popular song should be made aware of the

wealth of information on the internet--esp. the comprehensive website, "Jazz Standards dot com," which organizes its discussions of the songs from "most" to "least" recorded (most recorded of all time? "Body and Soul." Learn your flats and sharps!) as well as the individual entries about most standards on Wikipedia. In the meantime, Gioia's book is probably the definitive one-volume study of the individual songs from a musician's point of view, singling out melodies and harmonies that must be learned and memorized by any musician whose goal is completeness or, simply, being brought up to speed sufficiently to play the tunes on the job (after learning the first 10, the next 150-200 are apt to be surprisingly fast and easy. And not least of all, musicians, from my experience, are far too limited in their listening experience. 30 albums by Sinatra, Ella's Songbooks, 10 albums each by Billie, Sarah and Tony, 30-40 Sonny Stitt albums (the instrumental equivalent of Sinatra)--listen to them until you "learn to like" them and can identify the songs. (I've met a couple of musicians who had a single vocal album in their collection--the Coltrane-Johnny Hartman Ballads session. A good choice, but if you expect other people to support your music, you owe it to the great predecessors to listen to theirs. At the very least, musicians will--like Sinatra and Bennett--announce the name of a song's composer and even begin to attach the music they play to the name of a composer. (Only then am I unlikely to experience ever again an exchange like the following: Me: "Watch out. It's a Jerome Kern bridge!" Student: "What's that?" Me: "Jerome Kern"? Student: "No. A bridge?")

I had received this book as a gift in hardcover and loved it. Being a jazz musician and teacher, I found it fascinating and invaluable. I wanted the Kindle version so I would have it on my iPad for easy reference. After downloading, however, this seems to be a PDF, not a Kindle book. It doesn't fit the page, doesn't have the same features as Kindle books. What gives? Five stars for the book, one star for Kindle version,

This is a must-have for any jazz fan. Fun to browse or read straight through. Gioia provides an the background of (and many musical details about) the jazz songs that he explains any aspiring jazz musician ought to know. I'd say that any serious fan might want to know the songs, too. I read this book sitting near an Echo, so I could play many of the songs Gioia discusses as I read. I liked the way Gioia provided multiple versions of each song by different artists -- interesting to hear the variations. I bought this book on Kindle, but I think I may buy the hardback, too. It's a keeper.

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