



THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK

America's Favorite Songs

1. All Of Me – Billie Holiday
2. Blue Moon – Mel Tormé
3. Till The End Of Time – Perry Como
4. Rags To Riches – Tony Bennett
5. The Lady Is A Tramp – Lena Horne
6. Sentimental Journey – Doris Day
7. What A Diff'rence A Day Makes – Sarah Vaughan
8. I Got It Bad (And That Ain't Good) – Duke Ellington & His Famous Orchestra (featuring Ivie Anderson)
9. Summertime – Sarah Vaughan
10. Baby, Won't You Please Come Home – Ella Fitzgerald & Her Famous Orchestra

Cherished Classics

1. Secret Love – Doris Day
2. I'm In The Mood For Love – Louis Armstrong
3. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive – Johnny Mercer
4. Thanks For The Memory – Bob Hope & Shirley Ross
5. They Can't Take That Away From Me – Billie Holiday
6. I've Got The World On A String – Bing Crosby
7. Cheek To Cheek – Ginger Rogers
8. Wanted – Perry Como
9. As Time Goes By – Dooley Wilson
10. Makin' Whoopee – Eddie Cantor

Timeless Music

1. Singin' In The Rain – Gene Kelly
2. Puttin' On The Ritz – Fred Astaire
3. I Get A Kick Out Of You – Sarah Vaughan
4. These Foolish Things – Billie Holiday
5. Over The Rainbow – Judy Garland with Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra
6. One For My Baby (And One More For The Road) – Lena Horne
7. The Very Thought Of You – Ray Noble (with Snooky Lansen)
8. I Can't Get Started – Dinah Washington
9. Stardust – Bing Crosby
10. Blue Skies – Perry Como



ORIGINAL
AMERICAN
CLASSICS

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THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK

The Great American Songbook

Against the tide of trendy pop songs that wear out after a few listens stand the timeless classics from the Great American Songbook. These are the songs, the writers and composers who laid the unforgettable and inimitable landscape for early twentieth century American music. Stretching across Jazz, Tin Pan Alley, Broadway and Pop, the genres and styles of these songs vary, but they all share a lasting place in music culture and in our collective musical memories.

These songs have lasted in part because they have been interpreted many times over, but it is this Great American Songbook collection that gives you the definitive original versions that made them the standards that they have become today. Singularly American in the democratic manner with which they drew from a variety of sources – Jazz, Ragtime, Blues, and Opera – they are also deeply influenced by European traditions that relay a concrete sense of history.

It all began in the 1920s, which heralded the beginning of the vocal era, with a group of singers who would later become American institutions. Bing Crosby and Louis Armstrong were two of the first, and though they had incredibly different vocal styles, they shared a song structure and a detailed attention to melody that became the defining traits of this genre.



As we move into the 1940s the next major creative explosion occurred – the emergence of the professional composer. This collection is filled with many luminary songwriters that would soon go on to become household names, such as Irving Berlin and George Gershwin. And luckily, there was plenty of vocal talent to do their songs justice – with wonderful artists like Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Fred Astaire, and Tony Bennett.

Tin Pan Alley

The Great American Songbook is deeply tied to the practical and creative influences of Tin Pan Alley – a nickname given to the publishing industry that hired songwriters on a permanent basis beginning in the 1890s. Originally, Tin Pan Alley referred to an area in Manhattan along West 28th Street, between Broadway and 6th Avenue, the location where many of the publishing houses had offices; eventually, Tin Pan Alley came to mean the entirety of the American music publishing industry.

Before Rock ‘n’ Roll, sheet music was the primary source of revenue for the music industry, and publishers would hire “contact men” and “song pluggers” who would work to get the songs recorded by the top performers of the day. The bigger the star, the better, and Bing Crosby

was the star to get in the 1930s, as he had huge exposure through both radio and film. In turn, the publishing companies would utilize the performers’ image on the actual sheet music they were selling; creating an attractive package that would encourage song sales. Fans began to see the music as not only a song, but also as a collector’s item.

Many stars of the Great American Songbook were connected to this integral institution: Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, and James Kern to name just a few. With the emergence of youth culture and Rock ‘n’ Roll in the 1960s, the focus of American music changed, and Tin Pan Alley lost its position as the main center for popular music, since many of the new ‘rockers’ were writing their own music.

The Composers

Before a song is performed, it is written, and many of the composers who created music for the Great American Songbook catalog are as well known and well remembered as the artists. The greatest talent of these composers was their ability to create songs that inspired a number of performers and performances while still exhibiting the distinctive stamp of authorship. This ability to inspire others while remaining true to oneself is perhaps the best definition of a true American classic.

Irving Berlin



Born in Mohilev, Russia in May 1888 as Israel Baline, Berlin changed his name in 1907 when he earned his first songwriting credit. Berlin arrived in the U.S. with his family when he was five years old, and he left home at the age of 14. Beginning his career by singing for small change in New York’s Bowery district, it was not until the age of 21 that Berlin got a job as a staff lyricist on Tin Pan Alley.

He excelled there, even though he did not play the piano or read music. In 1911, Berlin had his first big hit with “Alexander’s Ragtime Band,” but this was just the beginning for a composer whose career at the top lasted for decades and brought us such flawless gems as “Puttin’ On the Ritz,” “Easter Parade,” and “Cheek to Cheek.” “Cheek to Cheek” appeared in *Top Hat*, one of three Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers movies for which Berlin wrote the music.

Berlin is widely considered the most successful writer of the 20th century. His long tenure at the top left him a wealthy man, and he lived to the ripe old age of 101.

George Gershwin

Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1898, as Jacob Gershowitz, Gershwin took to the family piano immediately; by the age of twelve he had begun to study it seriously.

Tin Pan Alley was the beginning of his professional career, although he didn't begin as a composer. Instead, he worked as a "song plugger," a job that exposed him to an incredible variety of music. At the same time, Gershwin was also honing his own musical skills, continuing his piano studies and working part-time as a rehearsal pianist.

Gershwin's first big hit was on Broadway, when his composition "Swanee" was included in the show *Sinbad*. He then teamed up with his brother Ira, and the two embarked on a fruitful career specializing in composing Broadway musicals. They produced a number of unforgettable songs such as "The Man I Love," "Someone To Watch Over Me" and one of their best known, "Summertime."

Tragically, George Gershwin did not live to see his 40th birthday. In 1937, at the age of 39, he died of a brain tumor.

The Performers

The composers are all talented beyond measure, but they are also indebted to a number of equally talented singers who gave their songs life. The Great American Songbook catalog features a special selection of performances by such gifted performers as Sarah Vaughan, Fred Astaire, and Ella Fitzgerald. This surefire combination of writing and performing talent has produced some of the most enduring music of the 20th century.

Tony Bennett

A native New Yorker, Tony Bennett was born Anthony Dominick Benedetto in 1926. Music was always a part of his life, and he soon parlayed it into his first professional success when he was discovered performing alongside Pearl Bailey on Arthur Godfrey's talent show under the stage name Joe Bari. Bob Hope hired "Bari" to open his shows at New York's Paramount Theater and suggested the name Tony Bennett.



A living testament to the timelessness of the Great American Songbook, Bennett remains one of America's best-loved crooners. He released an album of Irving Berlin standards entitled *Bennett/Berlin* in 1987 and *Perfectly Frank*, a tribute to Bennett's idol Frank Sinatra, in 1992. Most recently in 2006 he scored a huge success with his *Duets* album. With sales approaching 2 million units, it could be Tony's biggest selling album ever!

Bing Crosby

Born in 1903 as Harry Lillis Crosby, but sticking with his childhood nickname "Bing," Crosby's family moved from his birthplace of Tacoma to Spokane in 1906, hoping for better employment opportunities.



Crosby entered Spokane College in 1920 set on studying law, but his stint playing drums with a local band, The Musicaladers, was so lucrative that he decided on a career in music. The band broke up in 1925, and Crosby and former Musicaladers manager, Al Rinker, set off for L.A. where they joined the vaudeville circuit and performed in movie theaters throughout California.

Crosby and Rinker cut their first record "I've Got The Girl," in 1926, and this proved the beginning of Crosby's musical career which would last until 1977. He recorded almost 2000 songs, and sold hundreds of millions of records, having more sales than any other artist in the world.

Ella Fitzgerald

Known as "The First Lady Of Song," Ella Fitzgerald was a versatile vocalist whose control, wonderful voice, and unique phrasing made her one of the most revered singers of all time.

Born in 1917 in Virginia, Fitzgerald's first career opportunity saw her singing at the Harlem Opera House. A few years later she performed at the Apollo Theater, and there she was spotted by a member of Chick Webb's band. Fitzgerald joined them as their lead vocalist, and this collaboration would last even after Webb passed away in 1939, when Fitzgerald became the band's symbolic leader.

In 1942, Fitzgerald decided to concentrate on a solo career. At the same time, many of the Jazz clubs where she had made her name were closing down, so in the '50s she changed genres and recorded a number of songs by popular Great American Songbook composers, including Cole Porter, Rodgers & Hart, Jerome Kern, Johnny Mercer and the Gershwin brothers.

Sarah Vaughan



Born in 1924 into a family of musicians in New Jersey, Sarah Lois Vaughan came to music early in life and never let go. She was singing by the age of 7, and playing the organ by age 12.

In 1942, she won an Amateur Night at The Apollo Theater where she was noticed by singer Billy Eckstine who used his influence to get Vaughan the position of 2nd piano in the Earl Hines Orchestra. Eckstine, who was also a member, left the orchestra a few years later and Vaughan decided to set out with him and join his band.

The move proved to be the beginning of her recording career, which continued to grow when she signed with Mercury Records in 1954. Like Ella Fitzgerald, Vaughan could do both Jazz and Pop, and she made her name with a number of classics, "Sophisticated Lady," and a haunting rendition of "Summertime." In 1982 she recorded an album of Gershwin pieces, but soon afterwards her health took a turn for the worse. Vaughan passed away in 1990.