

Jazz History: The Standards (Introduction)

The Trends, People, and Events that Shaped the Jazz Standards Canon

Overview

By [Chris Tyle](#) - Jazz Musician and Historian

What are the ingredients that make a song into a “jazz standard”? It would be convenient if there were a set recipe, but more often it’s a complex mixture of musical influences (harmony and melody) and artist prerogative.

From its beginnings until the 1950s, jazz was a utilitarian music intended mostly for dancing. Consequently, musicians felt compelled to include a large percentage of popular songs in their repertoire. Recorded evidence is not always the best yardstick for judging what jazz groups played, especially prior to the 1940s (when artists were finally allowed more input regarding tune selection). For example, King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band, arguably the benchmark of excellence in classic jazz performance, recorded 40 titles in 1923, yet not one is a popular song. Anecdotal evidence, however, indicates the band routinely played many pop tunes on their regular engagements. On the other hand, the Jean Goldkette Orchestra of 1927, which featured the talented cornetist Bix Beiderbecke, was relegated to recording a mostly dreary group of pop songs, and the great jazz numbers arranged by Bill Challis were unreleased by Victor Records which considered them commercially unacceptable.

Even from the very first jazz recordings in 1917 by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (“[Livery Stable Blues](#)” and “[Dixie Jass Band One-Step](#)”), recording executives could see that it was mutually beneficial to work with sheet music companies to “push” certain songs. In the 1930s, pianist, vocalist, band leader and composer [Fats Waller](#) would be given a group of the latest popular songs from the Brill Building (Tin Pan Alley’s unofficial headquarters) and told to select the ones he wanted to record. Rarely was he ever given an opportunity to record his own compositions which were generally far superior to the standard Tin Pan Alley fare.

Some artists, especially those who had achieved a degree of popularity, were able to negotiate with recording executives in favor of better quality material. The first jazz musician who appears to have been given some latitude in choosing his recorded repertoire was [Louis Armstrong](#), who in the late 1920s and early 1930s recorded such tunes as “[Body and Soul](#),” “[Stardust](#),” “[Georgia on My Mind](#),” “[Ain’t Misbehavin’](#),” “[I Got Rhythm](#),” “[After You’ve Gone](#),” and “[St. Louis Blues](#)”--- these just from the top 100 jazz standards list. [Duke Ellington](#) is another artist who, almost from the beginning of his recording career, was able to record his own compositions and very few pop tunes.

As the popularity of swing music increased in the mid-1930s, top record-selling artists such as [Benny Goodman](#), Tommy Dorsey, [Glenn Miller](#) and Artie Shaw made a point of recording better quality material in favor of the Tin Pan Alley songs that undoubtedly they were required to record. Yet, as in the 1920s, some bandleaders, for economic survival, were required to cater to the Tin Pan Alley song pluggers, especially those who were struggling to get their bands off the ground such as Bunny Berigan, Jack Teagarden and Gene Krupa.

Despite the effects of the Great Depression, the period from 1929 to 1940 is the era where the majority of jazz standards originated. During this decade there were a great many excellent songwriters contributing well-crafted material for Broadway shows (and for movie musicals) such as [George Gershwin](#), [Cole Porter](#), [Richard Rodgers](#) and [Lorenz Hart](#), [Irving Berlin](#), [Hoagy Carmichael](#), and Walter Donaldson, to name just a very few whose material rose above the standard Tin Pan Alley fare.

Generally, a contributing factor to a song becoming a standard is due to an important jazz recording. For example, [Louis Armstrong](#)'s 1931 version of "[Stardust](#)" was a key recording of the tune, making it popular among jazz musicians. Nevertheless other non-jazz recordings, like [Bing Crosby](#)'s, helped assure the tune's popularity among the general public. Although Armstrong recorded "Body in Soul" in 1930 and [Benny Goodman](#) in 1935, it was really Coleman Hawkins' 1939 treatment that made the tune the standard it is today. The same situation applies consistently throughout jazz history.

Although external influences like World Wars, the Great Depression, and the 1940s bans by ASCAP and the American Federation of Musicians affected aspects of musicians' work, these things had little effect on what musicians played. But following the recording ban there were a number of indie recording companies formed specifically to record jazz artists, and these companies extended artistic control to the musicians, enabling them to select their own material. While the major companies were recording pop versions of "How Much is That Doggie in the Window?" and the "Hut Sut Song," indies like Keynote and Savoy were recording classics such as "[Night and Day](#)," "[All the Things You Are](#)," "[Cherokee](#)," and "[Just You Just Me](#)" by artists like Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, [Dizzy Gillespie](#), Miles Davis, and Don Byas.

Following World War II, as recording technology progressed from the 78 rpm to direct-to-disk recording to the long playing 33 1/3 record and, especially, the longer recording times afforded by magnetic tape, one can get a better idea of how jazz artists selected their repertoire from live recordings. For example, it's interesting to look at a list of tunes played by Charlie Parker on a gig in March, 1947. Out of 26 tunes recorded, ten are on the top 100 jazz standards list, including "[Body and Soul](#)," "[Indiana](#)," "[All the Things You Are](#)," "[Stardust](#)," "[Perdido](#)," and "[Night in Tunisia](#)," and several other tunes ("[Hot House](#)" and "[Ornithology](#)") are originals based on the chord changes of standards. Similarly, a recorded portion of a 1963 gig by pianist Bill Evans consists of 11 tunes, seven of which are from the top 100 jazz standards, including "[Lover Man](#)," "[Love is Here to Stay](#)," "[Round Midnight](#)," "[All the Things You Are](#)," and "[What is This Thing Called Love](#)."

Ultimately, one cannot create a formula to explain why a particular song becomes a standard, but the revelation from jazz history is that it frequently comes down to those songs that are artists' favorites, the tunes that inspire them to creatively spin an improvisational web.



Our jazz historian **Chris Tyle** has been given top honors by the [Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD](#). Only one in one thousand CDs are given a crown, the guide's special token of merit. Check out Chris Tyle's Silver Leaf Jazz Band's CD [New Orleans Wiggle](#) at [CDUniverse.com](#).

Jazz History: The Standards (Early Period)

Overview

By [Chris Tyle](#) - Jazz Musician and Historian

The first twenty years of the twentieth century were marked by great advances. There were many new technological marvels: the first airplane flight; the radio and the first trans-Atlantic radio transmission. The landscape of America became more urbanized with fewer wilderness areas.

Although at the start of the twentieth century live music was still the primary form of entertainment (and in the home, the piano in the parlor), the phonograph began to encroach upon sheet music sales as phonograph prices began to drop, due in part to the predominance of the flat 10-inch 78 rpm record over the cylinder record.

There would be tragic events during the two decades, such as the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, the sinking of the “unsinkable” behemoth ocean liner Titanic, and the horrible devastation of the First World War.

Then America would feel the effects of a prohibition upon alcoholic beverages, a unique experiment that did little to quell American’s taste for liquor but helped to bolster live music.

The Early Period in Jazz

Most historians agree that jazz began close to or just prior to the turn of the twentieth century, and the most likely birthplace was the city of New Orleans. A cultural melting pot, the “Big Easy” had a reputation for its free-spirited ambiance with “everything in the line of hilarity,” as jazz pioneer Jelly Roll Morton so aptly put it. The fact that the city is on the Mississippi River, the major waterway from the southern to northern United States, made it a conduit for music of all types, especially ragtime from Missouri and the blues from Mississippi. In 1900s New Orleans, for example, a person could hear a brass band playing ragtime, marches and polkas; string trios playing popular ballads; street musicians singing the blues; and early jazz bands playing all of these things.

Just prior to and during the period of World War I, The Creole Band, a group made up of black New Orleans musicians, was part of a touring vaudeville company that brought jazz music to many parts of the country. Although they were given the opportunity to make the first jazz records in 1916, it wasn’t until 1917 that the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, a group of white musicians from New Orleans, would actually lay down the first example of the New Orleans style jazz.

The Early Period in Song

Popular song was divided into a number of different genres, all of which would be represented by recordings during the period. They were:

- Male Quartets, represented by “Barbershop” four-part harmonies with tunes like “In the Good Old Summertime” and “Take Me Out to the Ballgame.”
- Parlor ballads, such as “In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree” and “[Shine on Harvest Moon.](#)”

- Minstrel Songs, many of which came from the 1800s (such as “Carry Me Back to Old Virginny”), but others written during the period such as “[Bill Bailey, Won’t You Please Come Home.](#)”
- Ragtime and syncopated songs, which included true ragtime-form numbers like Scott Joplin’s “[Maple Leaf Rag](#)” but also ragtime songs such as “[Alexander’s Ragtime Band.](#)”
- Broadway songs, especially those by George M. Cohan, composer of “You’re A Grand Old Flag” and “Yankee Doodle Dandy.”
- Topical songs, written for special events like the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (“Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis”) and also world events such as the Wright Brothers first flight (“Come Take Me in My Air Ship”) and the sinking of the Titanic (“My Sweetheart Went Down with the Ship”).
- Brass Band music, encompassing marches, polkas and one-steps (which were also dances).

The first blues number, written as a popular song, was “Dallas Blues” of 1912. Tunes with the word “blues” in the title would become very popular during the period from 1918 into the 1920s. Some tunes, mostly written by African-American composers, were actually in the 12-bar blues form, such as “Dallas Blues,” “[St. Louis Blues,](#)” and “[Weary Blues,](#)” while others such as “Home Again Blues,” “Dangerous Blues,” and “Laughing Blues” were merely capitalizing on the popularity of the word “blues.” As the popularity in ragtime waned and jazz became part of the public awareness, so did the popularity of the blues, to the point that by 1920 the word “ragtime” would be considered pass?.

Some hit tunes from the decade include the following:

- “[You Made Me Love You](#)”
- “Carry Me Back to Old Virginny”
- “[Maple Leaf Rag](#)”
- “Rock-a-Bye Your Baby (with a Dixie Melody)”
- “[After You’ve Gone](#)”
- “[Poor Butterfly](#)”
- “It’s a Long, Long Way to Tipperary”
- “[Peg O’ My Heart](#)”
- “Ragging the Baby to Sleep”
- “[Alexander’s Ragtime Band](#)”
- “Casey Jones”

Underlined tunes are in the JazzStandards.com top 1000 list.

Jazz Standards from the Early Period

Year	Rank	Title
1914	20	“ St Louis Blues ”
1918	34	“ After You've Gone ”
1917	41	“ Indiana (Back Home Again in Indiana) ”

Jazz History: The Standards (1920s)

Overview

The decade of 1920s marked huge advances in the music industry. The phonograph record became the primary method of disseminating music, surpassing sales of sheet music and piano rolls. The music industry, ever keen to discover new ways of making profits, realized that record, sheet music and piano roll sales could all be tied together. The “song plugger” was born: a person who worked to make sure his company’s tunes would be performed by dance bands or by singers, live and on records, ever hopeful of a “hit.”

The decade marked the beginning of independent (or indie) record companies, smaller operations that weren’t afraid to take a chance on music and artists that the bigger companies shied away from. Some of the great early jazz, blues and country performers appeared on indie labels like Gennett, Paramount and Okeh.

Toward the end of the decade, radio went from being an expensive novelty into a major purveyor of inexpensive entertainment. With the beginning of the Great Depression, phonograph and sheet music sales would plummet and radio would become the most important medium in the music industry. As a result, indie record companies went bankrupt or merged with the bigger companies, and similar operations wouldn’t emerge again until the late 1930s.

By the late 1920s motion pictures had gone from silent to sound, creating another medium for the sale of sheet music and phonograph records. Soon Broadway and Tin Pan Alley songwriters would be exercising their craft for films.

The 1920s in Jazz

Jazz music, which had originated in New Orleans in the early 1900s, began to spread throughout the country by the late ‘teens. As more employment opportunities opened up in the North, especially in Chicago and the Midwest, both black and white musicians from New Orleans moved to Chicago. Prohibition and the advent of the “speakeasy” created many opportunities for musicians in small cabarets, dance halls and ballrooms.

Beginning in 1922, Gennett Records, an indie company located in Richmond, Indiana, began recording jazz groups performing in Chicago. The first group they recorded was the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, followed in 1923 by King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band with young lion [Louis Armstrong](#) on second cornet. That same year Gennett waxed a series of solo piano recordings by Jelly Roll Morton. The following year they recorded The Wolverines, a northern group which had been influenced by both the New Orleans Rhythm Kings and King Oliver’s Jazz Band and featured the up-and-coming cornetist Bix Beiderbecke. Another indie company in Chicago, Paramount Records, was competing with Gennett and Okeh for jazz talent. (King Oliver’s band recorded for all three companies during 1923.)

By mid-decade jazz musicians, whose skills were honed playing the free wheeling, collectively improvised jazz of the late ‘teens and early ‘20s, were more often in reading bands performing popular tunes of the day and taking the occasional “hot” solo. Although commonly referred to as the “Jazz Age,” in retrospect the era would be more reasonably named the “Dance Age,” as America went crazy for dances like the Charleston and the Black Bottom, and the music they danced to was played by seven- to twelve-piece dance orchestras. In New York, a popular dance

orchestra led by pianist Fletcher Henderson had been playing a more ragtime-influenced style of jazz until trumpeter [Louis Armstrong](#) joined up in 1925, causing a profound change in the group's sound. Another New Orleans native, Sidney Bechet, master of the soprano saxophone, caused a similar change in the orchestra of [Duke Ellington](#) and subsequently influenced many of the decade's saxophonists.

Coleman Hawkins, tenor saxophonist with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, fell under the influence of both Armstrong and Bechet, and his style would be the primary influence on tenor players until Lester Young's arrival on the scene in the 1930s.

The blues, which had influenced jazz from the beginning, became increasingly popular due to singers like Ma Rainey, Mamie Smith and Bessie Smith---the latter selling thousands of discs, including a national hit, "Down Hearted Blues."

A white cornetist from Davenport, Iowa, Bix Beiderbecke, rose to prominence with The Wolverines then joined the dance bands of Jean Goldkette and [Paul Whiteman](#). His influence would be widespread, continuing into the 1930s. A number of young white musicians who would become stars in the 1930s, like clarinetist [Benny Goodman](#), trombonists Jack Teagarden and [Glenn Miller](#), and cornetist Red Nichols, began their careers working in dance bands in the 1920s.

From the mid-to-late '20s, Chicago's prominence as a center for jazz would wane, and New York, already the center of the music industry, would be the magnet drawing musicians from other parts of the nation. At the same time Kansas City, with its many nightclubs, cabarets and dance halls, created a haven for jazz musicians in the South and Midwest.

The 1920s in Song

The popular song form (a 32-bar piece of music with four eight-bar sections) became the norm and would continue until the advent of rock-n-roll. Songs of the '20s can loosely be characterized as happy-go-lucky, "rainbow 'round my shoulder" ditties with catchy melodies and relatively simple harmonies. Coming from Tin Pan Alley composers, these songs comprise the largest bulk of popular favorites during the 1920s. Here's a brief song list of million-seller records of the decade:

- ["Whispering"](#)
- "Wang Wang Blues"
- "Wabash Blues"
- ["Linger Awhile"](#)
- ["Who"](#)
- ["My Blue Heaven"](#)
- ["Sonny Boy"](#)
- "The Prisoner's Song"
- "April Showers"
- "My Mammy"
- "Dreamy Melody"
- "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More"

The underlined tunes are on the list of 1000 jazz standards.

Of these twelve, only two ("[Who](#)" and "[Sonny Boy](#)") are from Broadway shows. The underlined tunes are in the 1000 jazz standards list. Two of the tunes use the word "blues" as part of the title

but aren't really twelve-bar blues.

Based on recordings, jazz musicians in the 1920s were able to perform some original material (and compositions targeted for jazz musicians), but recording company executives wanted popular songs, too. Some of these tunes became enduring jazz standards, such as:

- [“Sweet Georgia Brown”](#)
- [“Dinah”](#)
- [“Bye Bye Blackbird”](#)
- [“Avalon”](#)
- [“I’ve Found a New Baby”](#)
- [“Sweet Lorraine”](#)
- [“Sugar”](#)
- [“Deed I Do”](#)
- [“If I Could Be With You”](#)

Generally, music written by Broadway composers, such as [George Gershwin](#), [Jerome Kern](#), [Vincent Youmans](#) and [Cole Porter](#), wouldn't begin to find its way into the jazz repertoire until the 1930s, as musicians became more attuned to sophisticated melodies and harmonies.

Jazz Standards from the 1920s

Year	Rank	Title
1929	12	“Star Dust”
1929	15	“Honeysuckle Rose”
1925	16	“Sweet Georgia Brown”
1924	18	“The Man I Love”
1924	22	“Oh, Lady Be Good!”

Jazz History: The Standards (1930s)

Overview

The dawn of the 1930s found America (and the world) caught in the grip of the Great Depression. Unemployment was rampant and all industries suffered huge losses, including the music industry. By 1932 total record sales in the US hit an all-time low of 6 million, contrasting with the high of 140 million in 1927.

With the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as president in 1933, the country began a long economic upturn. Record sales slowly started to increase as Americans began frequenting establishments with juke boxes. Radio continued to be an important source of entertainment, but motion pictures were no doubt the favorite escapist entertainment. By mid-decade, Hollywood musicals would gain great popularity which continued unabated into the 1940s.

The 1930s in Jazz

Jazz took a hard blow, as the rest of the country did, during the first-half of the 1930s. Although there was still work to be had, especially for the best musicians in New York, those in other areas of the country “scuffled,” eking out a meager existence.

Bandleaders, whose orchestras were filled with great jazz musicians, like [Louis Armstrong](#), Fletcher Henderson, Cab Calloway and [Duke Ellington](#), would continue to find employment, although their repertoire would include a liberal amount of popular songs. Ellington was an especially talented songwriter, however, and 15 of his compositions from the 1930s became jazz standards and popular favorites.

Things would begin to change by 1935, the year that marked the beginning of the “Swing Era.” [Benny Goodman](#), who had established a stellar reputation with studio and radio work, assembled a band of top musicians with the intent of concentrating on jazz arrangements rather than pop tunes. Securing a record contract with Victor Records, Goodman then proceeded to grab a spot on the “[Let’s Dance](#)” radio program. Goodman would soon realize the power of radio when, on a less-than-successful transcontinental tour, the band was a smash hit at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles, where Goodman’s slot on the “[Let’s Dance](#)” show was during prime time. Soon Goodman’s band would garner a national following, culminating with a first-ever jazz concert at New York’s prestigious Carnegie Hall.

Following Goodman’s success, other bandleaders began featuring more jazz arrangements and jazz solos. Soon the country was swing crazy. Trombonist Tommy Dorsey had a million-seller record with [Irving Berlin](#)’s tune “[Marie](#).” Artie Shaw, [Benny Goodman](#)’s clarinet rival, had a million-seller with [Cole Porter](#)’s “[Begin the Beguine](#).”

The 1930s in Song

Perhaps as a result of the depression, or just the high quality of song writing during the decade, the 1930s produced more standards, and jazz standards, than any other decade of the twentieth century. Such great songwriters as [George Gershwin](#), [Cole Porter](#), [Jerome Kern](#) and [Irving Berlin](#) were

writing for Broadway shows, many of which would be adapted for the silver screen. Great Tin Pan Alley songwriters like Walter Donaldson, [Hoagy Carmichael](#), [Harold Arlen](#), Sam Coslow and others turned out memorable popular songs.

The popularity of “crooner” [Bing Crosby](#) helped put many songs into the standards repertoire, especially “[Stardust](#),” “[Out of Nowhere](#),” “[Ghost of a Chance](#),” and “[How Deep Is the Ocean](#).” [Fred Astaire](#), from his movie appearances and records, made standards out of tunes like “[Night and Day](#),” “[The Way You Look Tonight](#),” “[A Foggy Day](#),” and “[They Can’t Take That Away from Me](#).”

As with the 1920s, lyricists focused on upbeat topics, with the tune “Happy Days Are Here Again” perhaps being the best example. But just as popular was the tune that more accurately described the dire aspects of the decade---“Brother, Can You Spare a Dime.”

Here’s a brief cross-section of popular tunes of the decade:

- “[Body and Soul](#)”
- “[Pennies from Heaven](#)”
- “[Cheek to Cheek](#)”
- “[Stormy Weather](#)”
- “The Last Roundup”
- “[Sweet and Lovely](#)”
- “[Night and Day](#)”
- “Sweet Leilani”
- “[A-Tisket, A-Tasket](#)”
- “[Three Little Words](#)”
- “In a Shanty in Old Shanty Town”
- “[Winter Wonderland](#)”

The underlined tunes are on the list of 1000 jazz standards.

As with the 1920s, the majority of popular material was from Tin Pan Alley, but the percentage of Broadway material is higher than in the 1920s, no doubt in part due to the popularity of film adaptations of Broadway shows.

In the 1930s there were more popular songs written by jazz musicians than in the 1920s, some of which became big sellers and standards, such as:

- “[Don’t Be That Way](#)”
- “[Sing, Sing, Sing](#)”
- “[In a Sentimental Mood](#)”
- “[Sophisticated Lady](#)”
- “[Organ Grinder’s Swing](#)”
- “[What’s New?](#)”
- “Flat Foot Floogie”
- “[And the Angels Sing](#)”
- “[I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart](#)”

Jazz Standards from the 1930s

Year	Rank	Title
1930	1	“Body and Soul”
1939	2	“All the Things You Are”
1935	3	“Summertime”
1935	5	“I Can't Get Started (with You)”
1937	6	“My Funny Valentine”

Jazz History: The Standards (1940s)

Overview

With the big band era in full swing, the 1940s began ominously. Events in Europe and Asia would soon plunge America into its second World War of the century. As America entered into the fray, inevitable changes occurred in the music industry and in jazz. First, a wartime entertainment tax hurt profits for big bands, and then the draft created vacancies that were difficult to fill.

In March, 1940, ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Artists and Producers), proposed a new contract increasing by 100 percent the royalties they received from broadcast use. In retaliation broadcasters created their own organization, BMI (Broadcast Music Incorporated) and began signing non-ASCAP songwriters. By the end of 1940, 650 broadcasters signed with BMI compared with only 200 who continued with ASCAP. At the end of 1941 ASCAP negotiated a new contract, but the “ban” of ASCAP material by many broadcasters had a substantial effect on popular music. Many of the artists BMI signed during the ban were country or western swing artists, who subsequently received considerable airplay and a rise in the popularity of western music.

Then in August, 1942, American Federation of Musicians president James C. Petrillo initiated a ban on recording, in hopes of coercing record companies into returning part of their profits to the union to be used for special concerts and projects. This forced the record companies to focus on recording singers and singing groups and reissuing previously recorded material. The ban lasted until Decca Records capitulated in September, 1943, but it would be another 14 months before RCA and Columbia would give in. Consequently the recording ban further weakened the popularity that the big bands had, and by the end of the decade the swing era had given way to the era of the pop singer.

By the end of the decade, several important technological changes would affect the music industry. First, vinyl would replace shellac as the medium for pressing records; then 78 rpm records would give way to first 45 rpm and then 33 1/3 long play records. Television, invented in the late 1930s, was no longer a novelty as the big radio networks (CBS and NBC) perceived it as the medium of the future.

The 1940s in Jazz

While the big bands struggled to keep going during World War II, a revolution in jazz music was occurring. Starting in the mid-1930s, 52nd Street in New York City became “Swing Street” where small combo jazz was featured. By the 1940s these groups, spearheaded by musicians like Art Tatum, Charlie Parker, [Dizzy Gillespie](#), [Thelonious Monk](#) and Coleman Hawkins, were exploring the harmonic frontiers of popular song. This new type of jazz came to be known as “bebop.” Whereas in the 1920s and 1930s jazz and popular music crossed paths, bebop and the jazz styles built upon it appealed to a specialized audience, and the music rarely ventured back into the popular music realm.

As jazz advanced harmonically, many musicians looked back to tunes from the 1930s, especially Broadway show tunes, which were generally more sophisticated than Tin Pan Alley tunes. Following the mid-1940s recording ban, a number of independent record labels specializing in jazz began business, and the artists they hired were generally given freedom to record material of their choosing.

Some swing era musicians, for example alto saxophonist Louis Jordan, found that there was a growing market for “jump” music, which came to be known as “rhythm and blues” and became part of the roots of the music which would rise to popularity in the 1950s, “rock-n-roll.”

The 1940s in Song

Music from the 1940s reflected a wide spectrum of tastes, ranging from swing band numbers like “[In the Mood](#),” “[Tuxedo Junction](#)” and “[Take the ‘A’ Train](#),” to strictly Tin Pan Alley tunes like “Paper Doll” and “Buttons and Bows.”

Here’s a brief list of tunes that were million sellers in the decade. Those underlined are part of the top 1000 jazz standards list.

- “[In the Mood](#)”
- “[Tuxedo Junction](#)”
- “Rum and Coca-Cola”
- “[Sentimental Journey](#)”
- “[White Christmas](#)”
- “[Take the ‘A’ Train](#)”
- “[God Bless the Child](#)”
- “[Chattanooga Choo Choo](#)”
- “[You Made Me Love You](#)”
- “Paper Doll”
- “You Always Hurt the One You Love”
- “Buttons and Bows”
- “[On a Slow Boat to China](#)”

The underlined tunes are on the list of 1000 jazz standards.

In general, tunes that became jazz standards from the 1940s tended to be from Tin Pan Alley, with Broadway show tunes being replaced by tunes from movies (for example, “[Chattanooga Choo Choo](#)”). There was a higher proportion of numbers written and performed by jazz artists like “[Night in Tunisia](#),” “[Perdido](#),” “[Good Bait](#)” and “[Four Brothers](#).”

Jazz Standards from the 1940s

Year	Rank	Title
1944	4	“ Round Midnight ”
1942	7	“ Lover Man (Oh, Where Can You Be) ”
1946	10	“ Stella By Starlight ”
1947	11	“ Autumn Leaves (Les Feuilles Mortes) ”
1940	21	“ How High the Moon ”

Jazz History: The Standards (1950s)

Overview

Although America was healing from the effects of World War II, the country was embroiled in another conflict against North Korea in Southeast Asia which would last until the middle of 1953.

In the music industry, the 45 rpm record became the “single,” and 78 rpm records went the way of the horn phonograph and the player piano. At the same time, first 10-inch and then 12-inch long-playing records at 33 1/3 rpm became the industry standard. For jazz musicians, this meant that they could now “stretch out,” no longer hindered by a three-minute standard for recordings. In 1958 stereo recordings were introduced, a format which delivered almost live performance realism in one’s living room.

Television’s popularity grew until by decade’s end it had overtaken radio and become the single most important entertainment medium. Jazz benefited from this medium, as musicians were occasionally featured on variety programs and specials. In 1956, jazz pianist/vocalist turned pop icon, Nat “King” Cole, briefly had his own weekly program, one of the highlights of which was inclusion of members of the Jazz at the Philharmonic. There were specials for several years sponsored by Timex watches, and a live jazz program hosted by Art Ford. Specials featured top jazz performers such as [Duke Ellington](#), [Billie Holiday](#), Miles Davis, and many others.

A 1957 landmark production was the “Sound of Jazz,” a special conceived by jazz writer Nat Hentoff, which featured musicians playing in a loose (although rehearsed) atmosphere, free from the oft contrived concepts of television producers. Such great musicians as Henry “Red” Allen, Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Count Basie, Lester Young, Gerry Mulligan, [Thelonious Monk](#), Jimmy Giuffre and Billie Holliday were spotlighted in a 50- minute program.

The 1950s in Jazz

A tune title from 1949 accurately describes jazz at the beginning of the 1950s--- “Bebop Spoken Here.” Great musicians who stretched the limits of the music in the 1940s--alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, trumpeters [Dizzy Gillespie](#) and Miles Davis, pianists Bud Powell and [Thelonious Monk](#) and others--continued to be at the forefront. Younger musicians, such as trumpeter Clifford Brown, alto saxophonists Sonny Stitt and Cannonball Adderley, bassist Charlie Mingus and drummer Art Blakey, built on the foundation laid down by the bebop innovators, creating what is now known as “hard bop.”

Another extension of bebop was a lighter, cooler style introduced partly by Miles Davis’ *Birth of the Cool* session in 1949. This music became known either as “Cool” or “West Coast” style jazz, and its practitioners were players like trumpeter Chet Baker, tenor saxophonist Stan Getz, alto saxophonist Paul Desmond, and baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan.

Beginning in the mid-fifties tenor saxophonist John Coltrane, whose early career included work with the rhythm ‘n blues band of alto saxophonist Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson and with Miles Davis, began exploring a more avant-garde style of jazz. Alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman and cornetist Don Cherry took this stylistic exploration even further.

In 1954 jazz musician and producer George Wein founded the Newport Jazz Festival, the template for what has since become a popular way of presenting a number of jazz artists in an informal

(oftentimes outdoor) setting over a number of days.

The 1950s in Song

As the 1950s progressed, rock ‘n roll became increasingly popular. Music radically changed from 32-bar popular songs coming from Tin Pan Alley composers to more rhythm ‘n blues influenced material. As the following list of million-sellers shows, pop music was still heavily weighted toward Tin Pan Alley, but tunes like “Heartbreak Hotel” and “At the Hop” are clear indications that rock ‘n roll would soon be here to stay. “[Misty](#),” the only tune on this list that is a jazz standard, was written by jazz pianist [Erroll Garner](#) but popularized by vocalist Johnny Mathis, a good example of a crossover tune. Jazz pianist and vocalist Nat “King” Cole became a crossover artist with his many pop hits in the decade, including “Mona Lisa.”

- “Come On-a My House”
- “Slow Poke”
- “[P.S. I Love You](#)”
- “Mona Lisa”
- “Sh-boom”
- “Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White”
- “Wayward Wind”
- “Heartbreak Hotel”
- “A White Sport Coat”
- “At the Hop”
- “[Mack the Knife](#)”
- “[Misty](#)”

Underlined tunes are on the top 1000 jazz standards list.

Compared to the previous decade, there are considerably fewer tunes that became jazz standards. As the 32-bar song form faded from popularity, jazz musicians gravitated either towards older material or original compositions, often based on the chord structures of earlier 32-bar tunes like “[I Got Rhythm](#)” and “[Indiana](#).”

Jazz Standards from the 1950s

Year	Rank	Title
1958	45	“ Satin Doll ”
1954	56	“ Misty ”
1953	97	“ My One and Only Love ”
1953	100	“ Here's That Rainy Day ”

Jazz History: The Standards (1960s)

Overview

America entered the 1960s with the status quo of the 1950s, but it was a decade marked by incredible change, turbulence, and, once again, a war in Southeast Asia. The country elected a young, energetic president in 1960, but John F. Kennedy was felled by an assassin before the end of his term as was civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., and John Kennedy's brother Senator Robert Kennedy. The war in Vietnam created massive demonstrations, especially by those under 30, to demand that the U.S. end its participation there.

As the 1960s progressed, rock 'n' roll became the dominant popular music as the music industry focused on youth culture. In 1963 an English pop group, The Beatles, became the most popular music group of the decade, scoring hit upon hit in the pop charts. Their unique approach to rock music and their original compositions expanded rock music from a strictly blues-based medium into a more creative medium.

Technical strides put a man on the moon, and the invention of the transistor made music more portable. By mid-decade cassette tape and recorders were introduced, quickly followed by the eight-track tape, which made it possible to customize music for listeners who no longer had to rely strictly on radio broadcasts.

The 1960s in Jazz

The first few years of the 1960s were very much like the 1950s, when jazz still garnered a segment of the popular audience. But with the rise in popularity of the Beatles and television becoming the dominant form of entertainment, jazz clubs began to close, putting musicians out-of-work. But some musicians continued on, striving to extend the boundaries of jazz into new areas. In 1961 tenor saxophonist John Coltrane formed a revolutionary quartet, utilizing many aspects of jazz's rhythms and harmonies into his approach, culminating in the recording of a milestone work in 1964, *A Love Supreme*, an album that ensured his position as an important saxophonist and one of the most influential jazzmen of the decade.

As jazz struggled to continue through hard times, some jazz musicians looked to the rhythms of rock 'n' roll and strived to add elements of that music to jazz, creating "fusion jazz." The culmination of this movement was the landmark recording by trumpeter Miles Davis entitled *Bitches Brew* which became a popular seller and catapulted Davis into almost pop star status.

Although there had been Latin American rhythms in jazz beginning in the 1920s, especially those associated with dances such as the rhumba, meringue and the tango, in 1960 a Brazilian guitarist and composer, Antonio Carlos Jobim, began to receive recognition for his music, a combination of jazz and the Brazilian rhythm known as samba. American tenor saxophonist Stan Getz's collaboration with Jobim and vocalist Jo?o Gilberto scored a hit with Jobim's tune "[The Girl from Ipanema](#)." This type of jazz-plus-samba became known as the bossa nova and has since become part of the flavor of jazz.

The 1960s in Song

By the 1960s the heyday of Tin Pan Alley was gone, superseded by music written by individual artists and groups. The 32-bar song form, the standard for almost 50 years, would disappear in favor of blues-influenced rock 'n' roll numbers.

During the decade, tunes that are part of the jazz standards list are almost evenly divided between show tunes (Broadway or movies), jazz originals, and pop tunes. A list of million-seller records of the decade does include a few songs that are part of the jazz standards list (underlined):

- [“Hello Dolly”](#)
- [“Exodus”](#)
- [“Sunny”](#)
- [“I Can’t Stop Loving You”](#)
- [“Yesterday”](#)
- “I’m a Believer”
- “Honky Tonk Woman”
- “Hey Jude”
- “To Sir with Love”
- “Help!”
- “Monday, Monday”
- “Daydream Believer”

The underlined tunes are on the list of 1000 jazz standards.

Also worth mentioning is that there were a few recordings by jazz artists that crossed over onto the pop charts but substantially fewer than in the past.

- “Stranger on the Shore”: Acker Bilk
- [“Take Five”](#): Dave Brubeck
- “Girl from Ipanema”: Stan Getz
- “Midnight in Moscow”: Kenny Ball
- [“Hello Dolly”](#): [Louis Armstrong](#)

Jazz Standards from the 1960s

Year	Rank	Title
1962	135	<u>“Days of Wine and Roses”</u>
1967	216	<u>“Wave”</u>
1960	263	<u>“Naima”</u>
1965	276	<u>“The Shadow of Your Smile”</u>
1963	280	<u>“Oleo”</u> <i>tady je hrubá chyba v letopočtu, skladba „Oleo“ je z roku 1954!</i>

Jazz History: The Standards (1970s)

Overview

In the United States the 1970s was a period marked by the political Watergate scandal, the end of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon.

The era of the 1980s and 1990s became a time of relative stability in America, yet there would be a mid-east conflict in 1990 and incidents of terrorist attacks targeting the U.S. and contributing to a growing unrest in the country. But it was an era of technological advances and economic boom.

The 1970s marked the beginning of the personal computer. As computer manufacturing advanced with miniaturization of parts, prices went down, and advances in the ease of operation eventually made the computer within reach of the average person. By the 1990s the Internet or “world-wide-web” became a tool for business, commerce, and entertainment, linking millions of personal computers together.

The first digital recording was made in 1976, and by the end of the decade digital recorders were available for studio use. The first Walkman portable cassette player, introduced by Sony in 1979, was a unit just slightly larger than the cassette tape, making it convenient to listen to music almost anywhere without having a significantly larger recording unit. 1983 marked the beginning of the production of compact discs, sales of which by the end of the decade would surpass long playing records, and in 1984 Sony introduced the first portable compact disc player. In 1986 Sony/Philips unveiled digital audio tape (DAT), a medium they hoped would be adaptable to home use, but instead it would become the predominant recording medium for studio use. In 1992 Sony introduced the recordable mini-disc, a digital medium that despite its small size and ease-of-use wouldn't catch on with the public in a big way.

The late 1970s also ushered in the era of home video recorders/players, enabling consumers to view prerecorded films and to record their own. By the 1990s digital recording would make available to consumers digital video discs (DVD) with prerecorded material, eventually leading to home-use DVD recorders.

The 1970s-2000 in Jazz

Although jazz music moved in various directions, there continued to be musicians working within the framework of earlier styles, such as traditional/classic (often referred to as “Dixieland”), big band swing, and bebop. For example, the bands of [Duke Ellington](#) and Count Basie were still active and continued to perform even after those two giants died (in 1974 and 1984 respectively). The big bands of swing-era leaders [Woody Herman](#) and Stan Kenton were filled with younger musicians who contributed arrangements of music from post-swing era composers like [Thelonious Monk](#) and John Coltrane. A big band led by trumpeter Thad Jones and drummer Mel Lewis found favor with the jazz world for purveying a neo-swing approach that included elements of bop and cool. Trumpeter Don Ellis' big band explored the complex rhythms of Eastern Europe and Asia.

Drummer Art Blakey, whose career began in the late swing era and blossomed with bop, began his band the Jazz Messengers in the 1950s, continuing until his death in 1990. In between he remained firmly rooted in the “hard bop” style, yet his band was “school” for many up-and-coming musicians, including trumpeter Wynton Marsalis.

Free jazz players who had made a mark in the 1960s, such as Ornette Coleman, Sun Ra and the Art Ensemble of Chicago, continued to explore jazz from a perspective that included influences from world music. On the other hand, crossover/fusion artists such as guitarist George Benson and, for a time, pianist Herbie Hancock, went at the music from more of a pop perspective. This style eventually led to the music now referred to as “smooth” jazz, a simple, easy-listening form of jazz.

The 1970s ushered in a period of academic interest in jazz music history and performance. Two important educational centers, the Berklee College of Music and North Texas State University, offered undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Since that time many other universities have added jazz studies to their curriculum. In addition, there was a renewed interest in big-band jazz (often referred to as “lab” or “stage” bands), beginning at the high school level, and big bands led by Stan Kenton, [Woody Herman](#), Maynard Ferguson and others performed and led workshops for college and high schools students.

From the beginning of his career in the early 1980s, Wynton Marsalis has balanced a career in both classical music and jazz. His early jazz playing showed influences of bop and hard bop players, but in the early 1990s he began a serious study of earlier styles and especially trumpeter [Louis Armstrong](#), of whom he has been a tireless advocate. In some ways he has become the unofficial spokesman for the music, not only as a performer but also as an educator and as the Artistic Director of Jazz at New York’s Lincoln Center. He was heavily involved in the important PBS documentary by Ken Burns, [Jazz](#).

The 1970s-2000 in Song

Prior to the 1960s, popular songs were the primary source for the majority of entries on the jazz standards list. There were significantly fewer in the decade from 1960-1970, where the mix of popular song, songs from Broadway shows, and jazz originals is, for the first time, evenly balanced. The jazz standards list from the decade 1970-1980 has only 14 tunes, of which one, “[Superstition](#),” comes from pop music, and one (“[Send in the Clowns](#)”) from a Broadway show. The remaining songs are jazz originals, as is the only tune from the 1980s, “[Love Dance](#).”

Although during the ‘70s and ‘80s there were pop songs with melodies and harmonies capable of being adapted as jazz vehicles, musicians seemed to be either going back to the music before the 1960s (especially tunes classified as jazz standards) or writing their own material. If the trend of popular music continues to move away from melody and harmony into rhythmic based music (hip hop and rap), it may be an indication that jazz musicians will continue to look to older material or originals for their repertoire.

Jazz Standards from the 1970s-2000

Year	Rank	Title
1980	604	“ Love Dance ”
1975	605	“ The Peacocks ”
1971	608	“ The Summer Knows ”
1973	609	“ Watermelon Man ”
1975	610	“ Goodbye Pork Pie Hat ”