

Description of the Project-Significance

The music of the 20th century that is uniquely American and is known and widely recognized around the world as a truly American invention and cultural treasure is the idiom of Jazz and the Great American Songbook. Its composers include such luminaries as Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, George & Ira Gershwin, Duke Ellington, Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart, Jerome Kern & Oscar Hammerstein II, to name only a few of its progenitors.

The history of the Great American Songbook begins with the precursors to Jazz known as Ragtime and Blues around the turn of the century which includes the bodies of work from the Tin Pan Alley, and Broadway reviews and musicals in New York, and migrating with the advent of the film industry to California and the Hollywood movie musicals.

Of the American Songbook Popular Standards, most were written for specific spots in shows, films, specialty acts, or revues. They were the product of professional songwriters and lyricists working at their craft. In the hands of a capable singer like Ella Fitzgerald or Frank Sinatra, the Standards serve as a sort of musical thesaurus of the spectrum of human emotions. Maybe that's the reason these songs and this body of work continue to engender such a deep response to this day.

The importance of this project and its long-term benefits will provide a centralized, consolidated and expanding online resource of biographical and historical research and information about the composers, lyricists, songs, shows, and singers of this fruitful period in original American songwriting. It will provide a "free to the public" portal into this wonderful world of American culture, and provide educational tools and resources for public benefit. American Songbook Preservation Society will continue to maintain, update, expand content, and develop new programming of this material for future presentation to the online public as technology allows and continues to evolve.

This project will expand on the depth, breadth, and accuracy of the information and material found at such websites as Wikipedia and references to information and available resource materials on the subject matter from JazzStandards.com, by the enhanced visual presentation in construction and design of the website, along with the addition of many more photographs and the inclusion of sound and film clips.

This dynamic web portal will evolve and expand over time as more and more content of this nature enters the realm of public domain. The uniqueness and completeness of this website as developed, will become a destination for those interested in this truly American cultural treasure.

Nothing like this has been attempted before and will serve as a model for research on behalf of the public for the preservation and promotion of the Humanities and our American Culture known and loved around the world, and recognized as truly American.

In light of the dwindling resources for Jazz Education and the collection and dissemination of information and support for one of America's greatest cultural treasures and legacies as our collective body of work known as the Great American Songbook; now more ever, is a dramatic need for an educational resource such as this project will provide honoring the composers, lyricists, songs and singers from this rich artistic period of the 20th century American Story.