Vocal Jazz in the Choral Curriculum
Repertoire for your Concert Choir

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Selecting Repertoire - Where to Start

Great American Songbook

- A recognized musical canon encompassing critically acclaimed, significant songs written during the first half of the 20th Century
- Synonymous with the concept of the American “standard”
- Sources include Broadway, Tin Pan Alley, Hollywood musical films, songs written for specific famous singers
- The availability of sheet music, the advent of recording technology and the birth of radio and television helped to bring this music to a wide audience.
Irving Berlin (1888-1989)
Berlin wrote most of his own lyrics, except as noted

- Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better
- Blue Skies
- Cheek to Cheek
- Count Your Blessings (Instead of Sheep)
- God Bless America
- Happy Holiday (Bing Crosby)
- How Deep Is The Ocean
- I Got the Sun In the Morning and the Moon At Night
- I Love A Piano
- It’s A Lovely Day Today
- I’ve Got My Love To Keep Me Warm
- Let’s Face The Music And Dance
- Play A Simple Melody
- Puttin’ On The Ritz
- Sisters
- Steppin’ Out With My Baby
- There’s No Business Like Show Business
- They Say It’s Wonderful
- Top Hat, White Tie and Tails
- What’ll I Do?
- White Christmas
Jerome Kern (1885-1945)
Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II wrote five musicals together, including *Show Boat*. Kern and Dorothy Fields collaborated on several Hollywood films.

- *All The Things You Are* (Hammerstein)
- *A Fine Romance* (Fields)
- *I Told Every Little Star* (Hammerstein)
- *I Won’t Dance* (Hammerstein, Fields, Harbach, McHugh)
- *The Last Time I Saw Paris* (Hammerstein)
- *Look For The Silver Lining* (DeSylva)
- *Pick Yourself Up* (Fields)
- *The Way You Look Tonight* (Fields)
George Gershwin (1898-1937)
Ira Gershwin was George’s primary lyricist. That’s the case for all of these songs but one.

- A Foggy Day
- But Not For Me
- Embraceable You
- Fascinating Rhythm
- I Got Rhythm
- I’ve Got A Crush On You
- Let’s Call The Whole Thing Off
- Love Is Here To Stay
- Nice Work If You Can Get It
- A Real American Folk Song Is A Rag
- S’Wonderful
- Slap That Bass
- Somebody Loves Me (DeSylva)
- Someone To Watch Over Me
- Strike Up The Band
- They Can’t Take That Away From Me
Richard Rodgers (1902-1979)

Rodgers partnered with Lorenz Hart 1919-1943.
Rodgers partnered with Oscar Hammerstein II 1943-1960

- Blue Moon (Hart)
- Cockeyed Optimist (Hammerstein)
- Do Re Mi (Hammerstein)
- Getting To Know You (Hammerstein)
- Happy Talk (Hammerstein)
- I Could Write A Book (Hart)
- I Enjoy Being a Girl (Hart)
- I Whistle A Happy Tune (Hammerstein)
- If I Loved You (Hammerstein)
- In My Own Little Corner (Hammerstein)
- It Might As Well Be Spring (Hammerstein)
- It’s A Grand Night For Singing (Hammerstein)
- Johnny One-Note (Hart)
- June Is Busting Out All Over (Hammerstein)
- Manhattan (Hart)
- The Most Beautiful Girl In The World (Hart)
- Mountain Greenery (Hart)
- My Favorite Things (Hammerstein)
- My Funny Valentine (Hart)
- My Romance (Hart)
- Out of My Dreams (Hammerstein)
- People Will Say We’re In Love (Hammerstein)
- This Can’t Be Love (Hart)
- Where or When (Hart)
Cole Porter (1891-1964)
Porter wrote his own lyrics.

- Another Op’ning, Another Show
- Anything Goes
- Be A Clown
- Don’t Fence Me In
- From This Moment On
- I Love Paris
- I’ve Got You Under My Skin
- It’s Alright With Me
- It’s De-Lovely
- Just One Of Those Things
- Night And Day
- Sentimental Journey
- So In Love
- Where Or When
- You’re the Top
Other Significant Composers and Lyricists


- **Jimmy Van Heusen** (1913-1990): *Come Fly With Me* (Cahn), *Darn That Dream* (DeLange), *Here’s That Rainy Day* (Burke), *My Kind of Town* (Cahn), *Pocket Full of Miracles* (Cahn), *Swinging On A Star* (Burke)
Stylistic Expectations

- **Choral Tone - The “Truths” of Good Choral Tone regardless of genre**
  - Same pitch, same vowel, same volume with section mates
  - Maintain all habits of healthy tone production
  - Sing with an energized sound
- **Some Differences**
  - Bright tone on most up-tempo songs
  - Inside mouth space becomes more horizontal than vertical

- **Choral Diction**
  - A more “conversational” approach
  - Emphasize beginning consonants De-emphasize (or close) ending consonants
  - Allow a little bit of the “American R”
  - Allow the diphthongs to come through
  - Diction is “placed” at the front of the mouth as in Musical Theatre singing
Vocal Articulations Relative to Swing

WHY? Because we are performing a genre created instrumentally.

HOW
- Vocalists must rely on diction and breath attack to accomplish any kind of accent.
- Energize beginning consonants to create rhythmic interest, especially in faster tunes
- Adding a breath pulse to lyrics beginning with a vowel will create an accent.

WHEN
- As notated by the arranger
- On a scat syllable ending with a consonant (don’t speak the consonant)
- Performing in Swing, add a slight tenuto on the 2nd of every group of 2 eighth notes
- Performing in Swing, internally subdivide quarter notes into 2 eighth notes (ghost note)
Other Expectations

- **Accented Breath Release** - a rhythmic enhancement
  - Release the tone with an almost audible puff of air.
- Energize (intensify) into pitch changes.
- Energize (intensify) all notes longer than an eighth note.
- Adjust dynamic spectrum to maintain good vocal habits in louder moments.
Resources - Publishers

- **Hal Leonard Music**
  Vocal Jazz Series, Discovery Jazz Series
  A vast amount of repertoire to choose from for all voicings and difficulty levels. Most of the more recent arrangements have audio samples.

- **Sound Music Publications (Edmonds, WA)**
  Frank DeMiero and Ken Kraintz, co-founders
  http://smpjazz.com/?action=welcome
  Lots of excellent original charts as well as plenty of standards. Well defined difficulty rating system (levels 1-5.) Very few audio samples.

- **Alfred Music**
  Pop Series features a Broadway/Movies category and a Great American Songbook category. Almost all of these arrangements have full audio samples.

- **UNC Jazz Press (Greeley, CO)**
  https://www.uncjazzpress.com/
  Excellent resource for a wide variety of vocal jazz for all voicings and difficulty levels. Many newer arrangements have audio samples.
Resources - How-To Books


- *Jazz Singing: Developing the Artistry and Authenticity* (2007) by Diana R. Spradling

- *Jazz Warm-Ups and Vocalises* (2011) by Gary Walth
  ISBN: 9781458405791  CD included

- *Swingle Singing* (1997) by Ward Swingle

- *The Vocal Jazz Ensemble* (2009) by Paris Rutherford

- *Vocal Jazz Style* (2nd ed.) (2010) by Kirby Shaw
  ISBN: 884088202903  CD available
Resources - Books on Vocal Improvisation

- *Jazz Singers Handbook* (2005) by Michelle Weir  

- *Scat! Vocal Improvisation Techniques* (1998) by Bob Stoloff  

- *Vocal Improvisation* (2015) by Michelle Weir  
Resources - Listening

- The King’s Singers [http://www.kingssingers.com/]
- The Swingle Singers [http://www.theswingles.co.uk/]
- Chanticleer [http://www.chanticleer.org/#about-chanticleer]
- Just 4 Kicks [http://www.singers.com/group/Just-4-Kicks/]
- LA Jazz Choir [http://www.stage3music.com/lajc/lajc.html]
- Manhattan Transfer [http://manhattantransfer.net/]
- New York Voices [http://newyorkvoices.com/]
- The Real Group [http://www.therealgroup.se/index.html]