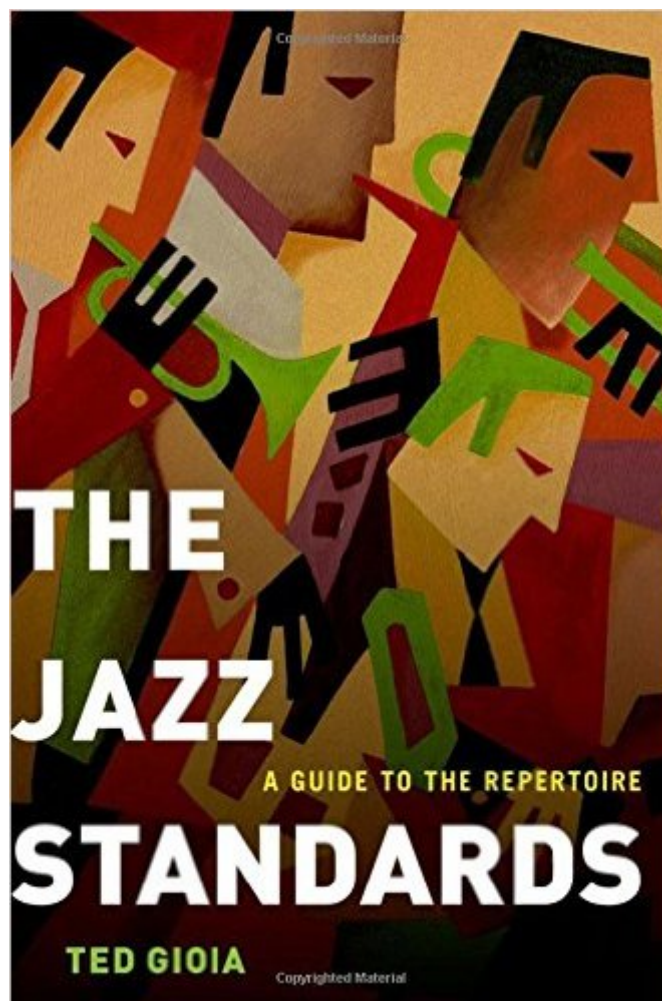


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The Jazz Standards: A Guide To The Repertoire



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

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.

It's important to remember that Ted Gioia chose not to write about 252 great songs, but about 252 musical packages of raw material for great improvisations. He attempts to answer the question of why jazz musicians like to play these particular songs over and over again, and his succinct (1- to 3-page) essays on each tune do a very good job of explaining the attraction for lay listeners. What turns an "exercise in frustrated phraseology" like "Come Rain or Come Shine" into such a memorable song? How do the monotonous phrases of "Falling In Love With Love" fall into such an irresistible groove despite themselves? The author claims that his song selection represents the most frequently performed and recorded tunes in the repertoire, and the result is an almost equal division between Broadway/Tin Pan Alley and jazz originals from "Tin Roof Blues" to "Wave." (Plenty of Monk, Ellington, and Jobim, but no Radiohead or Nick Drake -- not yet.) I love the historical anecdotes that Gioia provides as well. Bill Evans's New Jersey accent finally produces a plausible explanation for the title of Miles Davis's "Nardis," while the story of how a half million audience members turned "Muskrat Ramble" into a giant singalong at Woodstock (where Country Joe McDonald renamed it the "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag") is a masterpiece of bleak humor. This is a fun book to pull down from the reference shelf. Fun and musically enlightening.

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 fantastic book for musicians and for anyone interested in the jazz standard repertoire. Gioia has intriguing histories of over 250 standards, with a good dose of personal opinion and experience mixed in. The listings of recordings are excellent. I found that a simple two-page description of a tune can turn into an odyssey. I tracked recorded versions, compared, looked at printed versions and generally deconstructed and reconstructed chords and melody lines to get inside particular tunes. For example, listening back-to-back to a widely interpreted tune like Blue Moon is an eye-opener, from The Bad Plus's out there 2000 version, to Ella Fitzgerald's lampooning of the Marceles' absurd best-selling doo-wop version to Tommy Dorsey's terrible attempt at corn to Dean Martin's syrupy version to Frank Sinatra's straight-ahead version with some tasty jazz trumpet thrown in; like a run-on sentence it makes for a crazy ride. More seriously, take Rollin's Airegin, with some excellent versions by Chris Potter, Wes Montgomery and (of course) Miles Davis. Gioia gives us some insight to the tune, describing the unusual lengths of the ABC structure and how Davis's reconfiguring of one section into an 8-bar F-minor vamp gives us a portent of his later modal work. Any gigging musician will find themselves bringing the book along with them to dig further into the tunes they are playing. Fans too will appreciate a deeper understanding of the tunes. Gioia plays a nice line between giving musicians a taste of some of the more technical issues without losing the general reader. Is there Book 2 coming out in a couple of years (hint, hint)? I'll buy it sight unseen.

Very disappointed. This could be a great musical reference volume, but I unknowingly purchased the so-called Kindle version...which it is not. It's a PDF or some other format which greatly diminishes its value as a "look-up" reference. Should discount the cost of a replacement print version by the cost of this fake.

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