

The "New" American Songbook

"Both Sides Now"

"Everyday"

"These Boots Are Made for Walkin'"

"Stand by Me"

"This Old Guitar"

What is the "New" American Songbook?

"Most of the songs that we know and sing from the Great American Songbook are from the earlier part of the 20th century to mid-20th century. But there is also a body of music that we call the 'new' American Songbook - more contemporary songs that are written in the same tradition, in that they have lyrics that are very well crafted and carefully tell a story and have musical sophistication. These are all songs that come from the 60s, 70s, into the 80s that are a part of the 'new' American Songbook. They have a more contemporary feel to them, [but still] they are songs that many of us grew up with and knew in our earlier years. So, they have a special resonance because we not only know those songs, but we live them."

- Michael Feinstein, Founder of the Great American Songbook Foundation



Song: "Both Sides Now" (1969)

Songwriter: Joni Mitchell

Brief Context: This was the first hit song written by Joni Mitchell, whose version appeared on her 1969 album *Clouds*. Mitchell recalled: "I was reading Saul Bellow's Henderson *The Rain King* on a plane and early in the book, the Rain King is also up in a plane. He's on his way to Africa and he looks down and sees these clouds. I put down the book, looked out the window and saw clouds too, and I immediately started writing the song. I had no idea that the song would become as popular as it did." It is Mitchell's most covered song with over 1,000 versions recorded.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Both Sides Now" video
- Perfect Harmony "Both Sides Now" lyrics sheet

Fun fact

Joni Mitchell is also a painter!
Mitchell considers herself a
"painter derailed by circumstance"
though she has had greater
success in music,
Mitchell has continued to paint
throughout her life.



Joni Mitchell's self-portrait for her 1969 album *Clouds*.

Song: "Everyday" (1957)
Songwriter: Buddy Holly

Brief Context: "Everyday" is a song written by Buddy Holly and Norman Petty, recorded by Buddy Holly and the Crickets on May 29, 1957, and released on September 20, 1957, as the B-side of "Peggy Sue," which went to three on the Billboard Top 100 chart in 1957. The song is ranked number 238 on Rolling Stone magazine's list of the "500 Greatest Songs of All Time".

Activity: Singing

What do you need?

- "Everyday" Perfect Harmony video

Fun Fact

On February 13, 1955, when he was only 19 years old, Buddy Holly opened for Elvis Presley at the Fair Park Coliseum in Lubbock. Holly even borrowed Elvis' guitar for the occasion.



Everyday

Every day, it's a-getting closer

Going faster than a rollercoaster

Love like yours will surely come my way

A-hey, a-hey-hey

Every day, it's a-getting faster

Everyone said, "Go ahead and ask her"

Love like yours will surely come my way

A-hey, a-hey-hey

Every day seems a little longer

Every way, love's a little stronger

Come what may

Do you ever long for true love from me

Every day, it's a-getting closer

Going faster than a rollercoaster

Love like yours will surely come my way

A-hey, a-hey-hey

Song: "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" (1966)
As performed by: Nancy Sinatra

Brief Context: Nancy Sinatra is perhaps best known for two things:
1. Being the daughter of Frank Sinatra and 2. "These Boots are Made for Walkin'". According to singer Nancy Sinatra, songwriter Lee Hazlewood and arranger Billy Strange visited the Sinatra's home to preview a selection of tunes they thought Nancy might want to record. The moment she heard the memorable bass line of "These Boots Are Made For Walkin'," she knew it was a winner. It charted on January 22, 1966, and reached No. 1 in the United States Billboard Hot 100.

Activity: Movement

What do you need?

- **Perfect Harmony "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" video**

Suggested Seated Movement

Follow Perfect Harmony leader Donna or create your own seated movement!

Use movements like . . .

- **March in place**
- **Tap your knee**
- **Kick legs out**
- **Move arms side to side**



Song: "Stand By Me" (1961)
Made popular by: Ben E. King

Brief Context: "Stand By Me" was originally the name of a gospel hymn written by the Philadelphia minister Charles Albert Tindley in 1905. His hymn became popular in churches throughout the American South and was recorded by various gospel acts in the 1950s. The most popular adaptation was by The Staple Singers, who recorded it in 1955. It was through this rendition that Ben E. King was introduced to the song. In 2015, King's iconic version was inducted into the National Recording Registry by the Library of Congress, as "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".

Activity: Singing and Discussion

What do you need?

- "Stand By Me" Perfect Harmony video
- "Stand By Me" lyrics sheet

Suggested Discussion Prompt

Who in your life has "stood by you" through good times and bad?

- **Suggested prompts:**
 - **Parent**
 - **Friend**
 - **Partner**

How did they help you through a difficult time?



Stand By Me

**When the night has come
And the land is dark
And the moon is the only light we'll see
No, I won't be afraid
No, I won't be afraid
Just as long as you stand
Stand by me
So darlin', darlin', stand by me
Oh, stand by me
Oh, stand
Stand by me, stand by me
If the sky that we look upon
Should tumble and fall
Or the mountains should crumble to the sea
I won't cry, I won't cry
No I won't shed a tear
Just as long as you stand
Stand by me
So darlin', darlin', stand by me
Oh, stand by me
Oh, stand
Stand by me, stand by me
Whenever you're in trouble won't you
Stand by me
Oh, stand by me
Oh, stand
Stand by me, stand by me**

Song: "This Old Guitar" (1974)
Songwriter: John Denver

Brief Context: Known as one of the most beloved entertainers of his era, John Denver recorded and released over 300 songs and had 33 albums and singles that were certified Gold and Platinum in the U.S. Denver's songs have become classics in their own right. "Take Me Home, Country Roads," "Annie's Song," "Rocky Mountain High," and "Thank God I'm a Country Boy" are just a few songs that have made Denver a household name. Denver also became a hit with younger audiences after releasing the album "Rocky Mountain Holiday" with the Muppets.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "This Old Guitar" video

From the Songbook Archives

In 1979 "John Denver and the Muppets: A Christmas Together" graced the airwaves on December 5th. Mainly centering on holiday music, Denver and his newfound puppet friends perform songs like "The 12 Days of Christmas," "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," "Silent Night," and "Deck the Halls."

The Songbook's Ray Charles ("The Other Ray Charles") was a music consultant for the Muppet programming in the early 1970s. His collection includes photos of John Denver with the Muppets for numerous collaborations, including their Christmas special.

See photos of John Denver and the Muppets on the next page.





John Denver in the top center between his Muppet friends including Miss Piggy and Animal. Jim Henson (creator of the Muppets) in shown bottom center.



John Denver recording "The Christmas Wish" with Kermit the Frog.