



*The Great American
Songbook Foundation*

Michael Feinstein, Founder

AT THE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

LIBRARY & ARCHIVES ACQUISITION POLICY

The Great American Songbook is the canon of American popular music primarily created between the 1920s and the 1960s for Broadway and Hollywood musicals, television. Eligibility criteria include a song's lasting popularity/ reinterpretations and the songwriter's nationality: American. While the 1920s-1960s are considered the Golden Age of the Songbook, many songs have been written and performed since then that have become American classics which should be included in the Songbook. The GASF should create a "movable wall" on the timeline that allows for songs that are more than 25, 30, or 40 years old (TBD) to be included. Music that does not generally represent the GAS includes British musical theatre or other musicals created and performed outside the US, classical, folk, gospel, beach, electronic, cool jazz, instrumental soundtracks for movies, film noir, and horror.

The top priority shall be primary source materials such as correspondence, photos, arrangements, compositions, original lyrics, lacquer discs or other original recordings, or anything else that helps to tell the story of a major artist, composer, lyricist, or arranger. Secondary source materials include commercially published materials such as DVDs, CDs and LPs, books (from juvenile to adult) preferably peer-reviewed, and sheet music and ephemera.

I. RECORDINGS PRIORITY BY SUBJECT

A. First Priority

1. Popular American music from the 1920s – 1960s.
2. Musical theatre cast albums and soundtracks.
3. Oral histories of American performers, songwriters, arrangers, etc.
4. Documentaries of American songwriters, singers, etc.
5. Radio shows hosted by popular American songwriters and/or singers
6. Swing/Big band
7. Jazz (pre-1950s traditional)
8. Vocal jazz groups of the period

B. Second Priority

1. Vaudeville
2. American Yiddish theatre
3. Bossa nova, Latin Jazz

Exclusions: (except when included as part of a larger GAS collection)

1. Classical and art music
2. K-12 educational material
3. Language instruction
4. Sacred music
5. Non-pop musical forms (waltzes, marches, etc.)
6. Non-American musicals
7. Audiocassettes [master recording or artifact only]
8. R&B, soul, black urban contemporary, rap
9. Blues

10. Country, bluegrass, western swing
11. Comedy, wit and humor
12. Folk music
13. Spoken literature/English language [poetry, prose, drama]
14. Cajun, zydeco, calypso, reggae
15. Latino, Hispanic-American, Tex-Mex
16. Sermons
17. Sounds and sound effects
18. Electronic and chance
19. Commercial advertising jingles, presentations, etc.

II. RECORDINGS PRIORITY BY FORMAT

A. First priority - unique recordings

1. Lacquer and transcription discs
2. Open reel, quarter-inch, audio tapes
3. Audio cassette recordings of material issued exclusively in that format, bypassing the LP or CD completely

B. Second priority

1. Compact disc reissues of LPs with substantial additional content
2. 78rpm
3. 45rpm
4. 33 1/3 rpm
5. Compact disc

C. Third priority

1. VHS video cassettes of music that have not been reissued in DVD format

Exclusions:

1. Piano rolls [artifact only]
2. Cylinders [artifact only]
3. 8-track tape [artifact only]
4. Wire [artifact only]
5. Beta format video cassettes
6. Open-reel commercially released audio tapes
7. Multi-performer compilations of previously issued recordings.

III. VISUAL RECORDINGS BY FORMAT

A. First Priority – unique recordings

1. 2" quad video
2. Super 8
3. 16mm
4. 8mm
5. 35mm
6. DVDs of oral histories, Broadway and Hollywood musicals

B. Second priority

1. DVDs of commercially released material

C. Third priority

1. Laser discs

IV. PRINT MATERIAL BY PRIORITY

A. First Priority – Primary Source Documentation – Archival Materials

1. Correspondence
2. Photos
3. Handwritten or typed lyrics
4. Musical arrangements
5. Production scripts
6. Scrapbooks
7. Ephemera such as theatre programs

B. Second Priority – Library Materials

1. Books on popular music, musical theatre, biographies, discographies, critical monographs, historical discourses, theatrical art
2. Popular sheet music and songbooks

Exclusions:

1. Playbills and other programs unless accompanied by ticket stubs/other materials. (Playbill.com provides a fully-searchable function on the website.)
2. Autograph stubs with no evidentiary value.

V. ARTIFACTS BY PRIORITY

A. First priority

1. Awards – ASCAP, GRAMMY, Oscar, etc.
2. Costumes
3. Lobby cards, advertising posters

Exclusions:

1. Artwork unrelated to the Songbook