

Queens of the Songbook

"The Way We Were"

"It's a Good Day"

"9 to 5"

"The Way You Look Tonight"

"So Far Away"

Celebrating Women's Musical Legacies

Women have left a lasting mark on the Great American Songbook, shaping its melodies and lyrics with their unique voices and perspectives. From timeless compositions of songwriters like Dorothy Fields and Carole King, women have played pivotal roles as singers, lyricists, composers, and arrangers. Their contributions have added depth, emotion, and innovation to the rich tapestry of American music, capturing the essence of love, longing, and resilience.



Song: "The Way We Were" (1973)

Songwriters: Marilyn Bergman, Alan Bergman & Marvin Hamlisch

Brief Context: "The Way We Were" is a famous love song written by Songbook Hall of Fame members Marilyn and Alan Bergman, with music by Marvin Hamlisch. It came out in 1973 as part of the movie with the same name, starring Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford. The song's touching melody and meaningful words talk about remembering a past love, connecting with people all over the world. It won the Academy Award for Best Original Song and became one of Streisand's most beloved songs.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "The Way We Were" video

Did you know?

Known for its opening line, "Memories, light the corners of my mind," this song sets a nostalgic tone that perfectly complements the movie. Early demos of the song show that the first word was originally "Daydreams," but Streisand suggested changing it to "Memories."



Song: "It's a Good Day" (1946)
Songwriters: Peggy Lee & Dave Barbour

Brief Context: "It's a Good Day" is a cheerful and uplifting song written by Songbook Peggy Lee and Dave Barbour, released in 1947. The song captures a sense of joy and positivity that was particularly welcome in the post-war era. Its infectious optimism continues to brighten the spirits of listeners around the world, cementing Peggy Lee's legacy as one of the most iconic voices of her generation.

Activity: Singing and Discussion

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "It's a Good Day" video
- Perfect Harmony "It's a Good Day" lyrics sheet

Suggested Discussion Prompt

Peggy Lee, who wrote the lyrics to this song, was a source of inspiration for many young songwriters looking to follow a similar career.

- Have you ever been inspired by someone to follow your passions?
- Who is a mentor or notable person who inspires you?



It's a Good Day

Yes, it's a good day for singing a song

Yes, it's a good day for movin' along

Yes, it's a good day

How could anything go wrong?

A good day from morning 'til night

Yes, it's a good day for shinin' your shoes

And, it's a good day for losin' the blues

Everything to gain and nothing to lose

And it's good day from morning 'til night

I said to the sun, "Good mornin', Sun

Rise and shine today

You know you gotta get goin'

If you're gonna make a showin'

And you got the right of way"

'Cause it's a good day for payin' your bills

And it's a good day for curin' your ills

Just take a deep breath and throw away the pills

A good day from morning 'til night

Yes, it's a good day from morning 'til night

Yes, it's a good day from morning 'til night

Song: "9 to 5" (1980)
Songwriter: Dolly Parton

Brief Context: "9 to 5" is a spirited and uplifting song by Dolly Parton, written for the 1980 movie *9 to 5*, where she also acted. The song talks about the challenges working women face, especially in offices, as they seek fairness and respect. Parton's catchy tune and lyrics resonated with listeners, making it a chart-topper and earning nominations for awards like the Academy Award and Grammys.

***Activity:* Movement**

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "9 to 5" video

Suggested Seated Movement

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

Use movements like . . .

- pat your legs
- march in place
- shimmy your arms up your body and shake your hands



Song: "The Way You Look Tonight" (1936)

Songwriters: Jerome Kern & Dorothy Fields

Brief Context: "The Way You Look Tonight," a classic song from the Great American Songbook, was composed by Jerome Kern with lyrics by Dorothy Fields. The song was written for the 1936 film *Swing Time*, starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The song won the Academy Award for Best Original Song that year, solidifying its place as one of the most beloved standards of all time.

Activity: Singing

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "The Way You Look Tonight" video
- Perfect Harmony "The Way You Look Tonight" lyrics

Songbook Archives

Letter from lyricist Dorothy Fields to composer, arranger and lyricist Meredith Willson on his opening night of THE MUSIC MAN. The letter is dated February 14, 1966 and reads:

Dear Meredith - It was wonderful of you to remember me on opening night. Believe me I appreciate it. Love, Dorothy.

Meredith Willson Collection, Great American Songbook Foundation Library & Archives



The Way You Look Tonight

**Some day, when I'm awfully low,
When the world is cold,
I will feel a glow just thinking of you
And the way you look tonight.**

**Oh, but you're lovely, with your smile so warm
And your cheeks so soft,
There is nothing for me but to love you,
And the way you look tonight.**

**With each word your tenderness grows,
Tearing my fears apart
And that laugh that wrinkles your nose,
Touches my foolish heart.**

**Lovely, never, ever change.
Keep that breathless charm.
Won't you please arrange it?
Cause I love you
And the way you look tonight.**

Just the way you look tonight.

DOROTHY FIELDS

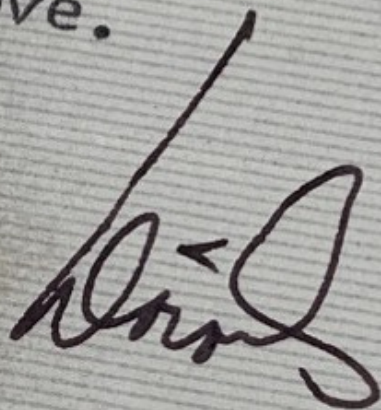
FEB 14 1966

February 7, 1966

Dear Meredith -

It was wonderful of you to
remember me on opening night. Believe
me I appreciate it.

Love.



Mr. Meredith Wilson
c/o A.S.C.A.P.
575 Madison Avenue
New York New York



Song: "So Far Away" (1971)

Songwriters: Carole King

Brief Context: "So Far Away" is a touching song by Carole King on her famous 1971 album *Tapestry*. The song reflects King's feelings of longing and separation, capturing the universal experience of missing someone dear. Its introspective lyrics and gentle melody struck a chord with listeners, making it one of the standout tracks on the album. *Tapestry* went on to become one of the best-selling albums of all time, showing how talented and influential Carole King is as a singer and songwriter.

***Activity:* Listening**

What do you need?

- **Perfect Harmony "So Far Away" video**

Did you know?

Carole King has written over 400 songs that have been recorded by various artists. Her prolific songwriting career spans several decades, with songs recorded by artists such as Aretha Franklin, The Beatles, and Celine Dion.

