

**ROCK WRITERS WHO DIED YOUNG: JIM MORRISON, JIMMY HENDRIX & RICK NELSON...**

The 3 writers mentioned had short but meteoric careers!

Check them out!

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim\\_Morrison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Morrison)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimi\\_Hendrix](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimi_Hendrix)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ricky\\_Nelson#Helen\\_Blair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ricky_Nelson#Helen_Blair)

**FATS DOMINO & LITTLE RICHARD**

One of my boy hood musical heroes was and still is  
Antoine 'Fats' Domino!

Richard "Little Richard" Pennymen was another!

Their magical music, that the critics/writers coined

'rhythm & blues' (writers, because of their lack of

musicality need to come up with 'names' for our

art and creativity) was a fresh approach to popular

music, which had become very stagnant through

a myriad of Connie Francis (and other) recordings!

Please have some fun reading about and especially

listening to the recordings of these 2 1950's and 60's

writing & recording icons!

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fats\\_Domino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fats_Domino)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little\\_Richard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Richard)

**The Wilson's AKA The Beachboys**

The Four Freshmen were mainly responsible for the sound of this group that revolutionized the  
sound of music beginning in the mid to late 60's!

Like the Beatles, this group started off writing primitive songs like the  
flurry of 'beach songs', just like the Beatles wanted to 'hold your hand'..

"Help Me Rhonda", and "Barbara Ann" climbed up the compositional  
'totem pole' a tad.....then came "God Only Knows" and "In My Room"

and the Beachboys had come of age!

Brian Wilson, the musical 'brain' behind the group truly is a genius!

I had the pleasure of seeing a new version (his) of the Beachboys

in 2004 when with Van Dyke Parks conducting, they played the entire

"Pet Sounds" album at the Hollywood Bowl!

One of the best concerts that I EVER attended!

Those that know a little bit about me know that I've been

up on stage MAKING the music for many, many moons!

Witnessing concerts is a rarity, and this concert was THE RAREST!

Enjoy The Beachboys!

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Beach\\_Boys](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Beach_Boys)

**THE STEVIE'S****STEVIE WONDER**

STEVIE IS AN AMAZING ALL-AROUND MUSICIAN!

He excels at singing, piano, harmonica and is a brilliantly

gifted songwriter with a long list of hits!

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stevie\\_Wonder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stevie_Wonder)

**STEVIE NICKS**

Stephanie Lynn "Stevie" Nicks (born May 26, 1948) is an American singer-songwriter, who in the course of her work with Fleetwood Mac and her extensive solo career, has produced over forty Top 50 hits and sold over 140 million albums. She was deemed "The Reigning Queen of Rock and Roll" and one of the "100 Greatest Singers of All Time" by Rolling Stone,[1][2] and, as a member of Fleetwood Mac, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1998. As a solo artist, she has garnered eight Grammy Award nominations[3] and, with Fleetwood Mac, a further five.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stevie\\_Nicks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stevie_Nicks)

**STEVIE RAY VAUGHN**

Stephen "Stevie" Ray Vaughan (October 3, 1954 – August 27, 1990) was an American guitarist, singer, songwriter and record producer. Often referred to by his initials SRV, Vaughan is best known as a legendary blues guitarist whose formidable achievements were acknowledged by the great black blues guitarists who influenced him. Vaughan revived blues rock and paved the way for many other artists. Vaughan was a founding member and leader of Double Trouble. With drummer Chris Layton and bassist Tommy Shannon, Vaughan ignited the blues revival of the 1980s. In a career spanning seven years, Vaughan and Double Trouble consistently sold out concerts while their albums frequently went gold.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stevie\\_Ray\\_Vaughan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stevie_Ray_Vaughan)

Six or seven people actually contacted me and told me that they read this little songwriting blog.....actually, if only one of you wrote back expressing enjoyment for my effort, it would do the trick and get me to continue...so, with 6 or 7 (out of over 400....I used to have 500 before I started blogging...lol) I'm all cranked up and ready to roll my next subject off the assembly line.....

Today's bonus is.....

**Diane Warren**

Just about every artist has cut a song written by Diane Warren. She was the first songwriter in the history of Billboard magazine to have seven hits, all by different artists, on the singles chart at the same time. Warren owns her own publishing company, Realsongs, which gives her control over her songs. Her number 1 hits include "Because You Loved Me", "Un-Break My Heart", "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing". She still remains the most in demand songwriter in the music industry today.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diane\\_Warren](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diane_Warren)

OOPS.....ITS RICHARD RODGERS, NOT ROGERS!  
SORRY! (ITS 6 AM...LOL)

ROGERS & HAMMERSTEIN.....A COMPOSITION DYNASTY!

Oscar Greeley Clendenning Hammerstein II ; July 12, 1895 – August 23, 1960, was an American librettist, theatrical producer, and (usually uncredited) theatre director of musicals for almost forty years. Hammerstein won eight Tony Awards and two Academy Awards for Best Original Song. Many of his songs are standard repertoire for singers and jazz musicians. He co-wrote 850 songs. Hammerstein was the lyricist and playwright in his partnerships; his collaborators wrote the music. Hammerstein collaborated with composers Jerome Kern, Vincent Youmans, Rudolf Friml, Richard A. Whiting and Sigmund Romberg; but his most famous collaboration, by far, was with Richard Rodgers, which included The Sound of Music.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar\\_Hammerstein\\_II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Hammerstein_II)

**RICHARD ROGERS**

Richard Charles Rodgers (June 28, 1902 – December 30, 1979) was an American composer of music for more than 900 songs and for 43 Broadway musicals. He also composed music for films and television. He is best known for his songwriting partnerships with the lyricists Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II. His compositions have had a significant impact on popular music down to the present day, and have an enduring broad appeal.

Rodgers was the first person to win what are considered the top show business awards in television, recording, movies and Broadway—an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar, and a Tony—now known collectively as an EGOT. He has also won a Pulitzer Prize, making him one of two people (Marvin Hamlisch is the other) to receive each award.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard\\_Rodgers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Rodgers)

VERY IMPORTANT!!! LOOK UP AND LISTEN TO ROGERS "VICTORY AT SEA" .....AMAZING COMPOSITION AND ORCHESTRATION!!!

**THE GERSHWIN'S.....GEORGE & HIS WONDERFUL 'SISTER' IRA**

LOL.....JUST WANTED TO SEE IF YOU WERE PAYING ATTENTION..

Ira Gershwin, of course, was George's brother and lyricist...

Together the 2 of them wrote more great songs and accrued more hits than any other writers of their day!

Please enjoy The Gershwin's!

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_gershwin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_gershwin)

<http://gershwin.com/about/george-gershwin>

Okay, I had a 1% click through (whatever that really is) after my last entry...3 people took the time to read what I wrote (I guess)

Three additional people sent me e-mails expressing appreciation!

So, there's 6 people that I now know are out there!

Things are looking up...for me? Hmm.....

Well, in any case....here's today's topic:

"I Fall in Love Too Easily" is a 1944 song composed by Jule Styne with lyrics by Sammy Cahn.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I\\_Fall\\_In\\_Love\\_Too\\_Easily](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Fall_In_Love_Too_Easily)

This song, I feel, is one of the greatest songs ever written, by two of the greatest songwriters that ever lived, Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn! Listen to Sinatra's version of this great song, and then familiarize yourself with the LONG list of hits that these great writers accounted for! As always, ENJOY!

For the past few weeks I have been sharing some songwriting tips as well as providing role models of great songwriters for you to check in to and possibly begin emulating some of these great people and groups!

My recommendations have accounted for 70-90% of all popular hits over the last 50 years!

Popular music is in peril of disappearing if you guys don't wake up and begin to take this business seriously!

Good songs don't write themselves!

This is hard (often impossible) work!

I hope to get some feedback from some of you in the near future!

In the meantime, pick up a copy of Jim Webb's book, "Tunesmith"

and READ IT!

PS: Hopefully you didn't delete the last 20 or so posts from me!

### **#17 Jimmy Webb**

This guy wrote more great songs than probably anyone alive!

He is a great COMPLETE musician, as he is also a fabulous arranger and lyricist!

He said this about God's place in his life as it pertains to songwriting:

*I couldn't write a song without God. Sure, I could hack out hackneyed phrases and clichés, but to write anything meaningful I have to be in tune with God. He is the great source, my inspiration, the current that I have to connect to. Sadly I've not always used the gift He's given me—the answered prayer—as best as I could or should have. I've made mistakes. I've done things I wish I hadn't done.[12]*

Webb has stated, "I am a strong believer in God... God is important to me. God is bigger than any one particular denomination. I don't like it when people try to confine Him. I don't put any limits on God." Webb reads the King James Version of the Bible

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy\\_Webb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Webb)

### **#16 SEALS & CROFTS**

I RODE FROM THE HOTEL TO THE UNIVERSAL AMPHITHEATRE  
WITH JIM SEALS AND MY BROTHER JEFF WHEN SEALS & CROFTS  
WERE IN THEIR PRIME AND HIT SONGS LIKE "DIAMOND GIRL"  
WERE PEAKING.

JEFF WAS THE ROAD MANAGER OF THE BAND AT THAT TIME!

LIKE THREE DOG NIGHT, HALL & OATES, THE BEACHBOYS AND OTHERS, SEALS &  
CROFTS HAD AN AMAZING STRING OF HIT  
RECORDS!

CHECK THEM OUT!

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seals\\_and\\_Crofts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seals_and_Crofts)

### **Songwriting #15 HALL & OATES**

They are best known for their six No. 1 hits on the Billboard Hot 100: "Rich Girl", "Kiss on My List", "Private Eyes", "I Can't Go for That (No Can Do)", "Maneater", and "Out of Touch", as well as many other songs which charted in the Top 40. In total, they had 34 chart hits on the US Billboard Hot 100, seven RIAA platinum albums, and six RIAA gold albums.[2] Because of that chart success, Billboard magazine named them the most successful duo of the rock era, surpassing The Everly Brothers

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hall\\_%26\\_Oates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hall_%26_Oates)

### **HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

Rich Pulin Music gives thanks for the opportunity of being associated with the wonderful musicians on the Reverbnation site!

May ALL of you flourish in 2014 and achieve things that none of us can even imagine!

That blessing is just one move away!

Keep the faith, and maintain the belief in yourselves and in your artistry!

You WILL succeed!

Here is one of the MOST SUCCESSFUL UK writer/recording artists of all time, the inimitable GILBERT O'SULLIVAN  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilbert\\_O%27Sullivan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilbert_O%27Sullivan)

### **SONGWRITING #14**

THE ROLLING STONES (MICK JAGGER)

RIGHT AFTER THE BEATLES, THE MOST POPULAR  
AND HIGHEST SELLING BAND IN HISTORY!!

CHECK OUT THEIR LONG LIST OF HITS ON:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Rolling\\_Stones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Rolling_Stones)

### **Songwriting #13**

#### **David Gates/Bread**

The songwriting successes of David and this group are comparable to *3 Dog Night*!  
The early 1970's witnessed one Bread Hit after another!  
Here is their history and story: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Gates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Gates)

### **Songwriting #12**

*3 Dog Night* was an amazingly successful pop band starting in the 1960's and continuing into the 1970's, 80's and right up to the current day!  
Here are some of their videos from that era: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiKcd7yPLdU>  
[http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=3+dog+night&sm=1](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=3+dog+night&sm=1)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three\\_Dog\\_Night](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Dog_Night)

### **SONGWRITING #11**

#### **BURT BACHARACH**

I had the honor and pleasure to work in the orchestra of songwriter-pianist-legend Burt Bacharach on New Years Eve 1992 at Caesar's Palace!  
For that occasion, Dionne Warwick was also on the concert!  
Burt has been, over time, one of the most prolific songwriters of our time!  
Please read about his life and career:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burt\\_Bacharach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burt_Bacharach)

### **SONGWRITING #10**

Mel Torme was another role-model for me! He did it ALL!  
Terrific drummer, dancer, actor, singer, arranger and songwriter!  
Mel penned perhaps the greatest Christmas song of all time, entitled "A Christmas Song", but known better for the first line of the song: "Chesnuts Roasting On An Open Fire"  
Please enjoy the read on Mel Torme!  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mel\\_Tormé](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mel_Tormé)

**SONG WRITING #9****(ONE OF MY HEROES!!) THE INIMITABLE, BOBBY SCOTT!!!**

I had the extreme pleasure and honor to work with Bobby Scott in 1962!

I was 1st trombonist with the Larry Elgart Orchestra and we (the band) had a recording at the infamous 'Webster Hall' in downtown Manhattan, New York City, where I originally hail from!

That day started fantastically when I ran into Lew Gluckin (a fantastic jazz trumpeter of the day) on the Long Island Railroad train from Long Island into Penn Station, NYC!

He was heading to the same session! Entered 'Webster Hall', which had a well-preserved late nineteen-hundreds architectural design appearance, and was HUGE...

Larry and a few band-members were playing catch with a baseball, and wearing baseball gloves! An upright piano was set up in front of the band, a rarity, considering the Elgart band did NOT employ a piano, favoring a guitar instead!

This was a brilliant decision by Larry, brother Les and Charles Albertine, all of whom 'engineered' the sound of the band!

Why the piano? The occasion was to accomodate the special 'guest of honor'.....pianist, composer-songwriter-arranger(The writer of "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother") BOBBY SCOTT!

Larry apparently contracted Bobby to write an 'all-original' line-up of tunes for this session! Bobby wrote himself in to the musical landscape that day on piano! I LOVED it!

What a thrill for a recently turned 21 year old trombonist, already a veteran with 3 years of experience under his belt!

Over the years I familiarized myself with Bobby and discovered that he covered ALL of the musical bases, including vocalizing!

So here's a breakdown of Bobby's life and career...

I truly hope that the readers of today's blog are impressed enough to take their own look into Bobby Scott, and hopefully pick up some important info, like I did so many years ago!

Please Enjoy Bobby Scott!!

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bobby\\_Scott\\_\(singer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bobby_Scott_(singer))

## **SONG WRITING #8**

### **Kris Kristofferson**

After a lengthy period of struggle, Kris Kristofferson achieved remarkable success as a country songwriter at the start of the 1970s. His songs "Me and Bobby McGee," "Help Me Make It Through the Night," "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down," and "For the Good Times," all chart-topping hits, helped redefine country songwriting, making it more personal and serious, much in the way that Bob Dylan's songs had transformed pop music songwriting in the mid-'60s. By 1987, it was estimated that Kristofferson's compositions had been recorded by more than 450 artists. His renown as a songwriter enabled him to launch a moderately successful career as a musical performer and that, in turn, brought him to the attention of Hollywood, leading to a lengthy career as a film actor.

The eldest of three children of an Air Force major general who retired from the military to head up air operations for the Saudi Arabian company Aramco, Kristofferson spent most of his childhood in Brownsville, TX, though his family moved around, finally settling in San Mateo, CA, by his junior high-school years. He graduated from San Mateo High School in 1954 and entered Pomona College in Claremont, CA. There he studied creative writing and he won first prize and three other placements in a collegiate short-story contest sponsored by Atlantic Monthly magazine. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1958, having secured a prestigious Rhodes scholarship to continue his studies at Oxford University in England. While at Oxford, he wrote and performed his own songs, which brought him to the attention of manager Larry Parnes (who handled Tommy Steele and other British pop stars). Signing with Parnes, he made recordings for Top Rank Records produced by Tony Hatch (apparently never released) and performed under the name Kris Carson, but he was not successful.

After earning a master's degree in English literature from Oxford in 1960, Kristofferson intended to continue his studies there. But during a Christmas break back home in California, he resumed his relationship with an old girlfriend, Fran Beir, and they married. Instead of returning to Oxford, he joined the Army. Like his father, he became a pilot, learning to fly helicopters. He was assigned to West Germany and went there with his wife and their daughter. During the early '60s, while rising to the rank of captain, he eventually returned to writing and performing, organizing a soldiers' band to play at service clubs. Hearing his songs, a friend suggested sending them to a relative of his, the Nashville songwriter Marijohn Wilkin. Kristofferson did so and he received encouragement from Wilkin, who had become a music publisher by founding Bighorn Music. In 1965, Kristofferson was reassigned to the West Point military academy, where he was to become an English instructor. He spent a two-week leave in June 1965 in Nashville, where he looked up Wilkin and decided to try to become a country songwriter instead. He resigned his commission and moved his family to Nashville, signing to Bighorn, which gave him a small weekly stipend that he augmented with a variety of jobs, including janitorial work, bartending, and flying helicopters to and from offshore oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. He and his wife had a son who was born with a defective esophagus, resulting in thousands of dollars in medical bills. Eventually, the couple divorced.

Kristofferson scored his first success as a songwriter with "Viet Nam Blues," which was recorded by Dave Dudley and peaked in the country Top 20 in April 1966. As a recording artist, Kristofferson was signed to Epic Records and released a lone single, "Golden Idol"/"Killing Time," in 1967, but it missed the charts. (He later re-recorded both songs for his Surreal Thing album.) Roy Drusky recorded Kristofferson's "Jody and the Kid" and took it into the country Top 40 in the summer of 1968 and Billy Walker and the Tennessee Walkers' version of his "From the Bottle to the Bottom" peaked in the Top 20 of the country charts in April 1969. But by that spring, those three chart placings and his failed single were all Kristofferson had to show for almost four years of effort in Nashville. He had moved to Fred Foster's Columbine Music and begun to collaborate occasionally with Foster, and he got a break when Roger Miller decided to record one of their songs, "Me and Bobby McGee," a ballad about hoboing that recalled earlier Miller hits like "King of the Road," but with more of a hippie slant. Miller ended up recording not only "Me and Bobby McGee," but also two other Kristofferson compositions, "Best of All Possible Worlds" and "Darby's Castle," for his

August 1969 album, Roger Miller. "Me and Bobby McGee" was released as a single in advance of the album and it peaked in the country Top 20. Meanwhile, Kristofferson had begun to gain recognition as a performer, thanks to Johnny Cash, who introduced him at the Newport Folk Festival that summer and featured him on his network television show.

In September 1969, Kristofferson earned another important cover when Ray Stevens released a version of his reflection on a hangover, "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down," as a single. It entered both the pop and country charts. The following month, Faron Young released "Your Time's Comin'," co-written by Kristofferson and Shel Silverstein. It gave the songwriter his biggest hit so far when it peaked in the country Top Five in December 1969. Jerry Lee Lewis' recording of Kristofferson and Silverstein's "Once More with Feeling" did even better, just missing the top of the country charts in March 1970.

In addition to Columbine Music, Fred Foster also ran Monument Records, an independent label, and he signed Kristofferson to it as a recording artist. Kristofferson went into the studio and cut his own versions of some of the songs others had already done -- "Me and Bobby McGee," "Best of All Possible Worlds," "Darby's Castle," "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down" -- as well as some new songs, notably "Help Me Make It Through the Night" and "For the Good Times," both romantic ballads with a decidedly erotic tone. His debut album, titled Kristofferson, was released in April 1970 and he promoted it with his first major concert tour, debuting at the Troubadour in Los Angeles on June 23, appearing at the giant Isle of Wight Festival on July 26, and playing the Bitter End in New York in August. But even at a time when standards for singers had fallen noticeably, the album was criticized for Kristofferson's rough vocals; it sold poorly and quickly went out of print.

The demand for his songs, however, only increased. The same month that Kristofferson was released, Ray Price reached the country charts with "For the Good Times," though it had been intended as the B-side of the single. It hit number one in September and crossed over to the pop charts, where it reached the Top 20; as a result, "For the Good Times" was named Song of the Year for 1970 by the Academy of Country Music. In August, Waylon Jennings reached the country charts with Kristofferson and Silverstein's "The Taker," which peaked in the Top Five in October and crossed over to the pop charts. By then, Johnny Cash had entered the country charts with his version of "Sunday Morning Coming Down" (as he called it, restoring the dropped "g"s). It hit number one in October and crossed over to the pop charts, and that same month it won the Country Music Association's Song of the Year Award for 1970, putting Kristofferson in the unusual position of winning the same award from country's two rival organizations for the same year with different songs.

But the string of hits was far from over. In December, Sammi Smith entered the country charts with "Help Me Make It Through the Night," giving the song a surprising twist by having the woman ask the man to sleep with her instead of the other way around. The single crossed over to the pop charts, eventually reaching the Top Ten and going gold, and it gave Kristofferson his third country chart-topper in February 1971. Meanwhile, Bobby Bare's recording of Kristofferson's "Come Sundown" also had reached the country charts in December and it peaked in the Top Ten in February 1971. Up to this point, Kristofferson had been getting most of his recognition in country music, but that changed in January 1971 when Janis Joplin's posthumous album Pearl was released. Joplin had covered "Me and Bobby McGee" and it was released as a single, shooting up the pop charts to number one in March. That same month, Ray Price followed "For the Good Times" with another Kristofferson song, "I Won't Mention It Again," which crossed over to the pop charts and in May gave the songwriter his fourth country number one hit within eight months. Meanwhile, Joe Simon got into the pop charts with his version of "Help Me Make It Through the Night" in April, Bobby Bare charted country in May with Kristofferson's "Please Don't Tell Me How the Story Ends," which peaked in the Top Ten in July, and Peggy Little reached the country charts with his "I've Got to Have You."

Despite all this sudden success as a songwriter, Kristofferson had not yet achieved any great notice as a performer. Monument had been purchased by CBS Records and turned into a



subsidiary of the Columbia label, giving its artists the benefit of major-label distribution and promotion. Kristofferson released his second album, *The Silver Tongued Devil and I*, in July 1971. Again, it combined the songwriter's own versions of songs that had scored for others -- "Jody and the Kid," "The Taker" -- with important new work, notably the ballad "Loving Her Was Easier (Than Anything I'll Ever Do Again)," which Roger Miller quickly covered for a Top 40 country hit. The album finally broke Kristofferson as a recording artist, rising into the Top Five of the country charts and the Top 20 of the pop charts and going gold, with the songwriter's own version of "Loving Her Was Easier (Than Anything I'll Ever Do Again)" becoming a Top 40 pop and Top Five easy listening hit. In August, Monument re-released Kristofferson's first album, renaming it *Me and Bobby McGee*. This time, the LP reached the country Top Ten and the pop Top 100 and went gold. Meanwhile, Ray Price released his third consecutive single of a Kristofferson song, "I'd Rather Be Sorry," and it just missed topping the country charts in October while crossing over to the pop charts. Patti Page also made the country charts with her version of the song. Jerry Lee Lewis put "Me and Bobby McGee" into the charts for a third time in November; it was given some country airplay as the B-side of his number one country single "Would You Take Another Chance on Me," while pop radio flipped the disc over and made it a Top 40 pop hit. The same month, O.C. Smith got into the pop charts with his version of "Help Me Make It Through the Night."

Kristofferson himself, meanwhile, had traveled to Peru at the behest of director Dennis Hopper, and he made his film debut in a bit part in *The Last Movie*, released in September, to which he also contributed songs. The same month, part of his performance from the Isle of Wight Festival was in the charts on the triple-record set *First Great Rock Festivals of the Seventies: Isle of Wight/Atlanta Pop Festival*. (In 1997, the film and CD *Message to Love: The Isle of Wight* also featured his appearance.) He had a more substantial film role in *Cisco Pike*, released early in 1972, also getting to sing several more of his songs. In February, he released his third album, *Border Lord*. It was his first collection to consist of all-new material and proved to be a slight commercial disappointment, reaching only the Top 100 of the pop charts and the Top Ten of the country charts, its single "Josie" becoming a pop and country chart entry but not a big hit. In March, however, three of his songs, "For the Good Times," "Help Me Make It Through the Night," and "Me and Bobby McGee," were among the five nominees for the 1971 Grammy Award for Best Country Song, while "Help Me Make It Through the Night" and "Me and Bobby McGee" were also up for the Song of the Year Grammy. Competing against himself, he managed to win his first Grammy for Best Country Song for "Help Me Make It Through the Night." The same month, Gladys Knight & the Pips brought the song back into the pop Top 40 and also made the R&B Top 20 with their rendition. In April, Kristofferson was in the charts with another live recording, appearing on the various-artists collection *Big Sur Festival/One Hand Clapping*. In June, Sammi Smith made the country charts with her version of "I've Got to Have You," which peaked in the Top 20 in September and also crossed over to the pop charts.

Having taken only seven months between his second and third albums, Kristofferson waited only nine more months before delivering his fourth album, *Jesus Was a Capricorn*, in November 1972. Initially, the LP did not do as well as *Border Lord*, itself a step down from *The Silver Tongued Devil and I*, as the title song barely made the pop singles charts and a second single, "Jesse Younger," missed the charts entirely. But in March 1973, Monument released a third single, the slow, pious "Why Me," which topped the country charts in July and went gold, also crossing over to the pop Top 20. With that, sales of *Jesus Was a Capricorn* rebounded and the album hit number one in the country charts a year after it was released. (Meanwhile, Brenda Lee had covered "Nobody Wins" from the album for a Top Five country hit and a pop chart entry.)

Kristofferson, meanwhile, had returned to acting, getting more substantial film roles and working with important directors. In 1973, he appeared in Paul Mazursky's *Blume in Love*, also contributing a couple of songs, and in Sam Peckinpah's *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, co-starring as Billy the Kid in the latter. His notices tended to be better than those for the films themselves and indicated that he had a future in films.

On August 19, 1973, Kristofferson married singer Rita Coolidge (who soon bore him a second daughter) and the following month the couple released a duo album, *Full Moon*. It was a big hit, topping the country charts, reaching the Top 40 of the pop charts, and going gold. Its first single, Kristofferson's composition "A Song I'd Like to Sing," was a Top 20 easy listening hit, a Top 40 pop hit, and a country chart entry. "Loving Arms," a second single, made the easy listening Top 40 and also reached the pop and country charts. The couple's version of "From the Bottle to the Bottom" won the 1973 Grammy Award for Best Country Vocal Performance by a Duo or Group. (Due to the peculiarities of the Grammy eligibility rules, "Loving Arms" was nominated in the same category the following year.) Kristofferson also earned 1973 Grammy nominations for Best Country Song and Best Country Vocal Performance, Male, for "Why Me."

In April 1974, "One Day at a Time," written by Kristofferson and Marijohn Wilkin, reached the country charts in a recording by Marilyn Sellars that went on to peak in the Top 20. Later in the year, it reached the pop Top 40. Kristofferson's fifth album, *Spooky Lady's Sideshow*, was released in May. Compared to earlier releases, it was a commercial disappointment, reaching the Top Ten of the country charts but only the Top 100 of the pop charts, with no charting single. From this point on, Kristofferson's albums would be only modest sellers at best. But he remained a potent country songwriter. In July, Ronnie Milsap entered the country charts with a revival of "Please Don't Tell Me How the Story Ends"; by September it had topped the country charts and crossed over to the pop charts. Kristofferson continued to pursue his film career, taking a small part in Sam Peckinpah's *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, released in the summer and a co-starring role in Martin Scorsese's *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, which appeared in December. Also that month, Kristofferson and Coolidge released their second duo album, *Breakaway*. Though less successful than their first one, it reached the Top 100 of the pop charts and the Top Five of the country charts. The single "Rain" made the country and easy listening charts. "Lover Please" also got into the easy listening charts and it went on to win the duo a second Grammy for Best Country Vocal Performance by a Duo or Group.

Kristofferson took a break from moviemaking to concentrate on his musical career and his sixth album, *Who's to Bless and Who's to Blame*, released in November 1975. But the extra effort did not translate into increased sales. The LP reached the country Top 40, but it missed the Top 100 of the pop charts. Johnny Duncan's recording of the Kristofferson song "Stranger" from the album became a country hit, however, reaching the Top Five. Kristofferson returned to the movies and in the spring of 1976 was seen in *Vigilante Force* and *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea*, also contributing a song to the latter. His seventh album, *Surreal Thing*, followed his sixth by only eight months. It was another commercial disappointment, reaching the country Top Ten while barely registering in the pop charts. But in December 1976, he enjoyed both a hit movie and a hit record with the release of *A Star Is Born*, in which he co-starred with Barbra Streisand. Critics howled, but the film was a box office smash, second only to *Rocky* among motion pictures released in 1976 as the top-grossing hit, while the soundtrack album, which featured several contributions from Kristofferson (among them the pop chart entry "Watch Closely Now"), topped the pop charts and sold several million copies. Of course, Streisand had more to do with all that than Kristofferson did, but he was awarded a Golden Globe for Best Actor.

Monument Records seized upon the occasion of his increased profile to release a compilation, *Songs of Kristofferson*, in April 1977. It did considerably better than his recent releases of new material, making the country Top Ten and the pop Top 100 and earning a gold record. Making only one film in 1977, *Semi-Tough*, released in the fall, he worked on his eighth album for more than a year and a half, not releasing *Easter Island* until March 1978. It marked a slight commercial uptick, charting higher in the pop and country charts than his previous effort, but did not restore his commercial fortunes as a recording artist. Returning to the movies, Kristofferson starred in *Convoy*, a film extrapolation of the 1976 song hit by C.W. McCall, which opened in the summer. In January 1979, he and Rita Coolidge released their third duo album, *Natural Act*, which was another modest seller.

Kristofferson's personal life and professional career were both at low points in the late '70s and early '80s. His ninth album, *Shake Hands With the Devil*, was released in September 1979 and did not sell well enough to reach the charts, though the single "Prove It to You One More Time Again" was a country singles chart entry. His next film, *Freedom Road*, was not given a theatrical release in the U.S., instead being broadcast on television in October. And on December 2, he and Rita Coolidge divorced. At the same time, however, his song catalog continued to prosper. Lena Martell's cover of "One Day at a Time" hit number one in the U.K. in October, then in the U.S. Cristy Lane revived the song, taking it to number one in the country charts in June 1980. Willie Nelson Sings Kris Kristofferson was released in October 1979 and made the country Top Five, as did Nelson's single release of "Help Me Make It Through the Night." Kristofferson toured with Nelson during the winter of 1979-1980. During this period, he also was working on what should have been his greatest cinematic triumph yet, though it turned into a debacle. This was *Heaven's Gate*, director Michael Cimino's follow-up to his Academy Award-winning film *The Deer Hunter*. The lengthy, expensive film debuted to negative reviews in November 1980 and was such a financial catastrophe that it bankrupted the movie studio that made it. Kristofferson had already been contracted to make another film, *Rollover*, released in 1981, but his association with *Heaven's Gate* may have scared off casting directors, since he didn't appear in another film until 1984. Meanwhile, he released his tenth album, *To the Bone*, in January 1981, and it became his second straight LP to miss the pop charts, though it made the country charts briefly, as did the single "Nobody Loves Anybody Anymore." But the old songs continued to sell; in July, Tompall and the Glaser Brothers just missed topping the country charts with their revival of "Lovin' Her Was Easier (Than Anything I'll Ever Do Again)."

Except for a non-charting single, "Here Comes That Rainbow Again"/"The Bandits of Beverly Hills," Kristofferson was not heard from for the rest of 1981 or most of 1982, resurfacing in November 1982 with the release of the double-album *The Winning Hand*, a group effort credited to "Kris [Kristofferson], Willie [Nelson], Dolly [Parton] & Brenda [Lee]." The album reached the country Top Five, though it failed to cross the 100 mark on the pop charts. On February 19, 1983, Kristofferson married for the third time, wedding attorney Lisa Meyers, with whom he eventually had five more children, for a total of eight. He returned to filmmaking in January 1984 with the television broadcast of *The Lost Honor of Kathryn Beck*, and made it back into movie theaters later that year with *Flashpoint*, a mystery, and *Songwriter*. In the latter, he co-starred with Willie Nelson in a story about the Nashville music industry. He wrote a number of songs for the film, resulting in his first Academy Award nomination for original song score. Columbia Records released *Music From Songwriter*, a duo album by Nelson and Kristofferson on which the two sang separately and shared a couple of duets. The album reached the pop charts and the Top 20 of the country charts, and one of the duets, Kristofferson's "How Do You Feel About Foolin' Around," made the country singles charts.

Kristofferson and Nelson expanded their partnership into a supergroup quartet with the addition of Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings to create the album *Highwayman*, released in April 1985. The title track, a song about reincarnation written by Jimmy Webb, with each group member taking a verse, topped the country charts in August and the LP was also a number one country hit, going gold. A second single, Guy Clark's "Desperados Waiting for a Train," made the country Top 20. The recordings were billed to the four participants by name, but the group came to be known informally as "the Highwaymen," though a settlement had to be made with the 1960s folk group of the same name for the name to be used legally.

In December 1985, Kristofferson starred in Alan Rudolph's film *Trouble in Mind*, also contributing the theme song, "El Gavilan" ("The Hawk," after the name of his character), sung by Marianne Faithfull. He put the song on *Repossessed*, his first solo album in six years, which was released on Mercury Records in February 1987. Reflecting his left-wing views particularly on American military involvement in Central America, *Repossessed* spent six months in the country charts, and "They Killed Him," a tribute to Christ, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr., placed in the country singles charts. Simultaneous with the release of the LP, Kristofferson appeared in *Amerika*, a controversial weeklong television mini-series that fantasized a U.S. under Communist domination. It was one of

many TV movie projects the actor had done in the mid-'80s, a time when his feature film work remained sparse.

Highwayman 2 appeared in February 1990, preceded by a single, "Silver Stallion," that made the country Top 40. The album reached the country Top Five and it earned a Grammy nomination for Best Country Vocal Collaboration. Kristofferson followed Repossessed with a second Mercury album, Third World Warrior, in March 1990. Another work of agitprop, it failed to reach the charts. In 1991, Columbia/Legacy released the compilation Singer/Songwriter, a double-CD set containing both Kristofferson's versions of his best-known songs and the best-known covers of them by people like Janis Joplin and Ray Price. The archival label followed in 1992 with the previously unreleased concert set Live at the Philharmonic, recorded in 1972. Kristofferson worked steadily in TV movies and independent features during the late '80s and early '90s; he wrote the score for the 1993 film Cheatin' Hearts, in which he also appeared. The Highwaymen's third album, The Road Goes on Forever, appeared in April 1995 and made the country charts. As a solo artist, Kristofferson had teamed with producer Don Was to record a new album, A Moment of Forever, for Was' Karambolage imprint in 1993, but an initial distribution deal fell through and the album was not released until August 1995, when it appeared on the Texan independent label Justice Records. Four years later, Kristofferson released The Austin Sessions, an album of remakes of his most popular songs. (In the mid-'90s, One Way Records reissued many of Kristofferson's Monument albums on CD.)

Kristofferson's appearance in director John Sayles' film Lone Star (1996) marked a turning point in his film career. Taking a supporting role as a corrupt sheriff, the 60-year-old actor displayed a flair for character parts and villains that vastly increased his offers from Hollywood in the late '90s and led to his appearances in such major-studio action features as Fire Down Below, Blade, and Payback. He also earned admiring critical notices as a James Jones-like novelist in A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries and in another Sayles film, Limbo. By the turn of the century, complaining that he hadn't had time to tour as a singer in years, Kristofferson was looking forward to additional film work.

## **SONG WRITING #7**

### **EDWARD KENNEDY "DUKE" ELLINGTON**

One of the first and most important writers of original jazz compositions!

Duke co-wrote works with Billy Strayhorn too!

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke\\_ellington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_ellington)

### **LENNON & MCCARTNEY**

The most important songwriters to come along as the new decade of the 1960's rolled around!

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lennon/McCartney>

## **SONG WRITING #6**

Hoagy Carmichael was one of the most prolific songwriters of the 20th Century.....

I am directing you to the late Mr. Carmichael's website and urge you to spend some time with his great songs, including the inimitables, like "Stardust", "Skylark" and "Old Buttermilk Sky" Enjoy!

<http://www.hoagy.com/catalogue.htm#top>

## SONG WRITING #5

I have listed several major songwriters as icons of the past 100 years...one of them, Johnny Mercer is associated with "The Great American Songbook" Here's a link to his site..and although Johnny's no longer with us, his songs live on! Here's a little about the man and his music:

<http://www.johnnymercerfoundation.org/the-great-american-songbook/>

### MELBA LISTON: IT'S ALL FROM MY SOUL

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For over seventy years, African American trombonist Melba Liston has been playing and writing music. Music that reaches across the boundaries of time, culture, and genre. Music whose essence is captured by the word soul. Liston has lived her life saturated by the soulful sounds and traditions of the African American community. It permeates everything she creates.

Playing, composing, and arranging for the giants of American music for nearly three-quarters of a century, Melba Liston has covered a multitude of musical eras and styles. Her artistry has been sought by such musicians as Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Dinah Washington, Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, and Tony Bennett. Although no longer playing trombone due to a stroke in the mid-eighties, Melba remains a force to be reckoned with as a writer. "She could write most of the guys under the table without trying, and I'm talking about some of the best out there," composer Hale Smith once said.

As an arranger, Melba Liston belongs to a select subculture of musicians. Elaborating on the raw material of composition, arrangers bring out inherent potential. They can augment, amplify, magnify, punctuate, or envelop a piece of music. In short, they bring it to life. In the jazz tradition, Liston's arrangements create energy and spur creativity, leaving space for improvisation. A sizeable ensemble relies on the arranger to create a unified concept of sound and style for a piece, as well as to assign its instrumentation (orchestrate it). Liston follows in the tradition of the country's leading arrangers: people like Fletcher Henderson, who was largely responsible for the Benny Goodman sound, and Gil Evans, creator of the evocative sounds of Miles Davis's larger ensembles, as well as contemporary writers, such as Quincy Jones, Benny Golson, and Frank Foster. Though not frequently, women figure prominently in this tradition, too. Pianist Lil Hardin Armstrong stands among the earliest arrangers of the century when she contributed her writing skills to trumpeter King Oliver's band. (This was prior to the arrival of her future husband, Louis Armstrong.) And among the greatest of all was legendary pianist Mary Lou Williams: mastermind behind Andy Kirk's "Twelve Clouds of Joy," she was one of the chief architects of the swing style.

Arrangers frequently team up with composers and the creative process becomes holistic--Fletcher Henderson with Benny Goodman, Mary Lou Williams with Andy Kirk, Gil Evans with Miles Davis, and, most seamless of all, Billy Strayhorn with Duke Ellington (Strayhorn is often referred to as Duke's alter ego). Arrangers are frequently the unseen and understated link between composer and listener, yet their work is paramount in getting the music across. It is in this context that Melba Liston fits. She has been one-half of the voice of a musical partnership with pianist/composer Randy Weston for over forty years.

The union between Liston and Weston is one of the most significant musical marriages of the century, consistently producing beautiful, soulful, and swinging music. When Melba and Randy are together, love radiates. It is palpable and audible on their recordings, not to mention in a room! And in a hall like the Majestic Theater at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1998, it was positively

contagious. There, for the first time since its public debut over thirty years earlier, their collaborative suite, *Uhuru, Afrika!*, was performed in a colossal concert. Love, respect, and honor were showered upon Melba at this historic occasion. And when Weston and Liston first met in the late fifties, Melba was already a seasoned, highly accomplished, and respected artist.

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1926, Liston spent her early years in the geographic heart of blues and swing activity in the country. In the twenties and thirties, Kansas City was a notoriously "wide open" city, run by gangsters and entertained by musicians. It claimed over one hundred nightclubs and the highest concentration of leading musicians in the country. It was headquarters to bandleaders Benny Moten, Count Basie, and Jay McSchann; to saxophonists Ben Webster, Lester Young, and Charlie Parker; to vocalists Joe Turner and Jimmy Rushing; and to pianist Mary Lou Williams. Music was everywhere, and in the African American community, it was in the very air.

Melba was a reflective and solitary child who liked math, and to "puzzle things out." A wise little girl who expected reasonable explanations, she invented a number system in order to remember the intervals of songs she liked to sing (a personal solfege). The family owned a piano and a Majestic radio. Her grandfather loved Cab Calloway and Count Basie, her aunt loved Jimmy Lunceford, and her mother (who raised her alone) loved Melba! She bought her daughter a trombone when she was seven, after Melba became infatuated with it in a shop window.

Liston was mostly self-taught. Encouraged by her guitar-playing grandfather, she spent long hours with him on the back porch, where she learned to play spirituals like "Deep River" and "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," as well as folk songs. Unable to reach sixth and seventh positions on the trombone because her arms were still too short, Melba learned to reach them by turning her head sideways. Recognized as a child prodigy, she received attention and was invited to play on the radio and at other special events.

When she moved to Los Angeles at age ten in 1937, Melba was promoted to the eighth grade; she became the product of good public-school music education. One of her classmates was saxophonist Dexter Gordon, and she was friends with multi-instrumentalist Eric Dolphy, who attended another city school. Shy by nature, Melba was encouraged by her peers. She described it to author Linda Dahl: "They loved me. Whenever they heard of something they'd say, 'Come on Bitch,' and I'd say, 'Well okay,' because I don't know what they're gonna do if I don't go. So I would go and do it. . . . Everybody had more confidence. I didn't know what was going on. They knew I could do a thing that I didn't know I could do. Well I had the love. The guys carried me all the way."

The catalyst that would really propel her into musical flight was a woman by the name of Alma Hightower. A remarkable woman by all accounts, Hightower was a drummer, pianist, and saxophonist who could teach all the instruments. Employed by the WPA during the depression, she supervised children's activities at a local playground for the Parks and Recreation Department. A multi-faceted artist with her own singular version of the "Harlem Renaissance," Hightower singled out the children with musical ability and trained them in the rudiments of music and entertainment; she would continue to do this voluntarily after the WPA programs ended.

A friend of the great vaudeville entertainer Burt Williams, Alma Hightower taught her pupils everything about the theatre, from singing, dancing, clapping, and tapping, to minstrel comedy and straight-man routines, to reciting the poetry of Paul Lawrence Dunbar. She led Melba, along with her great-niece, saxophonist Vie Redd, and other proteges in a band called Miss Hightower and Her Melodic Dots. The little group gained exposure playing at parks, fairs, churches, and local events like supermarket openings. Melba related to author Sally Placksin, "The boys would steal all the money, 'cause the girls weren't allowed to pass the hats, you know."

At sixteen, Liston joined the musicians' union; her first job, in 1942, was as trombonist in the pit orchestra of the Los Angeles Lincoln Theater under the leadership of Bardu Ali. There she experienced the full range of the musical theatre of the early 1940s. Many of the greatest entertainers of music, dance, and theatre came through Lincoln Theater, including the comedians

Pigmeat Markham and Dusty Fletcher. At some point, Melba saw fabled trumpeter Valaida Snow at the Lincoln Theater. Snow, who was a virtuoso musician as well as all-round entertainer, was known abroad as "Queen of the Trumpet" and "Little Louis." Swept up in fascist Europe during WWII, she survived due to her musical abilities. This most notable, yet under-noted, female brass player made a lasting impression on Melba.

The full range of Alma Hightower's vaudeville training came into use at the Lincoln Theater, where Liston occasionally even performed fill-in skits on stage between Pigmeat Markham's acts. More frequently she was called upon to write music for the shows. Given the nature of the assignments, she speculated that Bardu Ali must have thought she had just graduated from college rather than high school.

When the Lincoln Theater closed about a year and a half later, Liston was asked to join trumpeter Gerald Wilson's modern big band of the 1940s. Her relationship with Wilson would catapult the seventeen-year-old Liston into the heart of the jazz world. As Wilson's copyist, Melba had a chance to get inside the scores of one of the more sophisticated bandleaders. With Wilson teaching her those "things that weren't in the book," coupled with Melba's own concept of sound coming from her placement as a brass player in the center of the band, she began to cultivate a unique composing and arranging style.

Liston described it this way to author Sally Placksin: "Being a section player, I got real bored in the old days just playing straight down from the trumpet, that kind of vertical thing, so whenever I wrote something, I always tried to make the lines individually beautiful so the player could put more feeling into it. Even when I was in the school band, I used to not play the trombone part. I played the baritone part or the cello part or something, because they had the moving lines that I loved. So I try to make all the parts sort of free and special. Melodic."

Liston's approach to writing made her music challenging. She explained, "I had trouble with the orchestras playing it, too. They're so accustomed to all the reeds playing this way, and all the trumpets playing this way, so when they get my arrangement, the saxophone might be playing with the trombones, this one might be playing with the trumpets, and the mixture slows things up. Every now and then I get some kind of funny remarks from the dudes--'Why can't you write like everybody else'--but then after they get used to it, they find that they like it very much."

Titles to some of Melba's compositions over the years also suggest her different approach to music: "Elvin Elpus," meaning Elvin (Jones, drummer) help us; "Len Sirrah" (her husband's name spelled backward); and "All Deliberate Speed," about civil rights (and played quite slowly).

An eight-year tenure with Gerald Wilson introduced Liston to much more than the finer points of writing. Wilson's orchestra toured the country, and everywhere he introduced her to the giants of the profession, including Fletcher Henderson, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, and Dizzy Gillespie. These introductions would open the door for Melba into an exclusively male domain. Everywhere she went, she was greeted with delight by surprised audiences who were truly seeing and hearing history in the making.

Still, Liston encountered resistance from musicians who didn't know her yet. She spoke about it to author Linda Dahl: "I had to prove myself, just like Jackie Robinson." In an endeavor where jobs were scarce and competition was fierce, adversity was not uncommon. "The male-female thing is really something else. . . . It's not what they intend to do--the brothers would not hurt for nothing. . . . They would give me money, they would take care of me or anything. But they couldn't let me have the job."

One who did give her a job was Dexter Gordon, who by this time already had a national reputation as a deeply swinging and lyrical soloist. He called Liston to play on his 1947 Dial record session: at twenty-one, this was her first recording date. A photo from the session shows Melba beaming like a schoolgirl on the arm of her former classmate Dexter. The following year, at the end of Liston's

tenure with Gerald Wilson's band, she had a brief stint playing in the Count Basie Band, which presumably made her the first female brass player to work with that organization. By then, Liston's own reputation was established, and leading bandleaders like Les Hite, Lucky Millinder, Fletcher Henderson, and Benny Carter would utilize her whenever an opportunity arose.

In 1948, Melba Liston reached another historical landmark when she was summoned by Dizzy Gillespie to join his ground-breaking bebop big band. Bebop was the revolution in melody, harmony, and rhythm advanced by the cutting edge of musical intelligentsia of the 1940s. Among its primary exponents were alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, pianist Thelonious Monk, and percussionist Max Roach, as well as Dizzy himself. Parker and Gillespie had codified the new music in their ground-breaking quintet. Gillespie's 1948 big band represented the exciting next step in the music's development.

Gillespie's big band was an all-star ensemble featuring some of the most creative musicians in the country, including saxophonists John Coltrane, Jimmy Heath, and Paul Gonsalves, as well as pianist John Lewis and vocalist Billy Eckstine. Melba's being chosen for this history-making ensemble speaks volumes. In his autobiography, Gillespie said, "I think technically that this band was the best I ever had."

Liston recalled, in Gillespie's book, the circumstances of her joining the band: "Dizzy had the big band at what I think was Bop City, and he heard that I was in town, and there was a trombone player that he wanted to get rid of, so he immediately fired him. And I went by to visit. He says, 'Where's ya goddamned horn? Don't you see this empty chair there? You're supposed to be working tonight.'" Unfortunately, the band's progressiveness did not ensure its longevity, and it lasted only another six months.

An opportunity to work with Billie Holiday, as assistant musical director to Gerald Wilson on a southern tour in 1949-50, ended with disillusionment. Faced with increasingly hostile southern (in)hospitality, Holiday abandoned the tour. Liston recalled being stranded on the bus for days in Charleston, South Carolina, before Wilson was able to bring the band back north.

In the fifties, Liston had opportunities to act in two films. In spite of her star stature in the music world, Liston was nevertheless relegated to the role of Lana Turner's maid in the 1956 film *The Prodigal*. (Similarly, following Hollywood tradition, jazz's First Lady, Billie Holiday, and trumpet king, Louis Armstrong, both also played servants in the film *New Orleans*.)

Liston's status as a jazz dignitary was established when, in 1956, she was again summoned by Dizzy Gillespie. This time she was called for the first of two historic State Department tours. Gillespie, chosen to be America's first jazz ambassador, toured the Middle East in an effort to promote good will abroad by showcasing the all-American art form. "Brief?. . .I've got three hundred years of briefing," recalled Gillespie in his autobiography upon hearing that the State Department wanted to brief him before the tour.

As it happened, Gillespie was in Europe for the initial band rehearsals and appointed Quincy Jones as musical director. According to Liston, Gillespie instructed Jones: "'Get the band together, but include Melba, and Melba is to write some of the music.' So those were the orders, no questioning that. But when I got to New York I heard some comments about, 'Why the hell did he send all the way to California for a bitch trombone player?'" She continued, "They didn't know me at all, but as Dizzy instructed, I arranged some things and brought them with me, 'Stella by Starlight' and 'Anitra's Dance.' . . . When we got into the initial rehearsals, and they started playing my arrangements, well, that erased all the little bullshit, you see. They say, 'Mama's all right.' Then I was 'Mama,' I wasn't bitch no more."

After she weathered the initiation rights, the tour was a huge success for Liston. They traveled to Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, Greece, and Turkey. Greeted with enthusiasm and applause, Melba recalled the response of women in the audiences: "They wondered about the male-female



relationship in the U.S. I had lots of women come up to me in the Middle East tours to find out how life was over here for women and how in the world I could be running around there traveling and single when they were so subjected over there. And it sorta seemed to inspire a bunch of the sisters over there to demand a little more appreciation for their innate abilities."

In 1958, Liston recorded the only album of her career under her own name, *Melba Liston and Her Bones*. It featured an all-star lineup of trombones, including Jimmy Cleveland, Al Grey, Slide Hampton, Benny Green, Bennie Powell, and Frank Rehak. On the album, Melba's sound is distinctive, with a kind of "cry" in its timbre.

Continuing to travel to various parts of the globe, Liston toured South America with Gillespie's band on his second State Department tour in 1958. The following year she joined Quincy Jones on a European tour of Harold Arlen's folk opera *Free and Easy*. While working with Dizzy's State Department band Liston first met pianist Randy Weston, who waited to meet her backstage after a concert at Birdland. They struck up a friendship that would lead to a musical partnership of historic proportions. And so began a creative effort that joined Weston's compositions with Liston's arrangements, producing a powerful body of works, many of which are classics in the idiom now. Weston's *Uhuru, Afrika! (Africa Freedom Suite)*, recorded in 1960, was among the earliest compositions celebrating the African motherland. Melba did the arrangements and also composed one of the suite's four movements, "African Lady." The landmark recording was graced with Langston Hughes's lyrics and liner notes. A flow of collaborative works followed, including the albums *Little Niles*, *Highlife*, and *Tanjah*.

In the sixties, amidst various arranging projects, (Charles Mingus's 1963 Town Hall concert, the 1964 Duke Ellington Jazz Society concert), Liston began to focus attention on passing the jazz traditions on to younger generations. She helped establish the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra in 1964, and in Harlem she taught at Jazz Mobile and worked with the Harlem Backstreet Tour Orchestra. In 1967, she established the Youth in Action Orchestra at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. By the early seventies she returned full circle to her Los Angeles roots, teaching music to inner-city youth in Watts.

Later in the sixties and early seventies, Liston worked as staff arranger for Motown Records. She arranged and conducted for Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross, and the Supremes, as well as her old friend Billy Eckstine. Liston received opportunities to write for larger ensembles, too, and in 1968, was commissioned by trumpeter Clark Terry to arrange works for the Buffalo Philharmonic. In 1981, she arranged four Weston classics for one hundred thirty strings for a performance by Randy Weston and the Boston Pops Symphony Orchestra.

Liston's educational activities reached new frontiers when, in 1974, she was invited by the government of Jamaica to establish the African American Music Division of the Jamaica School of Music (part of the University of the West Indies). For the next five years Liston taught music fundamentals to her Reggae-immersed students. Visiting guest artists, among them Dexter Gordon and Frank Foster, came to the school. When Liston left the island five years later, she had introduced a generation of Jamaican students to the music of their African American brethren.

Following her triumphant return to the United States that was marked by a performance at the Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival, Melba Liston and Company was formed. Playing a repertoire that focused on her original compositions, Melba made an acclaimed tour of Asia in 1980. Soon after she had this chance to concentrate on her own playing and writing again, she suffered a stroke (in 1985) and was forced to change course. Liston credits musical soulmate Randy Weston for pulling her back into the music world. She learned to write on the computer, which became the medium for her creative process. Signaling her return was the 1991 Blues to Africa concert, which featured Liston's arrangements for the Randy Weston African Rhythms Orchestra. The concert inaugurated the first season of Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City. Recent collaborations include the eclectic *Volcano Blues* (1993), showcasing the blues in all its variety, the stunningly beautiful *Earth Birth* (1997), featuring the gorgeous strings of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra,

and, most recently, the mysterious Khepera (1998), dedicated to Senagalese scientist Cheikh Anta Diop.

With roots in the African tradition of storytelling and experience as an African American, Melba came to music perfectly equipped. In a recent interview, Weston described Liston as possessing "total awareness." He continued, "We were blessed, because although there was segregation, we had the best of everything, the blues and black church, the jazz, calypso. . . . We had all of that experience. Melba's able to describe all of that in her arrangements. So if I say, 'Okay Melba, we're going to Jamaica today,' she's going to write about Jamaica, or I say, 'We're going to the Congo, to Mississippi. . . .'" Melba, in turn, relishes writing for Randy because of the minimal guidelines he gives her, perhaps just a description of the musical "scene" and the size of the ensemble. Weston reflected on Melba, "She's totally in tune with whoever she's writing for and has that tremendous ability to be able to capture the spirit of the individual artist." Melba put it simply when interviewed by trumpeter Clora Bryant: "When I wrote for Dinah, it was ughh,. . . when I wrote for Gloria, it was Oooh! . . ."

With only the most rudimentary formal training, Melba told Clora Bryant, "I have to dig down and do it from there, it's all from my soul. I write soul music, more or less." Pressed by Bryant to describe her sentiment behind a particularly beautiful solo she recorded on her arrangement of "My Reverie" for Dizzy Gillespie, she responded with irritation, "I was thinking about nothing but the notes, I got to be thinking about the notes." Liston resists analysis (especially sentimental) of her music. Weston attributes this to an African orientation where music is a part of every facet of life, not a thing unto itself that can be talked about as such. In fact, there are cultures in Africa that don't even have a word for music. He adds, "We do many things like our ancestors, although many times we don't realize it."

Liston is meticulous about her music being played correctly. A longtime friend from the Basie Band, trombonist Benny Powell, describes her as "a very strong person with a non-aggressive personality." He said, "She is so beautiful and quiet that people would be prone to misinterpret her." He described a rehearsal where the musicians, who had not played the music correctly, challenged Melba about her writing. She responded, "You can't play it because you're a bunch of sad muthafuckas!" Noting that Melba could be "honest to the point of fault," Powell feels Liston preferred to work behind the scenes.

"You don't have enough print, not enough ink and paper!" exclaimed vocalist Leon Thomas when asked to speak about his self-proclaimed "musical godmother." He recalled his first opportunity of working with Melba, how she saved the day by providing him with last-minute arrangements for his first session with drummer Art Blakey. She strode in, like a vision, with her team of Walter Davis (piano) and Sahib Shihab (baritone saxophone) and the music. Never having rehearsed, Thomas began to sing his part to Melba, to which she replied, "You do the singing, I'll do the arrangements!" They became best friends; he described their musical rapport as "more osmosis and love than an apprenticeship." Describing Melba, Thomas said. "No one could have more fun than her, but a lot of people didn't know she had fun."

According to Thomas, Liston used to say, "If you take care of your music the music will take care of you." This has been half true for Melba. With her vast experience, she has never had a major record contract. And outside of musicians, few people are aware of Liston's extraordinary contribution to music. In fact, even among musicians, Melba Liston is a well-kept secret. Due in part to her reluctance to stand in the limelight, it is more plausibly explained by the fact that she came from, as she once put it, "the bottom of the heap" --female, African American, and musician. Though she has received numerous awards, such as the Lifetime Achievement Award from Drew University, she has missed the financial reimbursement someone of her stature deserves.

A twentieth-century pioneer, Melba Liston has been breaking the barriers of race, gender, culture, age, and disability. Her stature as trombonist, composer, and arranger places her among the musical mavericks of our time. As a brass player, Liston crossed a barrier of particular taboo for

women musicians. When she played in the all-male big bands of the 1930s, she paid the dues and opened the door for generations of women musicians to follow. She has been an inspiration to those for whom role models have been few.

Melba Liston is a repository of twentieth-century musical sound, writing music for the greatest American musicians, from soloists to choirs, from big bands to symphonies, employing a full variety of forms and styles. She writes jazz, blues, gospel, soul, pop, and everything in between. With arrangements for Count Basie to Marvin Gaye, Liston's body of work is a tapestry with threads like Thelonious Monk, Freddie Hubbard, Sara Vaughan, Johnny Griffen, Elvin Jones, John Lucien, and Lionel Hampton running through it. She is like a prism that enables us to see latent colors of the global musical fabric called African American music.

Editor's Note: Melba Liston died on 23 April 1999.

**MUSIC INDUSTRY TRUTHISMS.....**

You're a Real Musician When:

1. You realize that the cheers from the audience after a particularly difficult passage are for a sports play on the big screen TV over the bar, and that in fact, no one is listening to you.
2. When the gig you drove 200 miles for to make \$100, and had to pay for a hotel room, is later referred to as your "summer tour".
3. When your most sincere, heartfelt comments are made by people that are drunk and who won't remember you in the morning.
4. When you are repeatedly told that the lead singer who can't read, never practices and has been singing for only six months is "The strongest part of the band", primarily because she has big tits.
5. When you are pleased that the pay for the gig, when looked at hourly from the time you leave your house to when you return meets minimum wage.
6. When someone comes up to you to tell you how much they love your playing, because they didn't think anyone played those things anymore.
7. You get to the gig to find out that nothing is comped, and you're charged \$10 to park.
8. When someone seeks you out to complement your playing as the "best sax player they have ever heard", and you're the trumpet player.
9. When you realize that a small piece of equipment- such as a wireless mike you need- will take months of weekly gigs to pay for.
10. When you have to add \$30 or \$40 out of your pocket to find a sub, cause no one will cover you for what you are paid.
11. You aren't offended when all of the young wedding guests leave after the second set to dance to the DJ at a club down the street.
12. When you are told that you must play until the very end of when you were contracted for, when your only audience is the bartender, and you're being paid 40 or 50 bucks for the night.
13. When the bandleader or club owner wants to pay you in food or drinks, and you have \$100,000 in school loans to pay off for that music degree.
14. When the guy collecting money at the door for the band's performance makes twice over the course of the evening what you do as one of the band members.
15. When as a member of a blues band you no longer even pretend to smile when asked to play "Free Bird".
16. When you know that other musicians who routinely claim they don't work for less than \$100 a night only work a few times a year.
17. When people who are drunk tell you that what you are doing is absolutely great and the best thing thing they have ever seen or heard, but refuse to pay more than \$5 at the door.

18. When someone calling the cops for noise is a good thing. You get to go home early and you still get paid.
19. When you realize that asking women out that you meet on gigs doesn't work, for now they know you're a musician.
20. When you get invited to play the same gig the following year, which means that you don't have tear down after this year's gig.
21. When you have, for several years, been paid the same amount for a gig, but are afraid to say anything about it for fear that you might lose the gig.
22. When you spend more on the bar tab than you get paid for the gig.
23. When you finally have to resort to playing Proud Mary in order to get the audience dancing.

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#### **Song Writing 4**

There's been a healthy response and the main thrust is not to be stingy with my recommendations, and bolster my original list of favorite singwriters!

So, here goes.....I love all of these folks work, and if you give this a chance, you will too...AND, you will learn more about good songwriting then you ever expected to!

1. Antoine (Fats) Domino Jr.
2. Antonio Carlos (Tom) Jobim
3. Barry Gibb
4. Barry Manilow
5. Brian Wilson
6. Carly Simon
7. Carol King
8. Carole Bayer Sager
9. David Crosby
10. Diane Warren

So, here's another 10 excellent songwriters for you to research and get familiar with...you'll be happy that you did! Let me know what you think!

Carly Simon  
Carole King  
Carole Bayer Sager

I wanted to add 2 more writers to the previous list! Burt Bacharach/Hal David and Henry Mancini! These two writers have more hit songs than most writers!

Mancini, who wrote the music exclusively, teamed with many different collaborating lyricists, but most importantly he wrote "Moon River", "The Days Of Wine & Roses" and numerous other songs with Johnny Mercer as the collaborating lyricist!

I have been asked to recommend songwriters for you to listen to and develop an appreciation for good music plus give you an idea what these writers are doing within some of their famous songs that sets them apart from everyone else. So, I'm posting a 'short' list of writers for you to 'go to school' on. The writers are not necessarily in any order of priority or preference!

1. Cole Porter
2. Hoagy Carmichael

3. Johnny Mercer
4. Frank Loesser
5. George/Ira Gershwin
6. Richard Rogers/Oscar Hammerstein
7. Harold Arlen
8. Bobby Scott
9. John Lennon/Paul McCartney
10. Elton John
11. Billy Joel

Naturally, there are many many more great writers!  
If you research these 11, I'm sure you'll be busy for quite some time, and they will lead you to other great writers!

Please send some feedback!

Rich

— — —

We had a BIG response to yesterday's blog.

Many of you asked if you can receive one on one help with songwriting?

The answer is YES!

Please e-mail me at [rich.pulin@gmail.com](mailto:rich.pulin@gmail.com)

and/or phone at 818-570-6050

I will be happy to schedule a convenient time for us to be able to get together either on the phone, skype, or if you live in my area, in person!

<http://www.reverbnation/richpulinmusicalfamily>

There are NO rules in songwriting!

Our perspective on writing a good meaningful song is based on the story of the song!

The lyrics will determine just about everything that transpires in the composing of that song!

The lyrics drive the form or structure of the song.....

Traditionally, songs have followed a AABA form.....

Meaning that there is an 8 bar verse that sets the 'tone' and describes the situation (circumstances) that will follow....the first 8 bar verse is usually followed by another 8 bar verse, which generally re-enforces the story-line established in the 1st verse...

Then the next section is referred to as the 'bridge', and is generally the 'hook' or the 'bottom line' (sells the song) of the song (story) and again, traditionally is an 8 bar phrase...this section is called

the 'B' section...finally, another 8 bar verse generally completes the story (song)  
The last verse (3rd) usually reiterates what the writer has said up to that point!

Now, this format or recipe is a standard general format!

There are variances!

For example, listen to the following songs from our songlist:

"Back In The Game"

"Back In The Game" has a very different structure!  
It is ABABAB or erse, bridge, verse, bridge, verse, bridge.....

Listen to "Here I Am Again" and tell me what you notice right in the 1st verse?

I'll tell you that whatever it is caused a great LA studio pianist to get into a 'trainwreck' on a live gig, which if anyone notices the example, I will send you that video!

For today, the last song that I will ask you to examine, is "Waiting For You"

It has another interesting structure-related example that you might find interesting!

GOOD LUCK!

Sorry, we've been in mourning for a beloved family member that passed away!

I haven't felt like contributing in this period!

I have received numerous e-mails inquiring about other arrangers, songwriters and producers that I would recommend you tuning in to....

I have many recommendations to offer!

If you write to me at rich.pulin@gmail.com and give me a little background about your musical tastes and what you hope to achieve, I will be more than happy to oblige!

Its my pleasure to help!

Another composer/arranger of note (not to be too pun-ny)  
Is Mike Post....

One can really learn about thematic writing from listening to any of the MANY famous shows that Mike composed for, for example: "The Rockford Files", "Hill Street Blues", "LA Law", "Murder One", "NYPD Blue", and "Hunter"...  
Spend some time over at youtube researching some of Mike's music, and then sit down and write a theme of your own....

If you need help, contact me and I will work with you!  
Happy to help!

Earl Hagen was called a 'famous composer-arranger nobody knew!'

For those of you who want to get into scoring films,  
a "MUST" read is Earl's "Scoring For Films"  
<http://www.earlehagen.net/books.htm>  
Add that to the Mancini book recommended yesterday,  
and you'll have an un-beatable combination!

My first writing experiences as a writer came through arranging  
pieces for my band.....  
An excellent book to get started in arranging and get the hang  
of choices of instruments and the ranges of the different  
instruments in their families is Henry Mancini's "Sounds & Scores"

Anyone wishing to learn songwriting from an arranging perspective  
are welcome to contact us!  
As a professional brass player for over 50 years, I would be more  
than happy to critique your sound & articulation, and make suggestions  
where they may help!

We have a strong commitment to helping our up and coming  
colleagues on Reverbnation!  
RPMF has been blessed to be in a position to take some of  
our time and share it with you to answer any and all of your  
music questions...  
Just fire away at anything that you need help with, and we  
will be more than happy to supply the answers!

Very Kindly Yours,

RPMF