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School of Music and Music Technology

MA by Research Dissertation

The evolution of the jazz vocal
song: what comes after the
Great American Song Book?

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28 June 2013

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PREFACE

This dissertation is the result of a two-year part-time Master of Arts (M.A) research project conducted within the Department of Music and Music Technology at The University of Huddersfield. The material arises from interviews, from questionnaires completed by a wide range of people involved in jazz, from a search of the literature and from analysis of recorded and live jazz performances.

I have been greatly encouraged by all the various participants, especially the jazz critics and academics I was able to consult, and by the musicians and enthusiasts who completed my questionnaire. A number of jazz players and academics have given me a great deal of help at various stages of the project. My supervisors at Huddersfield University, Dr Geoffrey Cox and Dr Pierre Alexandre Tremblay have provided excellent support. A number of people have helped me record and produce the portfolio: Chris Flaherty, local recording engineer/drummer/guitarist, Alex Hart, a second-year undergraduate in music technology, Colin Crichton, a fellow postgraduate student and an experienced musician and sound engineer. Bass player Keith Singleton and drummer Derek Smallridge played on some tracks recorded at Glass Studios, Birkenhead. The portfolio consists of original songs, performed by me which, together with this dissertation, form the MA submission.

I am very grateful to a number of people for giving me interviews and to the musicians and jazz enthusiasts who completed my questionnaire. I would like to thank all the above people, plus Professor Tony Whyton of Salford University and all the members of his jazz research group for helping me understand some of the key themes in jazz studies.

As with many studies, the scope tended to expand during the course of the project and whilst many suggestions were researched further, it was not possible to follow up every suggestion. With all the help available, any shortcomings are, of course, my responsibility.

Robin Thomas

June 2013

ABSTRACT

This MA research project was originally motivated by the desire to explain the powerful dominance of standard songs from the Great American Songbook in the repertoire of jazz singers. This term refers to a large body of songs written in the 1930s, 40s and 50s, by Cole Porter, Gershwin, Rogers and Hammerstein, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin and others, often as part of musicals, which have become the standard repertoire for singers in the jazz idiom. After all, many of these songs were written over 70 years ago and both audiences and singers seem happy with that fact. However, given the advance of instrumental jazz into new vehicles, it seems sensible to analyse and explain this domination of the singer's repertoire, whilst at the same time, come up with some pointers to the future.

Initial findings suggest the following general conclusions. The Great American Songbook is still dominant in the jazz vocal repertoire, but there are a number of trends to show that some singers are keen to develop new ideas. The research has found that there is a richness and variety in the contemporary jazz vocal. Whilst the domination of the Great American Songbook remains strong, there has been a major trend towards using popular songs from the 1960s to the present day, plus a body of original new songs, and lyrics being written for existing jazz tunes. Rock and hip hop elements are present and a move away from a swing emphasis towards a more groove-based approach has been seen. However, in addition to new material, what has been noticed is an innovative approach to the actual performance of the song.

While some very competent exponents of the standard jazz song are filling halls and selling CDs, the flame of innovation is also thriving, in keeping with the great ability of jazz to absorb influences and reinvent itself. The portfolio of songs, submitted as part of the project, reflects this writer's creative and musical take on the research and attempts to show the direction in which the jazz vocal song may be moving. The CD essentially contains rough demos of songs composed by the writer. They can be seen as frameworks for others to develop and interpret further.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.1 Background

The position of the vocal element has been important in jazz since the emergence of this form of music in the south of the USA in the early years of the 20th century.

There are differing views about the value of the vocal element in jazz. However, the jazz vocal song has survived, with some fluctuations in popularity, right through to the 21st century, to a position where it seems to be as strong as it has ever been.

This is based on the general observation of jazz singers working in clubs and concert halls, on the wide availability of recordings and the frequent coverage of jazz singers in journals and the broadcast media.

It is also worth noting that many of the very prominent jazz singers have emerged in recent years, for example Sophie Millman, Hilary Kole, Jane Monheit, Clare Teal, Sarah Ellen Hughes, Jamie Cullum and many others. Each year, more and more new singers seem to be launching their careers. It is not the purpose of this study to examine that history, as others have dealt with the topic in detail, (Crowther and Pinfold, 1997) and the general development through work songs, blues, ragtime and what has become known as the Great American song book, will be known to even the occasional listener.

The key point of this study is to ask why, after so many years, the vast majority of songs in the current jazz vocal repertoire were written over sixty years ago. In other words, does the music need new vehicles for vocal expression or will the Great American Songbook continue to dominate the jazz vocal for the foreseeable future? And if that is the case, does that present a problem, artistically or commercially?

It can be argued that assessing the artistic content of music is a purely subjective process and that listeners will make their own judgements in any case. But jazz, like most forms of music, operates in an economic environment where there has to be some financial support if the music is to survive. There have to be paying audiences, possibly in conjunction with state or philanthropic support. Therefore, it makes sense to analyse the content of the jazz repertoire, not only in terms of musicians' preferences, but also in terms of audience interest and support.

Some will argue that the vocal is nearer the show business end of jazz and effectively occupies the easy listening market. Many jazz musicians do not work with singers but it is argued that the jazz vocal is a key element in the survival and development of jazz and is therefore worthy of close examination. This point can be supported by the evidence over the years that audiences, especially the wider audience of occasional jazz fans, have enjoyed seeing jazz vocalists and have been prepared to spend money on recordings. This goes back to the days of Bessie Smith, through to the importance of singers in the big band era (Frank Sinatra, Rosemary Clooney and others), to the popularity of singers like Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Peggy Lee, Diana Reeves, and Betty Carter right through to the success of popular jazz-oriented singers like Norah Jones and Jamie Cullum.

Without the audiences brought in by these singers, there would have been fewer venues featuring jazz and the livelihood of practising jazz musicians would have been adversely affected by the reduction in the work of accompanying these artists. So, we are back to the key questions: why does the great American song book so dominate contemporary vocal jazz, can that domination be measured and where are the new songs coming from? We also need to remember that not all vocal contributions are conventional songs as such, as the voice is used as an additional instrument in some genres of jazz.

The key research questions can be expressed as follows:

1. How can the powerful dominance of the Great American Song Book in jazz vocals be explained?
2. What future trends can be discerned in the potential development of the jazz vocal song?

The research part of this project is written up in this dissertation and the accompanying demo CD represents a short portfolio of rough demos of original songs which will attempt to illustrate some current and future trends in the development of jazz vocal material. An attempt has been made in these songs to reflect some of the different approaches to the jazz song, which are being demonstrated by certain innovative artists.

1.2 Methodology

The study has effectively borrowed from typical social science research methods, coupled with some of the tools of the music analyst. A study of the literature helped to set the scene and help to identify the issues and contacts with university researchers assisted in this process. An additional resource, that of the internet, helped in a variety of ways, by identifying artists, critics and academics, while online resources and artists' websites provided instant access to songs for discussion and analysis.

A key aim has been to ascertain the views of musicians, audiences and others involved in the jazz world. What *they* think about the future of the jazz vocal song is crucial to this project and the methods used to identify those views drew upon traditional interview and questionnaire methods. These of necessity involved only a representative selection of participants. Some face to face interviews also took place.

As for the music, many current songs and performances have been analysed. Standards from the Great American Songbook have already been subjected to detailed analysis by various writers including Crowther and Pinfold (1997) Furia (1992), Friedwald (1992), Wilder (1972) and others, and similar tools of analysis were used to examine new songs and vehicles. Some assessment has been made as to how well do the musical and rhythmic structures work for improvising musicians. The role of lyrics in communicating to contemporary audiences has been looked at. Finally, the research has considered what influences from other genres are at play.

1.3 Issues

The following are some initial key issues and this paper attempts to provide answers to these questions: What is the actual dominance of the Great American song book in today's jazz vocal scene and what proportion of other songs appear in typical repertoires? What are the views of interested parties on vocalese, scat, new ways of developing material and the impact of other influences? The paper puts forward some musical analysis of some of the newer song vehicles and also analyses the portfolio of songs produced to reflect some current trends.

Finally, it should be added that the range of the jazz vocal is so great internationally, that it has been impossible to do justice to every significant artist or trend. Jazz is so international that to cover, for example jazz vocal innovation in say, the Balkans or South America, has not been possible within this study. The study has therefore looked primarily at the USA and UK scenes, with some mention of Scandinavia. Furthermore, the selection of artists and trends seen to be significant is essentially a subjective one and another researcher might pick different examples. The critical evaluation of performances is also subjective, but an attempt has been made to reflect aspects of the current body of critical opinion.

CHAPTER TWO: The position of the Jazz Vocal Song: Historical Perspective, Literature Review and current situation

Review of Literature

At this stage of the paper it is considered useful to attempt to define jazz, so that the reader is aware of the perspective of the writer. Many books on jazz start off with an attempt at a definition and therefore some clarification is necessary. One approach is to keep things fairly open ended. Rhythm and improvisation seem to be key attributes. It will be argued from the perspective of this study that a reasonable proportion of the music should be improvised if the jazz label is judged to be appropriate.

Secondly, it is generally thought that some form of rhythmic content is necessary for the music to be thought of as jazz. Having said that, a totally composed piece could reflect the 'feel' of a jazz piece, and at the same time a piece of reflective improvisation with no discernible beat could easily be accepted as jazz. On this basis, are attempts at definition helpful? After all, some instrumental folk music has strong elements of improvisation and rhythm. Other factors which might be present in music identified as jazz could include extended harmony, especially in what followed New Orleans jazz, with different inversions of chords, the use of more complex chords and borrowings from classical music.

In addition, a key element is a degree of syncopation, linked with the concept of 'swing' where the emphasis of the beat is subtly changed to throw emphasis on the second and fourth beats of the bar, but done with some shading and less clear cut than the strong off-beat associated with rock music. The observer might hear 'blue notes' in the music, typically flattened thirds and sevenths, sometimes with bent and slurred notes, depending on the particular instrument.

For these reasons, the music to be covered by a jazz singer should include a rhythmic element and there should be improvisation as part of the performance, even if the singer gives a fairly straightforward rendition of the song. Beyond that, it is considered not to be helpful to pigeonhole the music too closely, knowing that jazz in becoming global, has absorbed world-wide influences, and is constantly producing hybrids as the music evolves.

At this point it is worth stepping back to examine the role of the song in jazz, as a basis for performance and improvisation. Townsend (2000, p8) spells this out:

One of the most important factors...is the material that musicians improvise on. Provided that improvisation is based on something...it takes an imprint from the material used. So in jazz, the nature of the vehicle for improvisation, of the song forms that make up its repertoire, partly determines the nature of the improvisation. What improvisers do is done within the framework provided by the song form.

Although Townsend does not specify the vocal song in these words, it nevertheless emphasises the importance of the song form for improvisers.

This leads us into the broad question of selecting vocal songs which can provide a basis for interesting or challenging improvisation. It partly answers the point about songs from pop, rock, folk, classical and world genres being borrowed by jazz musicians. Townsend states above that 'the nature of the song partly determines the nature of the improvisation' (2000, p8). We know that instrumentalists pick their material from a variety of sources. Miles Davies was able to use modal devices as demonstrated in 'So What' (1959) to provide the basis for improvisation which has been widely accepted as a landmark, while exponents of 'free' jazz, like Evan Parker, can start with a simple phrase or a rhythmic pattern. A whole new repertoire has been developed by exponents of bebop, 'cool' jazz and jazz funk.

However, from a vocal standpoint, until quite recently, singers have not strayed far from the Great American Song Book, on the basis that singers, instrumentalists and audiences felt happy with this body of material. The point and the debate surrounding choice of song vehicles are central to this paper and are explored throughout this paper.

One of the issues for debate in this study has to do with the idea of improvisation against a certain vehicle. The great show tunes of the 1930s and 1940s had chord sequences which provided an interesting challenge for improvisers. In addition, because of the creativity and wit of the lyricists, they were songs with which vocalists felt comfortable. The question of suitability is important because while musicians, including bop and post-bop players, were happy with 'standards' and indeed modified them in various ways, they were never enthusiastic about most popular songs written after the advent of post 1950s popular music. It is possible to surmise why these songs were not generally deployed by jazz players, possibly because the words were seen as lacking the wit of standards or because chord structures were not seen as a suitable improvisory challenge. Having said that, this study reveals a strong and emerging interest in popular songs and these ideas are developed as the study progresses.

To find out what is required as a suitable vehicle for improvisation, it is instructive to examine some points made by Paul Berliner (1994):

Composed pieces or tunes, consisting of a melody and an accompanying harmonic progression, have provided the structure for improvisations throughout most of the history of jazz. (p63)

He goes on to analyse what musicians do to embellish the melody:

A player can append grace notes to the melody's important pitches, articulating both pitches clearly, or for variety, draw them out together to produce a smear or dwa-oo (p69).

Following the point about simple chord structures, it is relevant to point out that John Coltrane was able to take two chords from 'My Favourite Things' (Rogers and Hammerstein) and develop a lengthy solo which remains a classic jazz performance.

It should be pointed out that the skill of the pianist, McCoy Tyner, using a modal approach, provided Coltrane with a fine basis for improvisation. It is appropriate, in mentioning Coltrane, to stress the innovative work of Miles Davis, along with Bill Evans, in developing a modal approach, which, it can be argued has led to some of the most profound instrumental solos of all time, namely on the album *Kind of Blue* (1959). Indeed, lyrics have been added to 'So What', perhaps the most iconic modal tune ever written. Complex chord structures would seem therefore not to be a prerequisite for a challenging solo, however, as 'So What' shows, the voicings of the chord, that is the actual notes which make up the chord, have to provide some kind of challenge.

As has been pointed, until fairly recently, jazz musicians have not used contemporary popular music as a source musical vehicles. However, we are now starting to see jazz musicians and songwriters borrowing from these developments to create novel structures and sounds for music which contains essentially jazz elements, but also other genres. A good example of this is the work of Robert Glasper, examples of whose work will be examined in Chapter 4, in addition to the work of artists like Kate McGarry, Solveig Slettahjel, Theo Bleckman and Kurt Elling. The above examples serve to illustrate the volatile nature of jazz as a continuously evolving genre, meaning that old-established positions on the music need to be reviewed constantly.

As for the jazz singer, whoever defined the jazz singer as 'a singer who sings jazz' will do as a starting point for this study. This section cannot be a history of jazz singing. This topic has been dealt with in numerous general books on jazz and in more detail in Crowther and Pinfold (1997) and in Shipton (2000). However, it is useful to sketch in some of the details as a backcloth to this paper. Joachim

Berendt's classic *The Jazz Book* (1976), sets out a helpful framework when he deals with male and female jazz singers in Chapter 5.

Immediately one is faced with the great difficulty of separating the song from the singer. Compared with the relative strictness of classical music, jazz singers bring so much to each song in terms of phrasing, attack, vocal tone and improvisation, that any review of the jazz song almost has to consider the singer in the same breath. Berendt takes the reader through the development of jazz singing, from blues, shouts, work songs through Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole to more modern soul and pop, including Bob Dylan, Leadbelly and the folk/blues tradition. He notes a similar pattern with female singers, though the great blues singer Ma Rainey, via Bessie Smith, to Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, and Ella Fitzgerald to a crop of modern singers. Even in 1976, he had identified some future trends which will be highly relevant to this study, including a jazz approach from the Norwegian Karen Krog, the UK singer, Norma Winstone and Sheila Jordan.

For a specific analysis of the Great American Songbook whose continued dominance of the jazz singer's repertoire is a key theme in this study, one can look at Alec Wilder's: *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators 1900-1950* (1972). A distinguished songwriter himself, Wilder takes us through the early development of the jazz song, covering similar ground to Berendt, then looks at Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Vincent Youmans, Arthur Schwartz, and others. He then looks at specific outstanding individual songs from the era, for example "We'll be Together Again" (1945) by Carl Fischer (Frankie Laine's pianist), and 'Laura' (1945), by David Raksin and Johnny Mercer. This song can be considered to be one of considerable interest because it was written in 1945. The date is significant because from that time onwards, the supply of songs which have been called: 'The Great American Songbook' began to dry up. In effect, a different type of popular music began to emerge in the post-war years, with songs which did not initially seem to lend themselves to jazz treatment and improvisation.

Wilder analyses these songs, and many of the others in the book, with a musician's awareness. He quotes the manuscript for the first 8 bars of 'We'll be together Again' stating: 'This song is a great illustration of pop ballad sophistication and its difference in character from a theatre ballad'. The key is in the chord sequence which provides an interesting framework for the improviser.

Shipton's (1997) description of jazz singing up to 1950 provides further useful background information for this study and his mention of the importance of the two key singers from this generation gives some indication of themes which a futurologist might wish to bear in mind. Like many writers, he notes the significance of Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit', effectively a protest song about lynching with very strong race overtones. The second singer Shipton emphasises is Ella Fitzgerald, where her technical facility is stressed:

With her astonishingly quick ear, a mind that allowed her to commit songs to memory rapidly, and a gift for mimicry, she was to become the outstanding scat singer in jazz. (1997, p?)

Scat is a theme which will be discussed later, along with technical expertise, as the future of the jazz song will involve consideration of these factors and their role in the music.

This is a rich history, which is ongoing, as Nicholson and Gioia report and it is beyond the scope of this paper to become a catalogue of great singers. However, as stated above, it is hard to comment on jazz songs without reference to jazz singers, so this interweaving thread will be a constant theme. Shipton (1997) contrasts the conservatism of Diana Krall and others with the innovation of Kurt Elling and some other singers:

What is missing from this approach (i.e. the sole performance of standards) is what I have felt to be an essential element in jazz: the frisson of daring, the challenge of making a new song work, of inhabiting a lyric for the first time and personalising it. (p882)

Shipton makes similar comments on the UK scene, contrasting the tendency of Stacy Kent to concentrate on standards with Clare Martin's use of original material along with standards. Towards the end of this final chapter, Shipton (p 887) revisits the question of relevance of lyrics to the contemporary scene, quoting the example of Abbey Lincoln, who 'has constantly addressed her lyrics to those issues of the day that concern her'.

The relative merits of the great standards and the introduction of new material is touched upon in a *Guardian* concert review where critic John Lewis comments on a Macy Gray and David Murray Big Band concert as follows:

If there's a problem, it's that Murray's rather aimless original material rarely does his band justice. Even Gray's own lightweight songs serve as a timely reminder that even the greatest jazz musicians can learn a lot about song writing from pop. (2012)

Stuart Nicholson (2005, introduction x) then talks about the rise of an American mainstream, which dominates current jazz practice:

Meanwhile a group of retro-styled singers have gained increasing popularity by imitating the sounds and styles of the great pop vocalists of the past.....in the minds of many members of the public..... jazz today has come to represent the past rather than the present.

Nicholson gets closer to the current study topic in Chapter 4, entitled 'Deja Vu time all over again: Jazz Singers and Nu-Crooners' in which he takes us through the great success of artists like Norah Jones, Diana Krall, Jamie Cullum and others. He describes the slick marketing strategies of the record companies who had spotted the potential of these young and photogenic artists to appeal to wide audiences through clever presentation, accessible arrangements and mainly songs from the great American songbook.

Even though CD sales have been in decline in recent years through the practice of downloading, these and other artists have sold and are selling many CDs and are attracting big audiences to live concerts. Television has helped this process, with endorsement on chat shows by Michael Parkinson and others. Although the bulk of the repertoire associated with these singers has been traditional, Nicholson sees a desire on the part of some singers to develop new material. He notes that the popular Diana Krall stuck to the American popular song for her first seven albums, but included six originals on her 2004 CD *The Girl in the Other Room* (collaborations with singer/songwriter Elvis Costello) and other numbers written by Mose Allison, Tom Waits and Bonnie Rait. He notes “New young signings were now less influenced by an Ella Fitzgerald, a Billie Holiday, or a Sarah Vaughan and more influenced by singer-songwriters like a Nina Simone, a Carole King, a Joni Mitchell....” (p90). Nicholson then examines the work of Patricia Barber, Cassandra Wilson, Silje Nergaard and Solvieg Slettahjell and we can see in the work of these artists a potential route away from the dominance of the Great American Songbook.

Ted Gioia (2008) in a two-part article published on the internet summarises the current position of jazz singers, emphasising the role of marketing and physical attraction in creating what appears to be a very successful genre. As jazz is a business as well as an art form, commercial success cannot be ignored because without it, there can be no venues and no audiences. It is worth summarising Gioia's views. In lighter mood he comments about someone like Michael Buble who might have walked off a Hollywood film set, or the debt owed by Diana Krall and Jane Monheit to their make-up and hairdressing teams, but then points out the low profile enjoyed by established, serious but older singers like Diane Schur and Sheila Jordan. He mentions Cassandra Wilson, continuing to produce work of ‘outstanding merit’ but not having the degree of promotion accorded to younger stars. In the same breath, he lists Andy Bey, Abbey Lincoln, Mark Murphy and Tony Bennett as in need of greater prominence, although time has reversed that view in relation to Bennett. He provides another list of brilliant artists who do not receive promotional support including Julia Dollison and Melissa Styliana. Gioia then asks what is happening today. “...the music is now a conduit for our fantasy life. Jazz has become the symbol

of glamorous sensuality.” He does concede that the new crop of singers do have talent, and notes a desirable willingness to sing new material. It is clear that there are indeed many new songs, but they have in general, not joined the mainstream and have not been taken up by major instrumental soloists.

Gioia then brings Patricia Barber into the frame, as representing the experimental and progressive wing in jazz singing, who does not play the glamour game on her CD covers. She ‘rejects the conventional and the expected. Her recordings tend to announce their alternative perspectives in the opening seconds’. She is a prolific songwriter with an interesting take on lyrics and she is described by Gioia as being an outstanding jazz pianist. She does sing occasional standards but as Gioia states ‘these moments of reverence for the jazz tradition are always short-livedshe is too focused on the here-and-now...’

Gioia’s mention of Patricia Barber’s work is timely at this point of the literature review, because she can be seen as providing a kind of innovative contrast to the current crop of commercially successful, but conservatively driven jazz singers. Patricia Barber’s work will be examined in more detail in Chapter 4 when an attempt will be made to evaluate and assess the most innovative singers operating today. Gioia then makes a statement which will need to be closely examined in this project: ‘Why aren’t more of our leading singers pushing the envelope like Barber?’ He points out that jazz vocals never developed a vibrant experimental tradition: ‘Jazz singing never had its Ornette Coleman or Cecil Taylor.....never even had its Coltrane or Dolphy. No avant garde singer has ever exerted strong influence on the music.’ Despite the work of people like Tierney Sutton and Kedra Shank, he stresses that traditionalists still outnumber progressives in the world of jazz vocals by five to one.

But even in this environment, Gioia sees hope for innovation and notes the originality of people like Ian Shaw, Madeleine Peyroux and Karryn Allyson. In part 2 of this article, Ted Gioia examines the position of male jazz singers and makes the same general distinction between the glossily packaged generation of ‘retro-cool’ singers,

and the more innovative ones. In the first category he mentions Peter Cincotti, Michael Buble, Matt Dusk and Tony DeSare. He has more time for Harry Connick Jnr, who has demonstrated staying power and he gives particular mention to the innovative Bobby McFerrin, who has carved out a whole new genre with quirky sound effects, scat singing and imitation of instrumental sounds. In concluding his survey of male vocalists, Gioia has praise for Jamie Cullum on account of his development of new material; on the basis that each of Cullum's CDs has featured three or four originals. Finally, he hints at a major influence, that of Brazilian singers and composers.

An interesting way of looking at jazz which casts some light on the position of the jazz song is put forward by Tony Whyton (2010) in 'Jazz Icons'. He argues that jazz is dominated by iconic figures who have taken on an almost god-like status. He looks at the influence of Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday and examines the role of myths and anecdotes. However, it is significant that the iconic figures he mentions are, with the exception of Louis Armstrong, are instrumentalists, and even with Armstrong, it can be argued that his iconic stature arises from his role as an innovator and brilliant trumpet exponent, rather than from his singing. This reflects earlier comments by Gioia about jazz singing having no Ornette Coleman or John Coltrane.

Overall, this literature survey shows that the jazz song has been covered by critics and academics to a reasonably thorough degree during what could be termed the golden age of jazz singers, for example Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra and Billie Holiday, but the coverage is not strong for singers who have emerged in the last ten years or so, except by Alan Shipton and Ted Gioia. There has been plenty of discussion on what defines a jazz singer and on the kind of material suitable for jazz. Shipton and Gioia have both described the recent commercial success of singers at the popular end of jazz and the low profile of more experimental and arguably, serious singers have been noted.

CHAPTER THREE: Survey Findings

Detailed results of the Questionnaire sent out December 2012- April 2013 and of the interviews which took place appear as Appendix 4. There were 17 replies from over 100 dispatched, on the face of it a low response. However, many of the replies went into interesting and informative detail and the results have been used more as a qualitative response. Any attempt to draw statistical conclusions would not have any validity. In addition, two face to face interviews were held with writers, an email discussion took place with another writer and one telephone interview took place with a UK-based professional jazz singer. There have been some interesting points made in the responses and the whole exercise can be viewed as a qualitative exercise, with respondents suggesting different angles on the subject matter, and in some cases suggesting artists worthy of further examination. The response had an emphasis on professional and semi-professional musicians, with only a small response from singers.

Respondents were asked to comment on the importance of the jazz song in the current jazz repertoire and they were almost universally in favour. How far this result would be replicated in a larger survey is impossible to assess. However, looking at venues, concerts and CD sales, it is clear that the jazz vocal song does enjoy widespread support and interest.

Respondents were then asked how they saw the future of the Great American Song Book in the jazz repertoire. From this small sample, there seems to be general consensus that newer material is needed in addition to the well-established standards. However, there is recognition that standards will continue to be important, but ideally should be performed in a way which allows a fresh approach.

Respondents were then asked to look at the potential influence of other genres on the jazz vocal song in the years to come. All the respondents have commented on

the ability of jazz to borrow from other genres to good effect, which also serves to lessen reliance on the jazz standard. This reinforces a key general point made in the research, in that singers are borrowing from other genres.

Respondents were then asked to mention any artists/composers/songwriters, from anywhere in the world, who seemed to be interesting in terms of the way ahead for the jazz vocal song. Their responses confirm one of the difficulties in a research project of this kind. Clearly, the research has already identified some major trends and new artists who are creating these trends, but when you put the question to a wider group of people, especially professionals who are generally in touch with global developments, a much larger number of artists emerged. Some of these were addressed in this project, but time did not permit this in full.

Respondents were then asked for views on the various attempts which have been made to vary or update the jazz vocal song. These could include scat singing (wordless vocal improvisation), vocalese (writing lyrics to jazz solos), writing lyrics for existing jazz tunes, writing music for existing words and composition of new jazz vocal songs. The responses indicated a general tolerance of the above techniques as long as the results were seen to be of musical value. Demonstration of technique for its own sake was not appreciated. This is very much a matter of personal taste in music, and it is interesting that many contemporary singers who use these and other techniques are receiving high levels of recognition. However, singers and performances are judged on the overall impact of their work.

Respondents were then asked to assess the potential of technology, including lap tops in a live jazz context. Those that commented on technology seemed reasonably positive about it and could see further use in the future. However, no specific examples were put forward. One can speculate that technology will influence song creation and performance, but as yet there seem to be no obvious examples in the public domain, although lap tops are used in instrumental performances in jazz.

A final question asking for additional comments produced a variety of responses. The use of the term 'jazz vocal' was challenged, a point which might have altered the design of the questionnaire. The term 'jazz vocal song' was used to differentiate from the word 'jazz song' which can easily be applied to jazz composition or tune where there are no lyrics. The other point, generally expressed in this paper is that the style of the singer and the musicians determines whether the term jazz song or jazz singer is appropriate. Therefore when Robbie Williams performs something from the Great American Song Book, it does not make him a jazz singer, and when the song is being performed by him, it is not a jazz song. However, when Kurt Elling or Patricia Barber performs 'Norwegian Wood', it becomes a jazz song.

With all definitions, there are problems of interpretation and a forensic approach to definition has been avoided in this research, indeed, boundaries have been blurred. From the point of view of the questionnaire, most respondents, including some academics, have accepted this element of imprecision and have concentrated on their general thoughts on what the majority will accept as 'jazz singing'.

Interviews

In addition to the above survey and the literature review, a number of interviews were held and extracts from the write-up of those interviews are presented here.

Will Friedwald is the author of 'Jazz Singing: America's Great Voices, and numerous other volumes on jazz topics. Friedwald's view is that the vocal song is of key importance in jazz. He felt that some closer definition of terms would be helpful. The word jazz vocal song has been used in this paper to indicate the presence of a vocal part. Jazz songs, such as 'My Funny Valentine' or 'Autumn Leaves' are a key part of the jazz repertoire, whether they have vocals added or not and can be described as songs, compositions or tunes. The focus of this study is on the way the human voice is used in jazz, which immediately raises the question of how jazz is defined. One answer is to take the view expressed in 'Jazz Singing: America's Great Voices' (Friedwald 1990), which is that jazz, especially jazz vocals, cover a fairly

broad spectrum, from big band singers who had some jazz about their approach, to the avant garde of jazz singing, involving perhaps, free improvisation in a jazz context. Looking at the future role of the Great American Songbook, Friedwald believes it will remain very significant for many years to come, with perhaps 50% of the repertoire covering this type of song. He pointed out that different audiences had different expectations. More general audiences liked to hear the old songs, but hard-core enthusiasts and critics liked to hear something new or different.

On the question of external influences on the jazz song repertoire, Friedwald pointed out that jazz had always played a kind of 'give and take' role with other forms of music. Rather than go into those influences which he felt were generally widely understood, he was very prolific in responding to the general question of artists whose material seemed to be pointing the way to future change. As a busy reviewer living in New York, he was able to suggest a number of singers in this category. Renee Marie had written a number of songs, but they had not been used by other musicians. This is a point worthy of discussion because whilst the songs from the Great American Songbook are sung by many singers, this is less frequently the situation with new material being composed, especially from singer/songwriters, as indeed is the case with a great deal of contemporary acoustic folk-oriented material, so the material becomes almost 100% associated with the singer.

Krin Gabbard (Academic, Writer, Musician).

As a lead into the discussion about jazz vocals Gabbard mentioned the broad spectrum of singers from what might be regarded as 'cabaret' right through to out and out jazz singing. He mentioned Eric Constock and Barbara Fasano, regularly working in New York, whose approach, whilst containing perhaps a number of songs from the Great American song book, also included material by Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell and Steven Sondheim plus Latin tunes. Cabaret was more stagey than jazz, but nevertheless should be considered in a research project of this type. Gabbard mentioned Kate McGarry (also mentioned by Fred Hersch) whose approach was clearly from the jazz camp, although her selection of material is much wider than that

of standards. He also listed Tierny Sutton, a singer who stressed that she was 'with the band' as a member, rather than being someone separate from the band. This is a key point in looking at jazz vocals, because the more adventurous the music, the greater the degree of integration with the musicians is required. It is not just a question of a singer plus a backing group. Kate McGarry, for example frequently works just with a guitarist and another musician. Her highly rhythmic approach requires empathy and flexibility and genuine improvisation, where ideas can be bounced off each other within the band.

Overall, Gabbard had a high regard for the role of the vocal in jazz. Jazz singers in his view are jazz artists, they know the repertoire and the best of them know how to refresh a song. On scat singing, he regarded it as an established part of jazz with sound credentials. On vocalese, he mentioned Jon Hendrick's complex lyrics, plus the work of Annie Ross, Eddie Jefferson, and King Pleasure.

Ben Bierman, New York-based (writer/academic) had planned to take part in a face-to-face interview, but circumstances prevented that from taking place. Instead, he was able to respond through a series of emails. In terms of the importance of the jazz vocal in jazz, he stated that, in his view, the jazz vocal is crucial to the past and the present.'

A number of jazz singers 'are some of the best and most profound performers. Ella Fitzgerald was a good example. No one has ever swung harder than her - ever. Louis Armstrong's vocal style is crucial to jazz phrasing and to all popular music phrasing. Frank Sinatra does not refer to himself as a jazz singer, but his phrasing and ability to work with an arrangement is at the very highest level, and just this second, for the first time, I am thinking of his working with a band as a similar experience to, say, Miles working with Gil Evans orchestrations. Audiences still love vocalists. Vocal presentation of melody is more straightforward than an instrumentalist's, and this is much more accessible to audiences, not to mention, of course, the fact that the lyrics gives them something to hold on to. While musicians often lose sight of what appeals to audiences, it is still important to reception and how jazz does or does not become/continue to be a music that people want to come

out and hear. The success of Norah Jones (even though she is not singing jazz usually), Esperanza Spaulding, Diana Krall and Kurt Elling is evidence of this.

Bierman was then asked to comment on the future of The Great American Song Book in the jazz repertoire:

I think that it will always be important, but that the landscape of material is quickly changing. Current groups of younger musicians (say under 35 or 40) are concentrating on original material. Much of what appeals to them is using techniques that are relatively new in jazz, such as the use of odd metres (it's always been around, but is now becoming almost *de rigueur*), and frequently these groups are creating whole new environments within which they present their material. Their vocabulary and influences are now so wide that the American songbook does not fill their needs in the same way. Some of this has always been true, but most of us used standards as the basis for our musicianship, and I don't think that is necessarily the case anymore. Musicians continue to feel even more restricted by old notions of what jazz is. Only the most conservative of students, often from other countries than the US, are looking to standards as their basis.'

'I do think that musicians now have an even wider background that they are working from. Many jazz musicians have always drawn from a wide variety of sources, so that isn't anything new, but I think the tendency is increasing, and perhaps even exponentially.

Bierman was then asked to mention any artists/composers/songwriters, from anywhere in the world, who strike him as indicating interesting/promising ways ahead for the jazz vocal song:

Theo Bleckmann does more things than most anybody I can think in a very wide variety of settings. I think he is extremely creative and is a good example of what I speak of above. Nothing seems to hold him in. He is not, however, a traditional jazz vocalist at all. That just isn't his thing, and I don't think I would even care to hear him sing a standard in a traditional manner. But he uses his

tools in very interesting and compelling ways and seems to know few boundaries.

Ian Shaw

The following points were obtained via a telephone interview with Ian Shaw, one of the leading jazz singers in the UK. Shaw has a classical background and trained as a pianist, but early on, moved out of that sphere. Embracing theatre, comedy and jazz singing, he fairly swiftly made a name for himself as a leading exponent and also as a witty presenter of his music. He has worked with Claire Martin, Liaine Carroll and others and has displayed the kind of catholic taste which is emerging in this paper as a key direction in the development of the jazz vocal. So, in addition to playing and recording standards, he has used material from Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell, Lennon and McCartney, in addition to writing his own material (p 718).

From his comments and from his recorded output, it is clear that while Shaw respects the tradition of the jazz standard, he is happy to use any material which he feels happy about, a key requirement being that he needs to fully believe in the lyrics, so there are songs out there, like Monk's 'Round Midnight', which had lyrics later added, which he will not use. The words are very specific about a person surviving the pain of a broken heart during the day, but feeling especially depressed as midnight comes. Shaw clearly feels that it would be insincere for him to sing these lyrics, given that like most singers, he believes in the importance of telling a story, of communicating a certain feeling to his audience. In contrast, he has started working on a song from Lionel Bart's *Oliver*: 'You have got to pick a pocket or two' However, Shaw's version is aimed at the current scandals involving bankers; bonuses and the lack of morality in business. He is also looking at David Bowie's recently released single: 'Where are we now', which chronicles the first major exit of East Germans into West Berlin which signalled the end of the Berlin Wall. The lyrics are powerful and emotional and clearly Shaw is sympathetic to the lyrics, whilst at the same time demonstrating his interest in an iconic figure from a world outside jazz. When asked to mention artists who seemed to indicate interesting areas of

innovation, Shaw mentioned Gabrielle Kahane, Emilia Martensson, Emily King, Becca Stevens and Sacha Vasanda.

From initial observations, Martensson, Swedish-born, but UK-based would seem to be closest to the jazz tradition, while Kahane, who incorporates humour and classical skills, would seem to be outside the jazz tradition, but Shaw points out that Martensson is due to record one of Kahane's famous humour-tinged songs. King is very accomplished but seems to be more in the soul area. Shaw also mentions Becca Stevens and Sacha Vasanda.

Shaw has demonstrated his willingness to look at differing ways of exploiting the jazz song, but feels that there is no real room for development of vocalese as a vehicle. He recognises the achievements of Lambert, Hendricks and Ross and is a particular admirer of Annie Ross, with whom he obviously knows quite well. He regards 'Twisted' and 'Joy Spring' as excellent pieces of music, but in general, and for the future, he does not see how composing clever words to brilliant solos by players of genius like Charlie Parker, can really constitute an improvement. On the question of technology, this is not an area he has gone into and he stressed the central importance of the human voice.

Moving into a more general discussion, Shaw challenged the use of the term 'jazz vocal' and emphasised the key point demonstrated by his choice of material, than any song from any source can be a vehicle for a jazz singer. The songs from the Great American songbook were the popular songs of the day and not necessarily intended as jazz vehicles. He noted that whilst some songs from Gershwin's 'Porgy and Bess' have become jazz standards, the original intent was that opera singers would perform the songs. He mentioned Antony Strong who is currently writing songs in the tradition of the great American songbook, and some recent work by Claire Martin to simplify the format, which can have the effect of enhancing the emotion. (This approach has already been noted in the work of Kate McGarry, Solveig Slettahjel and others). Finally, Shaw noted that some tunes written by the late Esjeborg Svennson (of EST) have had lyrics written, by amongst others, Viktoria Tolstoy. These songs would be worthy of further investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR: The current position of the Jazz Song

As others have suggested (Gioia, Nicholson), the jazz vocal song is in good health, especially if the word jazz is interpreted flexibly. The profile of performers like Diana Krall, Nora Jones, Stacy Kent, Michael Buble et al, who sell CDs and fill concert halls, suggests a wide interest in the genre, albeit encouraged by the strong marketing support described by Gioia . However, it can be argued that the material offered by these artists is fairly safe and is not really expanding the boundaries of jazz. Their programmes are dominated by the Great American Song Book or by what can be described as light-weight contemporary songs which do not offer much of a challenge to jazz musicians. So, just taking some of the above names, performances by Diana Krall focus mainly on her highly polished Peggy Lee-influenced versions of standards and Latin numbers, with Krall herself taking short, fairly predictable solos and occasional short guitar solos by people like Russell Malone. Buble and Jones are even further away from hard edged jazz in that instrumental solos of any sort of complexity do not generally appear on their CDs or stage performances. Stacy Kent however, is much more jazz oriented and performs with a small group of top UK musicians.

It can be argued as a generalisation, that this group of singers is essentially delivering pleasant, almost easy listening songs to appeal to wider audiences than the conventional jazz market. This is not a criticism and it can be argued that the high profile enjoyed by these artists is potentially good for the future development of the jazz song. It is also worth stressing that the current scene is much more complex than the above high-profile group of performers, and to lead into this discussion, it is worth returning to the work of Crowther and Pinfold (1997), as in their final chapter, they ask the specific question: 'What directions might jazz singing take in the future?' Their conclusions are instructive, but time has moved on since their book was published, and it will be the role of the current study to update these ideas and project forward.

Crowther and Pinfold quote Magni Wentzel: 'Yes there is a future for jazz singing. But we need great melodies and we don't seem to be getting them from composers today' (p188). Crowther and Pinfold add:

Indeed we are not. Even among the younger singers, the failure of latter-day composers to produce songs with the inherent qualities which made their predecessors so durable and suitable for jazz improvisation is a serious and justified cause for concern.

So it is interesting that at the conclusion of a study of jazz singers, the key point about material and vehicles for improvisation is being made

If we examine the contemporary jazz vocal scene, it is possible to look at four distinct, but possibly overlapping strands. One can be called *jazz oriented popular music*, where popular jazz stylists fill concert halls, sell albums and generally concentrate on the standard repertoire. A further group can be termed *near jazz*, where elements of the jazz vocabulary are used. Then there is *mainstream*, in the sense of singers working on the jazz club circuit, accompanied by jazz musicians and playing mainly standards. This would include singers like Sarah Ellen Hughes, Anita Wardell, Sophie Millman, Hilary Kole, Clare Teal and many more. A fourth group can be termed *leading edge* or experimental. These categories are fairly crude and artists and writers within these fields overlap. However, for the purposes of this study, they can provide a framework for analysing the contemporary scene.

Jazz Oriented Popular Music

If we look at this first group, Gioia has already described the current group of artists who have enjoyed great success, not only at the time of his article (1997) but well into the 21st century. As he explains, sophisticated marketing has assisted, but their success suggests a continuing appetite for standards. However, the role of new material should not be under-estimated. Nora Jones has built her success on original material (for example 'Come Away with Me' 2002) and on a certain country music cross-over feel. On the other hand, instrumental jazz solos have not been heavily featured. Diana Krall, as mentioned above, generally concentrates on

standards with limited opportunities for improvisation. Jamie Cullum performs some original songs and frequently appears with a jazz trio, where solos do take place. Cullum has made an impact, not just as a result of his Harry Connick Junior-inspired singing, but also as an 'all round entertainer', complete with dancing on the piano and impromptu drum solos. Michael Buble mixes standards with fairly pop-oriented material ('I haven't met you yet' 2009) but there is not much soloing in his live performances and his singles have been more pop oriented than jazz.

Near Jazz

The argument for including a section on 'Near Jazz' is based on the fact that audiences may perceive certain artists and song-writers to be loosely associated with the world of jazz. Essentially, the term 'near jazz' can be applied if the music contains some recognisable jazz elements. This might be in the use of jazz harmonies, as demonstrated in bands like Steely Dan, Chicago and Jamiroqui. It could be through particular jazz-influenced phrasing, with slurring jazz inflections such as sliding up to the note. Instrumentally, there might be a jazz solo by an instrument, such as the use of jazz-influenced tenor saxophone solo on some of Sting's albums.

This can only be a summary of the main purveyors of 'near jazz', but it may raise some relevant questions. As good a place to start as any is Sting, who had a jazz background before launching 'The Police'. Already an accomplished songwriter of all the Police hits, he launched his solo career in the 1990s by hiring the cream of American jazz musicians for his first set of albums. Many of the songs from that period have become well-known, including 'The Moon over Bourbon Street' and 'Fragile'. However, despite the jazz influenced treatment by his band, including people like Branford Marsalis (sax, ex-Miles Davis) and Kenny Kirklands (keyboards, ex-Miles Davis) and Omah Hakim (Drums, ex-Weather Report), the songs have not generally entered the jazz repertoire. On the face of it, the songs would work for improviser as they appear to have suitable chord progressions. Indeed, some songs by Sting have been used including 'Fragile' (Cassandra Wilson, Rigmor Gustafsson)

and 'shall we 'Dance', as an instrumental, by contemporary jazz pianist, Marc Copland.

It is also relevant to examine the work of Joni Mitchell, who whilst being revered as a giant of the singer/songwriter/stream of consciousness genre, can also be said to have included a jazz awareness in her work. She has shown interest in the work of Charlie Mingus and in 1979 recorded an album with some of the leading jazz exponent of that time. Entitled: *Shadows and Light* The band comprised Pat Metheny, Michael Brecker, Jaco Pastorius , Lyle Mays and Don Alias and all the songs except one were composed by Mitchell, including 'Goodbye Pork Pie Hat', her tribute to Mingus. The songs feature her trademark approach to melody, harmony, lyrical freedom and harmonic complexity and these prove to be effective vehicles for the world-class improvisers on stage. By any definition, the music produced on this occasion is jazz, so does that make Joni Mitchell a jazz singer? Perhaps not in the sense that specialist jazz singers like Betty Carter or Carmen McRae operated at that time, but it can be argued that Mitchell was pointing the way towards the current diverse jazz vocal scene.

Perhaps the most significant singer in this group is Erykah Badu, especially as she is currently active and prominent in cross-over 'near jazz' activities. It is perhaps significant that in 'The Revivalist' (2012) an on-line journal, Karas Lamb should describe Badu as 'The Last Great Jazz Singer' This phrase arose from an interview given by trumpeter Christian Scott to the US music store Amorba who said:

I always applaud her for her conviction because she's such a great artist and really on a lot of levels, I feel like she could be the last great jazz singer, which is kind of disheartening a little bit. But just her sensibilities—her ideas about music, how she approaches her music, the note that she sings, her inflections, I think she's a huge light for us right now. Hopefully there will be someone that'll come and grab the torch from her, but I don't really hear it yet, so she's the one right now.' (n.d.).

Scott's assessment would have to be considered along a wide range of successful contemporary jazz and near jazz singers, but there can be little doubt that Badu's distinctive voice, combining elements of Billie Holiday and Abbey Lincoln, together with her choice of material and her crossover appeal, marks her out as an important name in any analysis of the contemporary jazz vocal song. Badu has been described as bringing together elements of jazz and soul to form a new genre, dubbed as 'Neo-Soul'. The question of whether Badu's music can be considered as part of jazz will be examined more closely later when the role of Robert Glasper, with whom she has collaborated, will be evaluated. It would be easy to say that she is not a jazz singer and therefore not part of this study. But to ignore Badu and other artists, who demonstrate a range of influences, would be to miss the point that jazz vocals are becoming increasingly hard to categorise.

Another example of a singer in this general category is the UK singer, Sade. She enjoyed great success in the 80s with classic jazz-influenced numbers like 'Smooth Operator' and 'No Ordinary Love'. She has since moved to the USA where her career has taken off again. Her phrasing and cool tone certainly borrow from the jazz idiom, whilst the backing is less jazz, in the sense of limited opportunities for improvisation and is more from the 'smooth jazz' area. It is also worth mentioning at this point the work of the late UK singer, Amy Winehouse, who was clearly influenced by jazz and sang with a certain jazz feel. The list of singers who could be covered by the term 'near jazz' is considerable, and could include Madeleine Peyroux, Minnie Ripperton, Anita Baker, Bill Withers and George Benson

Mainstream

Artists in this group feature a mix of standards and new material and also improvised instrumental solos and sometimes, scat, in their performances. These are often the working singers performing in jazz clubs in the big cities, but also touring up and down the country, sometimes performing with their own trios, but more often than not, appearing with a local trio, hastily going through the song sheet half an hour before the performance. To many fans, this is the real jazz vocal, where the singer has to respond quickly to a new group of musicians, perhaps occasionally tackling

unfamiliar material and working out impromptu arrangements. The list of such singers is endless and includes in the USA, artists like Renee Marie, Shirley Horn, Shelia Jordon, with Clare Teal, Stacey Kent, Anita Wardell, Sarah Ellen Hughes and Carole Kidd, all operating in the UK .

Leading Edge

This paper proposes that the singers of most interest to this project are ones that can be termed leading edge. Some of these are examined in Chapter 5, as selected exemplars of the genre, while others are mentioned in Chapter 4, under Innovation. It is recognized that classifying singers in this way is a highly subjective process and that some key names may be left out. As an explanation about the treatment of these names in the context of this paper, a number have been selected for more in-depth analysis and these same singers have inspired the portfolio of self-composed and self performed songs. These are dealt with in Chapter 5.

There has always been experimentation in jazz. It is very much part of the music and has allowed musicians to introduce new material, different ways of playing and different instrumentation. Some experiments become consolidated into the mainstream, while others fail to catch the imagination of audiences and other musicians. So, the work of Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman and others have influenced those who followed, whilst it can be claimed that Cecil Taylor and Albert Ayler and others, whilst showing great originality and creativeness, have not really influenced the mainstream. Similarly with vocalists, it can be shown that Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Peggy Lee, along with others have influenced the development of jazz singing, but others have had less influence. Lambert, Hendrix and Ross pioneered vocalese with great skill, but the genre is still very much a minority interest.

So, in looking at current leading edge performers, this study attempts to assess those influences which shape the future, although it is perhaps too early to make that

judgement. Particular names, examined in this paper include Theo Bleckman, Kate McGarry, Kurt Elling, Robert Glasper and Christine Tobin.

Latin Jazz

It is important at some point in this paper to mention the importance of the Latin American music to the jazz vocal. The key breakthrough was with the Bossa Nova and the success of 'Girl from Ipanema' by Antonio Carlos Jobim, recorded by Stan Getz (1963), which created a world-wide following for the genre. Jobim's works, including 'One Note Samba', 'Desafinado', 'Quiet Nights' and 'Wave' have become an accepted part of the jazz singer's repertoire, not only performed by South American singers like Astrid Gilberto, Joao Gilberto and Eliane Elias, but also form part of the repertoire of many mainstream jazz singers. Bebel Gilberto is seen as being a very influential performer.

As for current trends, it will be beyond the scope of this paper to explore contemporary developments. It can be observed that Latin Jazz singers are emerging from the Caribbean and from South America, showing an authentic connection between local musical traditions and an understanding of jazz harmonies. This means borrowing from the folk music of Cuba, Peru, Argentina, Brazil and others, creating new contexts for songs. Names which have been mentioned are: Sofia Rei Koutsoritis, Sube Azul, Venissa Sauli, Lucia Pulida and Katt Parra.

There is a strong Latin Jazz element in New York where a number of Latino musicians have established a scene which mixes cutting edge contemporary jazz with Latin rhythms and Spanish lyrics. Milton Nascimento has been put forward as a distinctive and original vocalist with links with the prodigiously talented Egmont Gismonti, who has performed with and is revered by many world-class musicians. There is not enough scope in this paper to explore all those connections, but any future research will need to explore all these developments and connections.

Oscar Perez is seen as being one of the leaders in this field and singer Claudio Acuna, along with Angel Desai, Venissa Santi and Margos Herres are prominent singers in this genre. Claudia Acuna will be featured in Chapter 5, as will a Latin-inspired piece in the portfolio. Given that many jazz singers use Latin numbers, it seems reasonable to assume that innovation and change in the Latin jazz area will filter through to mainstream vocalists in the USA, Europe and elsewhere.

Lyrics in the Jazz Song

By definition, the question of lyrics must be considered in this research project. It is about the jazz vocal song and most uses of the human voice in jazz involve lyrics. It should be added at this point that the human voice has also been used in jazz over the years as an instrument (Norma Winstone, Bobbie McFerrin, Phil Minton and others) or in a scatting role. However, it is fair to say that most jazz songs have lyrics. How important lyrics are can be a matter of discussion, but in the Great American Song Book, lyrics are seen as being of major importance. Certainly in other genres of music, lyrics assume great importance in terms of the effectiveness of the song, whether it is a Paul Simon song, a Bob Dylan political protest song or indeed a rap, where the melody is frequently seen as being secondary to the words and the beat.

Historically, the first songs in any society would have been used by the itinerant singer to convey news, stories, myths and emotions. So, early songs in the jazz and blues idiom reflected the feelings of people and the words were an intrinsic part of the song. In the Great American Songbook, words assumed great importance and were taken very seriously. This was partly because many of the songs were from musicals, where the lyrics would have played a key part in taking the story forward. A great tradition of lyric writing developed, with successful partnerships being struck between, composers and lyricist, for example Rogers and Hammerstein, or George and Ira Gershwin. Some writers, like Cole Porter, tackled both tasks. The excellence of these lyrics has been described in 'Poets of Tin Pan Alley' (Philip Furia 1990). As

a generalisation, one could say that typically, lyrics from this era are elegant, witty and well-integrated with the melody, and a good example could be given in 'All The Things You Are' (Rogers and Hammerstein)

Many other examples are available, some using clever word play and unexpected humour. Lyrics also grew in importance as the great song stylists developed their repertoires, where the combination of melody, harmony and lyrics, in the hands of someone like Sinatra, had the potential to draw a deep emotional response from his audiences. Whilst the dominant theme was love; Billie Holiday's 'Strange Fruit' shows the power of a song with its lyrics of making a powerful social comment. The question then arises: how should the modern writer of jazz lyrics approach the task? The whole approach to lyrics has changed, especially in the contemporary, folk and pop areas, so that they are more likely to be meaningful to younger fans.

Lyrics written for Existing Tunes

One way of creating new material for the jazz vocal repertoire is for a lyricist to create words for an existing tune. It seems an obvious approach, because the numbers chosen will already be well established and will have received critical acclaim. There is no shortage of examples, but the question has to be asked about the effectiveness of the final versions, which involves making critical judgements. The creation of lyrics for existing tunes has grown considerably in recent years as singers have sought new material, especially tunes already known to instrumentalists. It is enough to state that writing lyrics after the melody has been composed is a major challenge and close examination of examples suggests that there has been a mix of successes and failures in this endeavour. Examples of this would include lyrics written by Gene Lees for the Bill Evan tunes, 'Waltz for Debby' and 'Turn out the Stars' and by Norma Winstone for a whole album of tunes by Fred Hersch (Songs and Lullabies, 2002)

Music written for existing words

A number of musicians/composers have sought inspiration by using existing words, notably poetry, to create new vocal material. As with the previously discussed process of writing lyrics to existing tunes, the process has met with mixed success. Sarah Moule's CD of verse by Fran Landesman set to music by Simon Wallace has not added material to any other singer's repertoire than Moule's, and a personal view is that the tunes are not memorable. However, Fred Hersch's music for Walt Whitman's 'Blades of Grass' has won awards and Christine Tobin's use of 'Byzantium' by W. B Yeats has been well received by critics. Reflecting on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the above two processes, the opinion could be expressed that melody writers and lyricists should ideally work simultaneously to produce songs in the jazz idiom.

The Jazz Vocal Song and Innovation

History shows that most innovation in jazz has been driven by instrumentalists and composers, with singers tending to catch up. It can be argued that the progress made by, for example Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton and Bix Biedebeck was reflected by jazz singers, who were able to perform alongside such musicians, using the same vehicles, such as show songs. Duke Ellington's compositions and rich arrangements provided an excellent backcloth for singers, but the bebop era seemed to introduce barriers for singers. The fast, intricate lines of some of the bop compositions would have posed difficulty for all but the most articulate singer, so singers did not figure greatly in those early days. However, as 'modern' jazz became absorbed by a wider range of musicians, so singers, mainly using the standards and show tunes, were able to adapt, good examples being Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Mel Torme.

However, other areas of innovation only had a marginal influence on singers and vocal material. The free approach of Ornette Coleman or Cecil Taylor seemed to have no real impact on vocalists. Jazz Rock or Fusion again failed to have impact. The modern era does show some signs of vocal innovation matching instrumental

change and it is instructive to examine the work of performers like Robert Glasper working across the genres of jazz and rap, and Gretchen Parlato, cooperating with innovative players like Taylor Eggsti.

Trying to predict the future of the jazz song cannot be an exact science. Current innovators can be observed and analysed and it is hoped that the major trends have been identified in this research, so we are seeing the use of pop songs, looping devices, rap, rock grooves, the composition of new songs, plus lyrics for existing tunes and music for existing words. Some examples of the vocal in free jazz (Lauren Kinsella and Sidsel Endreson will be examined later in this chapter.) Innovation in the jazz vocal, although arguably well behind the pace set by instrumentalists has been seen in the past with artists like Bobby McFerrin and Norma Winstone. The process is clearly continuing and specific examples are provided later.

A significant current example would be that of Dave Douglas, a highly regarded leading-edge trumpeter and composer, who featured a vocalist, Heather Masse, at this year's Cheltenham Jazz Festival. Until 2012, he had never used a vocalist, but after his mother died, he wanted to produce an album which reflected his mother's choice of hymns. The result was the CD *Be Still* (2012) and the song 'Be Still My Soul' is based on music by Sibelius with words by Katharina A von Shlegel, adapted by the singer on this album, Aoife O'Donovan. The vocal is quite hymn-like and yet the instrumental side is very contemporary.

This approach reinforces one of the arguments coming out of the current research, that while many jazz instrumentalists do not work with or feature vocalists, Dave Douglas's work suggests that when a personal statement is being made, there are some messages which can more effectively be expressed by the human voice, rather than a purely instrumental piece.

Creating and Extending a Repertoire

In placing the jazz vocal song in perspective, it is useful to consider the issues facing a jazz singer or band featuring a singer, when it comes to deciding what to sing. Much will depend on the nature of the singer. To get into jazz singing in the first place, most singers will learn all the key standards, so that as they try to gain experience and make a name, they can 'sit in' with a band knowing that the musicians will be able to play the material. Once a singer becomes more established, the need to diversify may arise, especially where recording is concerned. An unknown singer producing a first album full of standards, especially the fairly hackneyed ones like 'Summertime', 'Autumn Leaves' or 'Lady is a Tramp' is not going to arouse wide interest.

Using an informal sample of personally owned CDs, the result showed from 11 albums, with 66 standards, 25 originals and 41 from other sources including recent popular songs, new lyrics to existing music and new music for existing words. Overall, the domination of standards is no surprise and the balance has been affected by the two themed albums (Fred Hersch, Bill Evans), so that another selection might indicate even greater dominance of standards. The selection also shows that a genuine attempt is being made to identify new sources of material, from own compositions to artists from popular and contemporary genres.

An interesting and early example of jazz singers using popular material and making it work successfully at a jazz level, is the Scandinavian singer, Silje Nergaard, regarded as a major figure in Norwegian vocal Jazz. Her CD single *Tell me where you're going* was produced in 1980 and featured guitarist Pat Metheny, already well-established as a popular and critically acclaimed jazz musician ready to use innovative material both as instrumental and vocal material. Metheny also appeared on a successful CD single *America* by David Bowie. Nergaard's latest CD *Unclouded* (2012) has a version of 'Human', a massive success written by and recorded by The Killers. So, throughout her career, Nergaard has been happy to borrow from the world of popular music.

Sidsel Endreson is another Norwegian singer and theatre composer who has been able to reach a wide audience and touch their emotions whilst operating in the area of abstract improvisation and electronics. She frequently works with experimental guitarist Stian Westerhus and together they are part of a rich vein of Nordic jazz

creativity which includes Niergarde, and Solveig Sletajhell, underpinned historically by the likes of Karen Krog and Jan Garbarek.

Westerhus creates a wide range of guitar sounds with strong rock and electronic influences, while Endreson improvises, using a similar variety of wordless noises ranging from the lyrical to the wildly emotional. If we ask the question about song writing, the work of Endreson shows a totally different approach. She responds to the improvisation of Westerhus and creates a new piece of music, but it is not material which could be replicated by other singers. Indeed, this is very much a feature of contemporary jazz song creation. Some material will only be performed by the originator, but there is still a desire from performers to find good vehicles for their voices, whatever the source.

Norwegian singer, Solveig Slettahjell has developed a certain Scandinavian style further, specialising in numbers taken at a very slow tempo, where her purity of voice and her range of expression communicates a mood of serenity. She has recorded standards and is developing more original material. However, of particular interest to this study are her versions of popular songs, like 'Winner Takes All' (Abba) or 'Crazy' (Gnarls Barclay).

New Songs

Whilst the role of entirely new songs for contemporary singers has been alluded to, especially under 'Innovation', it is worth making some general points on the topic. The whole point about the domination of the Great American Songbook until recently in general, is that very few people were writing songs for the leading jazz singers of the day. There were some writers active in this field, including Dave Frishberg ('I'm Hip' 1965) with his witty songs, Bob Dorough and Mose Allison ('Parchman Farm' 1957) with his distinctive, blues-inflected voice and piano style.

Compared with the prodigious output of Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Springsteen, Lennon and McCartney, Ray Davies and countless others in the contemporary, folk and popular fields, the jazz output of vocal songs was limited. But things have started to move in recent years, as jazz singers have tried to add some variety to the solid but predictable fare of standards. The model of singer/songwriter is well established outside jazz, but it is starting to become evident in the jazz world.

We have seen this in the work of Liane Carroll, Gretchen Parlato, Kate McGarry, Joe Stilgoe, Richard Rodney Bennett, Theo Jackson, Peter Cincotti, Harry Connick Junior, Jamie Cullum, as singer/songwriter with Jim Tomlinson/Ishiguro as collaborators. In addition, a whole list of independent songwriters have had their work performed by established singers, including Michael Franks, Gordon Parks, Phil Springer and Dave Gill (Songs recorded by Liane Carroll and others). It is also worth mentioning that some songs seem to 'emerge' from recording sessions. All the songs on *Verso* (2000) by Maria Pia DeVito, John Taylor and Ralph Towner are down as composed by DeVito and either Taylor or Towner. DeVito, who is Neapolitan, contributed the lyrics and the instrumentalists have created tunes and arrangements, with a degree of collective collaboration demonstrated in the music. These songs, however, are only likely to receive airings from this combination of musicians.

So, gradually, a new repertoire is being built up. However, the difference between these songs and the old standards is that in general these new songs are performed by, and associated with particular singers. They do not appear to be picked up by other singers. This means that audiences do not get to know these songs. It may explain why so many contemporary jazz singers have gone for popular songs from people like Abba, Kate Bush, Lennon and McCartney, Stevie Wonder and Joni Mitchell on the basis that audiences *know* these songs and do not have to go through that uncertain phase of deciding whether they like the song. Performing a brand new original song is a much more risky prospect. If the example from popular contemporary music is to be followed, we should see singer/ songwriters like Theo Jackson, Joe Stilgoe and a number of UK and US-based singer songwriters

achieving recognition. This does not of course rule out singer songwriters from over the whole world achieving recognition, especially Latin American ones.

A question which has arisen during the course of this research is whether musical theatre can be a source of songs for jazz singers, given that many of the songs which form the Great American Songbook came from musicals from the 1930s and 1940s. From general observation, it is clear that modern musicals are not being used in this way, although future use might be a possibility. Andrew Lloyd Webber has been the source of dominant range of stage musicals in recent years, but the songs have generally not found their way into the jazz repertoire. *West Side Story* is regarded as one of the most sophisticated musicals in the post-war period, but its well-regarded songs have not been generally used in jazz. There is no obvious answer, here except possibly that some songs in musicals are so entrenched in the plot that they may not work in isolation. Similarly, the work of Stephen Sondheim would seem to have the complexity of chord sequences to provide a challenge for jazz players and again, his songs do not generally appear in the jazz repertoire.

As an indication of what may be possible, American singer Hilary Kole has recorded 'I Remember' by Stephen Sondheim as part of her CD *You Are There* (2010). This is a series of duets between Kole and a number of jazz pianists and Mike Renzi provides the reflective, almost Debussian support for this song, which came from a television musical, 'Evening Primrose' written by Sondheim and broadcast in 1966. Kole's version shows that the song can stand alone as a jazz vehicle.

The Musical Context of the Jazz Vocal

As this project has unfolded, an angle which seems worthy of examination is the precise musical context of a particular jazz vocal. Whilst the early focus in this research was on material, it has become apparent that the actual performance plays as much part of the finished article as the composition, so, for example, while artists

like Gretchen Parlato and Theo Bleckman can select contemporary popular songs as their vehicles, their treatment is so original and jazz-influenced that the material is transformed. In a similar way, the sound and feel of a jazz vocal is greatly influenced by the type of accompaniment.

Historically, early blues vocals were accompanied by guitar; with what is now a well recognized 'bluesy' style as developed by Robert Johnson, Leadbelly and others. This is a style constantly being recreated by many contemporary blues players, such as Eric Clapton and Robert Cray. Then we see the emergence of jazz singers backed by a full New Orleans-style jazz band, with Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Lil Armstrong and many more. The big band era ushered in a more complex style with the singer taking more prominence and arrangements becoming more tuned to the style of the singer, notably in the work of Frank Sinatra and Nelson Riddle.

This focus on accompaniment was partly inspired by a recently published PhD on the topic (White 2010) but also by observation and listening to examples. White's research was based on interviews with eight pianists and his work serves as a comprehensive analysis of the role of the accompanist. He looks at introductions, use of rubato, attention to lyrics, the duo setting, solos, ornamentation and adaptation to the vocalist's style. Overall, it is essentially a role of collaboration. He looks at classical examples, from lieder and quotes Gerald Moore, the noted classical accompanist. White's approach is mainly based on the Great American songbook, although he does mention recent work by Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea as being outstanding examples of high quality accompaniment. Moving on to the duo format, White states that: 'Performing alone with a singer is one of the most challenging tasks for an accompanist. Decisions about style, register and ornamentation occur on a more concentrated level' (p62). White then looks at the skill required to cover the feel of a full rhythm section:

When playing mid to up-tempo grooves, the pianist decides how to simulate the role of other typical rhythm section instruments such as the bass and drums. The accompanist must have an impeccable sense of time and a wide

variety of stylistically appropriate voicings. The accompanist must have an awareness of the functions of the bass and drums in order to emulate these instruments and sustain a solid groove.

These comments are useful in looking at the effect of the duo format on the final production of the song.

It can be argued that the duo format, especially in the current era, has produced work of extraordinary intimacy and subtlety. The format has become quite widespread in recent years, with work by the American pianist Ran Blake, firstly with Jeanne Lee and currently with Sara Serpa. John Taylor from the UK has regularly performed with singers, with Norma Winstone, as part of the trio Azimuth, but also in the duo format and more recently with Italian singer, Maria Pia de Vito. Brad Meldhau has recorded with his wife, Dutch singer Fleurine, Fred Hersch has performed with US singer Renee Marie and closer to home there are collaborations between Claire Martin and the late Sir Richard Rodney Bennett and locally on the UK North West scene, between pianist Dan Whielden and Alice Zawadzki.

There is not the scope to examine the duo format in detail, but all the above examples provide evidence of the intimacy and flexibility available in such an informal format. Listening, for example to John Taylor and Diane Torto, one is struck by the great technical facility of both performers and by the close, intuitive understanding of each other's approach. This allows for leaps of inventiveness, where one performer can go off at a tangent, knowing that the other will pick it up.

Another area for examination is the situation where the singer is also a jazz pianist and provides his/her own accompaniment. This has been an important feature historically and is also prevalent today. The obvious musical advantage in the jazz context is that the performer has total freedom to follow any musical thoughts in an instant. Nat King Cole was an important exponent of this facility, being both an excellent singer and a highly skilled jazz pianist. Most singer/pianists will work with a rhythm section, where a responsive drummer and bass player can often deftly

anticipate the moves of the singer, but players in this category can work quite effectively alone, thus maximising freedom but at the same time, perhaps making more economic sense. Nina Simone, operating somewhere between jazz, gospel and blues continued this tradition as did Shirley Horn. Mose Allison continues to develop a blues-tinged vocal style, backed up by a distinctive and spare piano style. On the contemporary scene, and having a more popular edge, one can list Diana Krall, Jamie Cullum, Harry Connick Jnr, Peter Cincotti, Joe Stylgoe, Theo Jackson and others. Of those analysed as being of particular interest later in this paper, Patricia Barber and Liane Carroll, it can be argued, stand out as artists who combines originality with a high degree of pianistic facility.

In discussing the topic of singer/pianists, it is reasonable to assume that some of them will be wanting to write their own songs. As jazz pianists, they improvise on a daily basis and improvisers naturally develop phrases, grooves and harmonic progressions which can be moulded into definite tunes. As singers, they know the importance of lyrics and it is reasonable to assume that some will have some facility with words or may collaborate with others in this respect. And therefore, it is no surprise that almost all the singers listed above, write their own material. However, although this material is generally well-received, none of the above has produced songs with the impact of the Great American Songbook, or with the output from the great singer/songwriter/pianists from the popular, contemporary field, such as Joni Mitchell, Tory Amos, Billie Joel or Randy Newman. As this paper will demonstrate, jazz vocalists take their material from a variety of sources and it happens that to date, no prolific singer/songwriter has emerged to dominate the field. Indeed, such domination is unlikely, in view of the great diversity of styles now prevalent in vocal jazz.

If piano is seen as a major component of a jazz singer's sound, it is also worth looking at the role of guitar, bearing in mind its early importance in the blues. Ella Fitzgerald made some memorable albums accompanied only by virtuoso guitarist Joe Pass, and Christine Tobin often operates in a band with guitarist Phil Robson but

with no pianist. Christine Tobin is analysed later, as are Theo Bleckman and Kate McGarry, both of whom work with guitar players. The guitar creates an even more intimate sound than solo piano, and whilst there is less harmonic complexity available by the very nature of the instrument, the guitar can operate with a different rhythmic pulse, with sound variation provided by the attack (plectrum or finger style), the opportunity to bend notes, and the chance to use sound processors to alter the sound of the guitar. McGarry works regularly with guitarist Keith Ganz, and sometimes with additional percussion. He uses a touch of chorus (an effect) on some numbers and has developed a spare but effective accompaniment which enhances the clarity and emotional impact of McGarry's voice. Theo Bleckman often performs alone with the help of a looping device or some vocal effect, like reverb or delay, but he also works with an accomplished New York guitarist, Ben Monder. The combination of Monder's intriguing guitar sound and Bleckmann's atmospheric voice is completely innovative and Monder's approach to guitar is a key part of that sonic palette. He uses a variety of effects, including reverb and delay, whilst at the same time coming up with unusual chord voicings. One key is an effective use of the right hand (finger style) to create patterns and textures, as opposed to the plectrum, more likely to be used by a conventional modern jazz guitarist.

A further context which needs attention is that of what is generally described as 'free jazz' as the genre, though not impossible for singers, presents genuine challenges, not least for audiences. Leading free jazz exponents tend not to work with singers. Most singers like to work with lyrics, to highlight the melodic and rhythmic structure of the tune and also to tell some kind of story for the audience. Within those limits, many singers are able to improvise and reshape the song. However, a number of artists do operate in the free jazz context, sometimes with the singer's voice being used in a wordless way, as, in effect another instrument.

Norma Winstone frequently operates in this way, sometimes responding to composers/arrangers, such as Michael Garrick and Kenny Wheeler. The UK composer Mike Westbrook operates in a similar vein, using singers such as Phil

Minton, Maggie Nichols and Kate Westbrook. A contemporary singer operating in this free area is the Australian, Gian Slater, a classically-trained performer who has moved into the jazz area. She has a large range and a flexible, accurate voice, capable of handling large intervals. She hardly uses lyrics, but uses her voice as an instrument, weaving in and out of other musician's contributions in a quite unstructured way. She also performs, using many of her own compositions, in a jazz choir environment, when some very rich textures are created, above which she can improvise.

At the extreme end of the free musical and vocal spectrum is Sidsel Edreson working with experimental guitarist, Stian Westerhous, whose sonically challenging work with the guitarist shows an astonishing level of freedom and rapport. Of course, moving out of the jazz idiom, it can be remarked that some versions of Rap involve 'freestyle' where the rapper improvises lyrics against a rap groove. The UK saxophonist, Soweto Kinch introduces rap elements into his jazz compositions, so future developments could involve some fusion between jazz and rap—indeed one of the major themes of this paper is the cross-fertilisation between many styles and regions of music.

Continuing to examine the effect of the overall sound spectrum on the delivery of the song, it is of interest to consider the role of the vocal group. The use of vocal harmony goes back to the Boswell sisters and continued through jazz groups like Lambert, Hendricks and Ross and the Hi-los, through jazz-influenced groups like the Four Freshmen and Manhattan Transfer, through to the current acts like Take Six and UK's Sector Seven. This is a group led by Sarah Ellen Hughes, already a successful solo singer in her own right. Her four-voice group offers a wide range of songs, including 'My Favourite Things', a folk song, 'She's Like a Swallow', a Stevie Wonder song, a Sting number, a gospel song and a soul/funk song associated with Anita Baker.

To bring the whole concept up to date an album has been released in 2013, featuring Kenny Wheeler with Norma Winstone (vocal) and the London Jazz Choir.

The music is from Wheeler and the lyrics are from poems by Stevie Smith, Lewis Carroll and W. B. Yeats. This CD has been well received by critics and it brings together a number of ideas outlined in this section. A conclusion to be drawn are that irrespective of the composition or lyrics, immediate musical context has a major impact on the performance of the song and can be said to mould the shape of the song, from the spare intimacy of voice/piano or voice/guitar, to the wider sound of a piano trio, with or without a frontline and to the recent Wheeler LP where there is a much wider mix.

It would perhaps be appropriate to mention the big band, very much the standard for the swing era, but the current research has not identified working with a big band as being very common, for reasons of taste and economics, nor has it identified current big band vocal music as representing major innovation. Nevertheless, a vocalist working with a big band does happen, notably in the UK with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra and in the USA, with large numbers of college bands. Undoubtedly there has been innovation in the development of big bands, via Gill Evans, Carla Bley, Loose Tubes, Kenny Wheeler and others. However, the innovation in jazz singing which has been unveiled in this research project has not generally highlighted big band jazz singing as a major area of innovation, but one example is that of Julia Dollison, mentioned in a later section, who has performed material developed from big band pieces by Maria Schneider to very powerful effect.

CHAPTER FIVE: Significant Jazz Singers and Genres

In discussing a group of singers judged to be innovative, a set of sub-categories is proposed, in an attempt to identify important contemporary trends. However it is recognized that some singers are hard to categorise, so the categories cannot be water tight. Individual songs are analysed so as to outline the innovative nature of their work. In addition, it has not been possible to include large numbers of highly accomplished singers, operating on a global scale. The choice of those to feature is based on a subjective judgement about which singers are thought to be of particular interest.

Experimental

Theo Bleckmann

Bleckmann was originally from Germany, but now based in USA. His work is characterised by a free approach, with use of electronics, loops and mix of original pieces and other songs. He has been described by a number of observers as a highly creative and innovative performer, not only in the jazz field, but also crossing over into other genres. Critic Warren Allen expressed his opinion of Bleckmann on the All About Jazz website (2010)

Solo albums are special opportunities for artists to show the range of their talent, and Bleckmann's talent is considerable. The blend of vocals, drones and space that he concocts creates a sense of wonder. And something beautifully mysterious lingers in the wake of its blend of the medieval and modern.

Since his arrival in the USA, Bleckmann has become a well-known player on the New York avant garde scene. Indeed, the theme of crossing over genre boundaries is one which has been seen to be apparent as this study unfolds. In an interview published on line by Jazz.About.Com (March 2011), Bleckman said: 'We live in a post Bobby McFerrin world of jazz singing now' Bleckmann therefore does not fill the

traditional role of a male jazz singer performing standards with a swinging band. He is more likely to be using a looping device and developing new material as the piece develops. He works with various combinations of musicians and cooperates with exponents of other art forms, such as art and dance.

Analysis of Theo Bleckmann Song: Running up the Hill (Kate Bush)

Demonstrating the tendency of some contemporary jazz singers to borrow from the world of pop, Bleckman's current album features the work of English singer, Kate Bush. To call Kate Bush a pop singer is probably a limited description given her international reputation for very sophisticated songwriting. Devoting a whole album to the works of Kate Bush is a unique challenge, but Bleckman shows how it can be done, whilst receiving encouraging support from critics, for example Christopher Loudon on the *Jazz Times* website(2012):

Great jazz singers are inveterate boundary-pushers, but even the boldest among them stop far short of the distances Theo Bleckmann travels. Over the past two decades, Bleckmann has created a singular pastiche that extends from Weimar cabaret and Italy's Arte Povera movement to the songs of Charles Ives and dynamic partnerships with guitarist Ben Monder, pianist Fumio Yasuda and drummer-composer John Hollenbeck. It is hardly surprising that Bleckmann and Kate Bush are a match made in some Dalí-esque version of heaven

The song selected for analysis is "This Woman's Work" from the Bleckmann album: *Hello Earth* (2011). He sets up a vocal loop, building up a number of layers as he attempts to create a mood and emotional feel for the song. Then the piano joins in with a series of rich Keith Jarrett-inspired chords. Bass and drum and other instruments then join in as Bleckmann stretches out the melodic line above the mix. He then returns to the loop and rises an octave above it. The band then builds up the intensity of the song as the track concludes. This is a live performance which is

enthusiastically received by the audience and it is clear that Bleckmann's voice, creativity and intensity have communicated something to the audience.

Gretchen Parlato (US singer/songwriter).

Any review of the contemporary jazz song will place Gretchen Parlato as a leading innovator who has attracted a considerable following. She has achieved a degree of critical acclaim, for example from Dan Bolles (2013) "*the face of a new generation of vocalists who are challenging our perceptions...*" and from Reuben Jackson (2013) "*It's the power of nuance... like Billie Holiday or even Miles Davis... Gretchen has that sublime power, where it's like being knocked over with a muted trumpet.*"

She performs with highly regarded jazz musicians and she uses a variety of song vehicles, including contemporary jazz numbers, some from the popular area and many of her own compositions. Her delivery is characterised by bursts of scat type improvisation and a strong sense of empathy with the rhythmic core of the number. She uses a mix of material, from original compositions to her versions of popular songs. Her distinctive approach involves lengthy and highly rhythmic introductions. Working with a band of very accomplished musicians, she effectively re-writes the melody using her light and flexible voice. She demonstrates an excellent understanding of what the musicians are doing, including the ability to deal with rapid chord progressions and intricate chord voicings.

Analysis of Gretchen Parlato Song: Holding Back the Years (Mick Hucknall)

The initial point to make about this song is the choice of material. 'Holding Back the Years' is a cover of a major hit record from the UK group Simply Red. It was written by Mick Hucknall, whose style can be described as a kind of romantic soul music. Hucknall has shown some empathy with jazz standards through his recording of 'Every Time I say Goodbye' and 'Holding Back the Years', although largely a simple two chord structured song, even at the time of its appearance, did seem to have

some jazz improvisation potential. This is clearly what attracted Parlato to this song, plus a set of lyrics which lend themselves to an emotional and very personal rendition.

The track starts with a distinctive slow rhythmic pattern from the drums, with the bass following shortly. Then the piano comes in using a three chord pattern, with a slight country and almost gospel flavour. This sets the mood of the song, with a restless undertow of chords and rhythm ready for the vocal. The singer then commences with her trademark light and breathy tone, staying with the song's melody, but already starting to play with the tune. There is one of two breaks, as if to say, slow down, the emotion has not built up yet.

Her vocal is all in the timing, with an ability to float over the backing, but pointing the key rhythmic points of the song. There is a piano solo, when the pianist reharmonises parts of the song. Parlato picks up the changes and starts to improvise, lengthening phrases, playing round with the words and building up the emotional feel of the song as she soars above the tune, following the changes with total accuracy. The track winds down with some bass improvisation against a repeated low piano note.

Why does this song point to the future? One answer is in the choice of material, in that Parlato, like some of the other artist in this section, has picked a popular song and turned it into a viable jazz vehicle. The other answer lies in Parlato's whole approach to music, as shown in her recorded and live output, her flexibility, her ability to work with complex changes in harmony and voicing and her distinctive and highly rhythmic approach to scat, not especially reflected in this track, but especially so in 'Butterfly' and others. Other singers who could be included in the above group are: Cassandra Wilson, Bobby McFerrin, Cleveland Watkiss, J D Walker and Youn Sun Yah.

Folk Influenced Artists: Kate McGarry/Solveig Slettahjell/Christine Tobin

This section will look at three artists from different corners of the world who are very distinctive in their own way, but seem to embody a similar, pared down approach which would seem to embrace a feeling of both jazz and contemporary folk, although both can be, and are described as jazz singers.

Kate McGarry is New York based singer who has achieved prominence in recent years, including a nomination for Best Jazz Singer Grammy in 2009. Whilst McGarry is not a prolific songwriter, her musical value lies in an essentially pared-down approach to a wide range of material, including Peter Gabriel, Sting, Bjork and Joni Mitchell amongst others. She is quite hard to categorise, in that she includes elements of folk music in her approach, whilst being perfectly comfortable with jazz standards. This difficulty of categorisation and the openness to diverse influences is one of the factors which can be seen increasingly in today's singers and is emphasised elsewhere in the current research. Typically, she performs with her husband, guitarist Keith Ganz, with the possible addition of a percussionist. Even with larger groups, the essence of McGarry's work is understatement, a pared-down approach, often to songs which have origins outside jazz.

McGarry's latest CD, *Girl Talk* is a tribute to some female jazz vocal icons important to McGarry including Betty Carter, Sheila Jordan and Carmen McCrae, so the CD is dominated by standards. However, an earlier CD from 2007 'The Target' contains some originals by McGarry, plus a song from Sting, some other contemporary singers and some standards, even 'Heather on the Hill' from Brigadoon. On other CDs and live performances, McGarry is fond of taking popular songs from the 1960s onwards and then giving them a pared-down, slowed down treatment. These include Dylan's 'The Times They are a Changing', Joni Mitchell's 'Chelsea Morning' and this song from the US group The Cars, 'Just what I needed.'

Analysis of Kate McGarry song 'Just What I needed'

It is instructive to listen to the original by The Cars because it is a medium paced rocker with a full group performing it. Ganz commences with an acoustic guitar chord and McGarry's voice coming in, backed by the guitar with both a jazz and folk feel. The chord voicings are from the jazz world, but the finger-style technique is more reminiscent of folk music. McGarry takes us through the song with her pure, vibrato free voice, whilst her phrasing is flexible and floats above the gentle folk-influenced backing. The song has a reflective quality which is implicit in the lyrics and which is emphasised through the minor chord structure. There is then a simple guitar solo from Ganz We return to the vocal and the song draws to an end with some slow chords.

Norwegian singer, **Solveig Slettahjell** uses popular songs, but in a slow- moving and intense style. She does not restrict herself to a strictly jazz environment and yet her total approach contains the freedom and intensity of the great jazz vocalists. She is known for her pared-down approach and her willingness to use material from the world of popular music. The title of her first album, *Slow Motion Orchestra* is the key to her approach and it is a name now carried by her group. However, she also works with pianist Tod Gustafson and in other formations. In a similar vein to Kate McGarry, it is a pure, soulful voice, plus exquisite timing a phrasing which helps to create a mesmerising emotional impact.

Slettahjell clearly sees no problem in using songs from the field of popular music, and her version of Abba's 'Winner Takes All' is typically a pared-down version with only piano as support. It is performed very simply, without elaboration, done almost as an old fashioned waltz. However, for a more in-depth analysis, 'Good Rain' from the album of that name (2008) gets closer to the jazz genre. It is a composition from the *Slow Motion Orchestra*, which starts off with a simple trumpet line against a gentle, lazy groove, then voice and after a few bars, swirling Hammond organ chords can be heard. There is a brief trumpet solo, followed by voice as a second chord sequence is developed. The piece then comes to a gentle conclusion.

A key question which must arise in any analysis of this artist must be: is this jazz? In a way, the question is irrelevant because it would require a detailed exposition of what constitutes jazz singing. The main thrust of the research behind this presentation is that what has been called the jazz song is capable of a variety of interpretations. So although Slettahjell does not perform much in the way of swinging four beat to the bar standards, she has an emotional intensity and phrasing which is more jazz than other genres. Moreover, she has helped to create a slow-paced, low energy style which is part of a wider Scandinavian approach to the jazz vocal but which is also influencing other exponents of the art. It is worth mentioning at this point that other Scandinavian singers are making their mark and exhibiting much of the restraint and coolness which seems to characterize both the jazz vocal and instrumental jazz in this part of the world. Vocal jazz is not a new phenomenon in Scandinavia, and important pioneering work has been done by Karin Krog and Silje Nergaard.

Christine Tobin has been prominent in the UK for a number of years and is known for her innovative and varied approach. She writes originals, she composes music to existing words, she uses contemporary popular songs and she borrows freely from folk music and popular music. The influence of folk music on jazz has been mentioned, not only in America, where blues and country elements have influenced jazz, but especially in Europe, where separate regions mine their folk traditions to create new forms. So, folk strands can be identified in the UK, especially in Scotland, and in Scandinavia and moving into Eastern Europe, Russia and the Balkans. Christine Tobin is a distinctive UK-based singer, who draws from a wide range of influences to create new material. She uses the melodic strength of folk music but in a more sophisticated jazz setting. A recent project has involved composing music for the poetry of W.B Yeats and before that she devoted an album to the songs from Carole King's *Tapestry*. Other singers who could be included in the above group are June Tabor and Melissa Stylianon.

Free Jazz - Lauren Kinsella, Sidsel Endreson (with Stain Westerhus) and other improvising jazz singers.

These artists specialise in free improvisation, although Endreson, a Norwegian singer and theatre composer, also performs more conventional work in different contexts. Westerhus has a totally modern approach to electric guitar playing, using all the effects and loops available, to create an intriguing wall of sound. This energy and thoroughly contemporary rock sound will have widened their audiences from the narrow jazz area and Endreson is able to operate in this totally free way and yet in keeping with what the guitar is doing. Sidsel Endresen on vocals and Stian Westerhus on guitar are well established with separate careers and are two of Norway's most featured experimental artists.

Lauren Kinsella also has a more structured approach but it has a strong element of free improvisation about it. Her work is worth examining in more detail as her work and that of her group, Thought Fox, suggest, along with Endreson and Westerhus, some of the directions in which the jazz vocal might develop.

Analysis of Song: Prime of Life:

'Thought Fox' have an interesting take on the jazz song in that the singer is totally integrated into the band. This is not 'Thought Fox' featuring Lauren Kinsella, or Lauren Kinsella with her backing band. The song 'Prime of My Life' starts off with a bass riff, then fairly quickly voice and trombone. This is a lively song with the voice balanced against double bass and trombone. There is a strong sense of rhythmic empathy as the rhythm section plays some complex breaks behind the singer. There is also an element of a conversation between the singer and the trombonist, with a slight feel of Mingus. The piano comes in with a repeated phrase and some free improvisation, creating a novel soundscape. The middle section has a simple melodic line against a complex chord sequence. Then there is a piano solo and her voice then enters with a piece of wordless improvisation, being used in effect as an instrument and fully integrated with the group. This comes to an end with some interplay between voice trombone and bass, with vocal swoops above the middle

section chords. Other specialists in this area of jazz singing are Maggie Nichols and Phil Minton.

Significant Focus on New Songs

Kurt Elling is widely regarded as the leading male jazz singer of his age and the New York Times as declared him to be 'the standout male vocalist of our time'. He told Jamie Cullum (BBC1 March 2013) that he had been greatly influenced by the American singer, Mark Murphy. Hearing Murphy sing: 'Never Let Me Go' had been a defining moment. He has been voted 'Downbeat's Critics Poll Male Jazz Vocalist of the year for twelve years running, At one level, he can be described as mainstream, as he fills concert halls with almost a traditional crooner's style, using a core of standards. But he is also an innovator, selecting material from various sources.

Elling's most recent CD pays tribute to the Brill Building in New York, the legendary song factory in New York where Burt Bacharach and others produced a string of hit songs in the 60s and 70s. He mentioned 'Come Fly with Me' and 'You Send Me' and noted that he had been able to change the rhythmic and harmonic structures of the songs. In this way, Elling supports one of the general trends identified in this paper, the willingness to use and adapt material from the world of popular music. The material on this CD includes Bacharach and David's 'A House is Not a Home', Sam Cooke's 'You Send Me'. Carole King's 'So Far Away' and Paul Simon's 'An American Tune'.

Elling is an expert scat singer who also writes lyrics to jazz solos, i.e. vocalese. He explained to Cullum that he would transcribe the solo and then come up with lyrics. He saw this as a challenge and noted that not many singers attempted to do this. He had been inspired by a vocalese version of a Charlie Parker solo by Eddie Jefferson. He uses sound processing effects and seems to recognise no boundaries. His popularity is significant in the broader question of audiences being receptive to new

ideas, because his audiences seem very receptive. Capilano University, on its website has said:

Elling is a true innovator in vocal jazz. His improvisations, both lyrically and musically, are always going into uncharted territory, solidly backed by his four-octave range and unrestrained voice

Analysis of Song: Norwegian Wood

Here again (after Parlato), we see a major jazz vocalist selecting a popular song to develop into a jazz vehicle. It starts off with some piano chords and the beginning of a bass riff in a $\frac{3}{4}$ metre. The strong, distinctive voice of Elling comes in with the first verse, singing it in a straight manner initially. In the middle section, his pianist Lawrence Hobgood applies a degree of reharmonisation to vary the chord pattern. There are occasional breaks which allow tension to be broken then recreated. There is a brief instrumental solo which sounds a bit like a violin, but it is probably an effect created with electric guitar when the volume is turned down, the note is struck and the volume brought up quickly, creating an effect known as bowing, effectively simulating a violin sound.

When Elling comes in, he starts to experiment with the tune and the lyrics, lengthening certain notes and extending words. At this point, there is a vocal harmony in the background, which could be electronically provided via a harmoniser. The voice sounds double tracked at this point. Then there is a short guitar solo, using an overdriven sound reminiscent of John Schofield, played over a repetitive pattern of piano chords. In the next repeat of the middle section, Elling's approach is gradually freer, there is a key change, a slowing down, then a pick up of the $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm, a series of drawn out notes as the tempo slows, there is a burst of overdriven guitar, followed by a drawn out chord to end the track.

Patricia Barber has already been singled out by Gioia and others as being an especially important artist in the context of this research. As a singer, pianist and composer she can be said to be in a very strong position to develop the role of the jazz vocal, and her recorded work, and her critical reception confirms this. A special

3 CD box set issued in 2007, reflects her work with the Premonition label (*The Premonition Years 194-2007*). Her approach to material is seen in the titles of the 3 CD: 'Pop Songs', 'Standards' and 'Originals'. Barber has explained her whole approach to composition, where she creates a fictional character, with the ideas and emotions emanating from the character she has created. Her duet album in 2011 with pianist Kenny Werner features 12 original songs. On *Monday Night at the Green Mill*, she features three originals mixed in with standards and bossa novas. Her 2008 album is devoted to the work of Cole Porter. So we see a mix of material, but whatever the material, the treatment is distinctive and innovative.

Analysis of Song: 'Winter'

Recorded live at the Cafe de Boit, Quebec in 2007, this was clearly a big musical event with a sell-out and highly enthusiastic audience. This song commences with a powerful bass groove, setting out the harmonic structure and rhythmic base of the song. Barber claps along with the rhythm. Then she brings the piano in and picks up the groove which carries on throughout the song. The guitar comes in with a high energy wail above the groove, using a delay effect which allows for a decaying echo. In the middle section, the guitar and piano drop out, then come back in. Barber breaks into a wordless vocal solo, not a conventional scat as such, but an extra vocal dimension. She ends on a high note above the groove.

The song works at various levels. Rhythmically it has the beat and energy of a rock band, but the chords she layers over the bass and drum groove takes us into classic modern jazz piano. However, the distinctive metre is 7/4, which creates a distinctive angular feel to the song. The song is about winter, so the imagery is highly evocative. As a singer/songwriter/pianist at the top level, she is a member of a very small club and she scores highly in all three disciplines, whilst striking out as a highly original artist. She does include standards in her repertoire, but always with a different twist, and in addition to her own original compositions, she is happy to work on pop vehicles, producing a distinctive version Lennon and McCartney's 'Norwegian Wood', also included in this dissertation as a Kurt Elling song.

Liane Carroll

A British singer, Carroll has a strong reputation as a powerful soul-inflected singer, capable of emotional frankness and able to scat sing with great flexibility. From the evidence of her concerts and recorded work, it is clear that along with a core of standards from the Great American Song Book, she has tried to select material from various sources, to provide variety for her audiences. Her most recent album reveals a variety of sources, including Tom Waits' 'Take Me Home', Turn out the Stars (Bill Evans), a Christmas song, 'Some Children See Him' and Moanin' (Bobbie Timmons). In addition, there are versions of 'Old Devil Moon', 'Witchcraft' and 'Killer Jo'. So, as an interesting take on the way some contemporary jazz singers develop their repertoires, we see the quirky Tom Waits, and two jazz tunes with lyrics added later, (Bill Evans, Bobbie Timmons). Positive reactions by critics and audiences suggest that this balance of new and old is a way of breaking free from over-reliance on the Great American Song Book. As The Guardian's John Fordham comments:

The peerless British vocalist Liane Carroll is at the Pizza Express.....
Carroll's subtle pitching, tone colouration and jazz improviser's timing reinvent 'Here's to Life' as a distilled understatement accompanied only by acoustic guitar; her earthiness is revealingly complemented by soft strings on 'Goodbye'; and 'Mad About the Boy' is so slow as to be prayer-like. McMillan's muted trumpet behind 'You've Changed' accompanies a delivery of the lyric that is all the more expressive for the matter-of-fact manner in which Carroll lists the evidence, and 'Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow' enhances the singer's frankness and emotional depth with haunting soul-sax melodies entwining the vocal line.

In addition, Carroll, over recent albums has introduced new original songs and new songs from other writers, including Todd Rundgren's 'Pretending to Care'. Carroll is not judged to be a leading edge performer in the same vein as Bleckman or Slettahjel, but she is worthy of inclusion in this section on the basis that she moves away from standards, picking a mix of contemporary artists (Mitchell, Waits) as well as writing her own material.

Analysis of Song: Dublin Morning

'Dublin Morning' is an original of Carroll's from her award-winning album *Billy No Mates* 2005. Carroll is an emotional performer who is not afraid to bare her feelings to an audience. Dublin Morning starts off with a gentle piano introduction with some runs reminiscent of Herbie Hancock, then settles into sequence of chords with a slight country feel, building up a rhythmic pattern picked up by the rhythm section. Then her voice comes in, straight away playing with the melody, swooping from an octave above and turning the lyrics into lines of scat. She takes a piano solo, which is followed by a bass solo. The song builds to a fairly free conclusion, with more scat and swoops and a long chord to end the song.

An interesting aspect of Carroll's work is that she is an accomplished pianist as well as a singer and song writer. Though not an essential part of being a songwriter, it is possible to argue that in jazz, as well as in popular genres, the combination of being a singer/songwriter and pianist is a powerful mix and allows for a distinctive style, knowing that all elements are under the control of the artist. Barber, Slettahjel and Gasper are all pianists, as are Joni Mitchell, Elton John, Kate Bush, and Billy Joel. This is not to say that they produce *better* material than other formats, but it does help develop a very personal sound. Other singers who could be included in the above group are: Carmen Lundy, Theo Jackson, Gregory Porter and Ian Shaw

Rock and Hip Hop Influence

Robert Gasper: Pianist and composer Robert Gasper has stated his mission to reconcile modern jazz with hip hop and R&B. His latest Blue Note recording, *Black Radio* (2012) very much embodies those aims. The album is a reflection on urban music, bringing together various aspects of his musical career, including work as a keyboardist for leading hip hop and R&B stars. At the same time, he made a name for himself as a stylish contemporary jazz keyboardist, working with Christian McBride, Roy Hargrove and Terence Blanchard and others.

Analysis of Song: Afro Blue

This song is from 'Black Radio' an album issued in 2012 by the Robert Glasper Experiment, featuring Erykah Badu. The choice of the song is significant in that Afro Blue was composed by Mongo Santamaria and later recorded by John Coltrane. Santamaria's version used a typical African 3:2 cross rhythm (also known as a hemiola, where three beats of equal value occupy the time normally taken up with two beats). Elvin Jones changed the approach with more of a $\frac{3}{4}$ feel, while Glasper incorporates hip hop elements whilst retaining the original feel of the song. The song can be regarded as being iconic, especially in terms of black history and black consciousness, areas where Glasper and Badu are prominent.

The song commences with a deep-toned bass guitar riff, with the drums bringing in a simple rock beat with a pronounced off beat. This pattern remains throughout the song. Badu's voice comes in with a sound reminiscent of Billie Holiday. The verse has a fairly simple chord sequence and as the song progresses, Glasper on piano starts to fill in gaps with a series of phrases and runs in the style of Herbie Hancock. The middle section has a more varied chord structure and Glasper starts to fill in more. The song ends gradually, with some free piano and Badu opening up as the song moves to a conclusion, with various instruments contributing solo phrases, including some flute, but the bass riff continues dominant until the final note.

What we seem to be witnessing on this track is a genuine attempt to engage younger listeners without sacrificing elements of jazz improvisation. So the beat is a steady danceable groove and the song is delivered by Badu in a way which incorporates the jazz tradition through her phrasing and tonal variation. The treatment is massively different from Coltrane's and yet the original tune is shown respect by Glasper and his group.

Esperanza Spalding has become something of a phenomenon in the last few years in that she has helped to put the jazz vocal in front of wider audiences. She has done this in a variety of ways. First of all she is a world-class double bass player who,

though quite young, has performed with serious players like Joe Lovano. Secondly, she sings whilst playing the bass, which is unusual. Audiences and critics have taken to her, partly because her image is a very positive one of a young, attractive and gifted musician. Her own music shares some elements with Robert Glasper, in that it includes elements of hip hop and R&B, whilst her light, flexible voice owes more to soul and funk than it does to mainstream jazz singers. She writes her own material, her lyrics can be political, romantic or descriptive and she has considerable cross-over appeal. Other singers who could be included in the above group are Jose James and Soweto Kinch.

Piano-influenced Vocals - John Taylor/Diane Torto, Ran Blake/Sarah Serpa, Dan Whieldon/Alice Zawadski, Brad Meldhau/Fleurine.

This section is devoted to the genre of jazz singing which allows for the great intimacy and freedom which is afforded by the piano/voice format. The resultant music is often lyrical and reflective, and without having a full rhythm section, misses the kind of drive possible with bass and drums. The English pianist John Taylor has pioneered this approach, with Norma Winstone, Maria Pia Vitto and currently Diane Torto. Performing 'Ladies in Mercedes' (Steve Swallow), Norma Winstone brings in free ranging wordless introduction, then moving into an element of scat. The atmosphere builds up slowly as John Taylor comes in on piano and her voice mixes with a piano solo. Various techniques are evident when Taylor is working with a singer, sometimes he will strike the strings inside the piano, but always there is his post-Bill Evans lyricism built on a strong sense of rhythm. His tune was composed by Steve Swallow, the veteran American bass guitarist, and lyrics were added more recently by Norma Winstone.

Dan Whielden, a Manchester-based pianist has had a thorough classical background, as has his duo partner, Alice Zawadski. A typical piece of theirs will have a slow and lyrical introduction, with Zawadski using her considerable range to improvise over his chords, creating an intimate, emotional feel. Their sources of

material include standards, but also compositions by both of them and tunes based on folk songs from Europe and further east. Ran Blake, the experimental, veteran US pianist had a duo with Jeanne Lee for many years and currently performs with Sara Serpa. Theirs is a more risky, edgy and abstract approach.

Brad Meldhau, regarded as probably the leading jazz pianist of his generation, frequently operates as a duo, sometimes with his wife, the Dutch-born singer, Fleurine. A good example is a song called 'Love Marks', which is a confessional, conversational song about splitting up and sharing the goods. Lyrics are by Fleurine and the music was composed by Meldhau. He starts with an arpeggio-style backing, creating a regular beat and laying down some rich chords. The vocal is light hearted and flexible, with the intimate feel which is a hallmark of the duo genre. Meldhau then takes a solo, with a degree of interplay between left hand and right hand, one of his trade mark features. Fleurine returns with the vocal, gradually bringing in an element of freedom as she extends the words with some free improvisation, before the number ends with a series of chords, fading gradually away.

Latin jazz

Developments in the Latin Jazz Vocal have been mentioned in this paper and it is reasonable to select a representative of the genre for closer examination, and to attempt to reflect this music in the portfolio. As stated earlier, the Latin jazz vocal has been important in jazz since the launch of 'Girl from Ipanema' and although innovation has not been substantial, changes are taking place, especially amongst the Hispanic musicians in New York. **Claudio Acuna** is one of the leading singers on the contemporary Latin Jazz scene.

Analysis of Song: 'Cigaritto'.

This is a song written by Victor Jara a Chilean singer, songwriter and political activist associated with the protest songs of the Nuevo Cancion movement that arose in Chile in the 1970s. The song "Cigaritto" however, is not a protest song; rather it is a gentle song that is simply sung from the point of a field on a tobacco plantation. The piece commences with the build-up of a Latin groove by the band for a number of bars until Acuna starts. She delivers the song with a light jazzy feel and as the song develops she breaks away from the melody, improvising on it and producing some long notes from the upper part of her register while the band continues to generate the Latin-tinged groove. We then hear a guitar solo which has a slow build up of complexity to a climax of notes. This is followed by a solo on a 5 string bass guitar. At this point the tempo changes down to a different feel and Acuna is able to develop some longer, free lines above the slower beat. Overall, the feel is quite different from a typical Antonio Carlos Jobim piece and shows jazz energy as well as Latin relaxation.

CHAPTER SIX: Review of the Research Project

This project concludes that the jazz vocal has been a key part of jazz from its earliest days and remains in a strong position today, although it has appeared and continues to appear in a variety of guises. The Great American Songbook continues to dominate the jazz vocal repertoire, but other material and approaches can now be seen in the work of many jazz vocalists. The definition of what is a jazz singer is fairly flexible which can be seen as an indication of the richness and variety of work which comes under this heading. This dissertation has attempted to categorise these strands.

Lyrics are seen as being important in the new approaches to the jazz vocal as they were in the age of the Great American Songbook. However, new strategies have developed: lyrics for existing instrumental tunes, music for existing words, often poems and entirely new songs with a contemporary feel. Use of popular songs from the modern era has required a new approach to dealing with these lyrics in a jazz context. There has been a major trend towards the use of post -1950s popular songs as vehicles for jazz singers, for example Kurt Elling, Theo Bleckman, Kate McGarry)

The Latin jazz vocal has evolved beyond the Bossa Nova with wider influences from other parts of Latin America linking with contemporary jazz influences. However, the profile of this newer music is not widespread. New jazz songs are being written, often by artists themselves, to good acclaim from audiences. However they have not generally entered the wider jazz vocal repertoire. There has been a major uplift in interest in jazz-influenced popular singers. Artist like Diana Krall, Jamie Cullum, Norah Jones and Jane Monheit fill concert halls and sell albums.

Vocal jazz has not generally been the source of major innovation in jazz, compared with; say Armstrong, Ellington, Davis and Coltrane. However, we are beginning to see new structural approaches to the idea of a jazz song from Theo Bleckman (building on the work of Bobby McFerrin), and Christine Tobin and it is too early to say how much the work of these artists and other artists will affect the wider world of jazz.

The research has shown that it is helpful from the study angle, to work from a fairly flexible definition of what constitutes a jazz vocal song. Purists may prefer the term to be used in a specific way, but in view of the increase in links between different genres and the degree of cross-fertilisation, it has been helpful to consider the categories of 'leading edge', mainstream, jazz influenced popular music and 'near jazz'. Some of the younger performers have recognised that young people are not listening to jazz and that jazz audiences tend to be quite old as a generalisation. Their answer is to include elements of music followed by young people, for example rap and hip hop, because this is the music that they grew up with. These artists include Robert Glasper, Jose James and Soweto Kinch. This can be seen as a potentially significant in the evolution of the jazz vocal song.

It is recognized that not all aspects of contemporary jazz singing can be covered within this dissertation, because as the research has unfolded, so the broad global scope of the subject has become clearer. Future research should look at the position of the jazz vocal song on a world-wide basis, as the jazz vocal will exist more or less wherever there is jazz. So the whole of Europe, Asia, Australasia and South America would need to be examined. Even though the current research has looked at the USA, UK and parts of Europe, it is acknowledged that the coverage has not been exhaustive. Some excellent and innovative singers and writers will have not been discovered, so ideally a general survey of all the world's major exponents should be undertaken. Amongst the leading edge performers, there is a willingness to seek inspiration anywhere, with no boundaries. This is in keeping with the adventurous spirit that jazz, in its relatively short existence, has always demonstrated.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Analysis of Song Portfolio in relation to contemporary examples.

This section forms the musical core of this project and the approach has been to select six artists whose work can be seen to reflect the vanguard of new thinking, to examine some of their work in musicological terms and to compose, perform and record jazz vocal songs which attempt to incorporate some of their ideas. It is not being suggested that the portfolio of new songs composed by this researcher will necessarily contain genuine musical quality. However, it is intended that the process of composition and recording will help to throw some light on the innovative trends being identified in this project.

Initial findings suggest that there are a number of approaches evident when assessing the current jazz vocal scene. There is no overriding or dominant trend and the final portfolio of songs submitted as part of this project will attempt to reflect the diversity which the current scene offers. In identifying trends, there will inevitably be an element of subjective choice, but it will also reflect the views of critics, academics and enthusiasts who have contributed to the project. To emphasise the diversity, there will be an attempt to show key areas of innovation.

Artists have therefore been selected who seem to be establishing new ways of singing jazz, either with new material or by innovative treatment of existing material, although not necessarily from a recognisable jazz source. This is a subjective selection and cannot claim to be the final word. However, it is argued that the selected list do demonstrate the current diversity encompassed by the term 'jazz vocal song'. At the same time, the enclosed CD has been put forward as an attempt to reflect the elements of distinctive innovation of each chosen artist.

'Control of My Heart'

Recorded at Glass Studios. Featuring Robin Thomas, keyboard and vocals, Keith Singleton, fretless bass and Derek Smallridge, Drums.

This song has a medium groove which attempts to emulate Parlato's approach in 'Holding Back the Years'. The song has a faintly gospel feel to it, perhaps reflecting my own exposure to church music at an earlier age, but it also attempts to create a chord sequence and a set of chord voicings to present some sort of challenge to a soloist. In the scat section, it tries to explore the melodic possibilities of the chord sequence. The general message of the song is that person one has fallen for has taken control of the admirer's heart, a fairly standard situation in a popular song. The middle eight attempts to use a military analogy to strengthen the idea of control. There is no point in attempting any kind of defence; surrender is the only strategy. The track commences with a descending line from the bass accompanied by piano chords from G to D, while the drums lays down a simple groove pattern. The voice comes in with two verses and the middle section, using the descending pattern between the verses. There is a piano solo over two verses, followed by a repeat of the middle eight and the final verse, with a brief scating solo over the descending chord pattern. The performance appears to benefit from being in a live situation and overcomes some of the issues experienced in multi-tracking and dubbing.

In terms of emulating Parlato's approach, there are immediate difficulties in getting anywhere near her light and rhythmically sophisticated approach. However, it was hoped that the groove-based approach, as opposed to a swing approach would make the track closer to the target. As with Bleckman, producing anything which matches her skill is a tall order, but the flexible, no boundaries approach is one which singers could examine and which will start to feed into the work of mainstream exponents.

'Lights on Water'

Robin Thomas, keyboard, vocal, bass and guitar, Chris Flaherty Drums and Recording Engineer.

This song was inspired by a view of the River Mersey, but the treatment is intended to reflect the approach of Theo Bleckmann. The lyrics are purely intended to create the feeling of someone looking across the river at midnight, with various light colours being reflected in the water. The general story line is that some decisions need to be taken and the view and atmosphere has created some confusion, but the decision must be taken. The song attempts to create an atmospheric mood and uses a degree of free vocal improvisation over a sequence of minor chords. It starts with a looping sequence, intended to replicate the kind of looping which Blackman employs. Bleckmann is such an original performer with such a versatile and mellifluous voice, that any kind of imitation will be difficult but the hope is that some of his elements of innovation have been portrayed. The looping was facilitated by recording engineer Chris Flaherty, using Cubase. The approach was to create a D minor chord harmony with my voice, to try to create a certain atmosphere. The piano comes in, using a mix of a Rhodes and an Acoustic Piano plug in. The drums and bass then come in at this point with a mid-paced rock beat. Before the vocal starts, there is a brief guitar break. This moves slightly away from the atmosphere created by Bleckmann, but it was felt that this particular tune needed a bit more structure and energy. After the verse and chorus, there is a guitar solo, with a small amount of reverb and delay to create a more contemporary sound than the purer approach of guitarists who follow the more traditional approach of Kessel, Johnny Smith and others. The vocal comes in on the final verse. In a technical note, there were some problems encountered with recording keyboard, vocal and bass as multi-track using as click track. The recording engineer has done a certain amount of adjustment in order to create as reasonable sense of coherence from a rhythmic standpoint.

'Change of Heart'

Robin Thomas keyboard and guitar, Keith Singleton, guitar and Derek Smallridge, drums.

This song tries to create something of the slow pace which characterizes the work of McGarry and Slettahjell, whilst developing the harmonic potential of the chord structure. Again, it is only an attempt to incorporate elements of their styles, which

they have made their own. The lyrics take a typical situation, like many songs, where a relationship has broken up and the frustration and sense of helplessness a person faces where it is a question of waiting for things to happen, so the winter to end, for the ride to turn.

The track commences with a repeated bass note as a groove is picked up on drums, against which there is a section of guitar improvisation. The vocal takes us through two verses with a change to a more insistent beat in the chorus section. After a guitar solo, the voice returns with the chorus and the final verse and a small piece of scat to end the track. This track was recorded in one take, with vocals and keyboard performed simultaneously. There may be advantages in recording vocals separately, but given the need to express vocal phrases in sync with keyboard phrases, the decision was made to do it all together.

Free Jazz piece

Robin Thomas, piano and vocal (influenced by Laura Kinsella and other free jazz singers)

This was recorded on the University's Steinway in the Phipps Room, with Alex Hart as Recording Engineer. This is a completely free piece, where the voice and piano can go in the same direction because there are no other musicians involved, It means that key and tempo changes can take place without causing musical confusion. Free jazz involving more than one player demands a high degree of empathy and listening from the players, as characterized by the work of the Australian trio, The Necks, who have no formal tunes as such and whose improvisations can go on for some time.

The piece starts with some arpeggio flourishes, and then a piece of scat with a medium swing beat over an improvised chord sequence. There is a patch of free chordal improvisation, with a return of the scat then a slowdown in tempo, introducing a more peaceful mood which moves towards the final keyboard flourish.

To emulate the work of Kinsella would be difficult especially as she has a closely-knit group who has been together for some time. However, it is hoped that at least I was able to create the feel of her very free and flexible approach to the jazz vocal.

In Paris, In Love, in Springtime

Personel Influenced by Kurt Elling.

Any attempt to emulate Elling is doomed to failure as he has a commanding jazz voice and tremendous attack and gusto. The portfolio song has partly been chosen because it is $\frac{3}{4}$ time, which is the time signature for 'Norwegian Wood'. However, other influences are at work in this song, notably a sense of being in Paris, hence the use of violin in this track. In terms of lyrics, the song reflects the appeal of Paris and observes some of the typical tourist attractions. The idea may be a little over-sentimental, but many people have felt this way about Paris and it is reasonable to assume that a couple, in Paris, would feel that the environment would lead to heightened feelings about each other. There are 2 versions of this song on the CD. Version 1 was performed by Robin Thomas, keyboard, vocal and violin, Keith Singleton, fretless bass. This features a violin solo, designed to create a French atmosphere. Version 2 has Robin Thomas on grand piano and vocals and was recorded by Alex is included because has an element of scat in it, and scat is one of Kurt Elling's trademarks. In addition, a sound effect of a typical Parisian pavement is included alongside the middle piano section.

'Gaza Strip'

Robin Thomas, keyboard, vocals, Keith Singleton, fretless bass, Derek Smallridge, Drums, recorded at Glass Studios.

This song attempts to create a rock/hip hop groove, while the lyrics are meant to be contemporary and political, which is close to the mood of Robert Glasper's work. The singer on Africa Blue, Erykah Badu is known for a strong sense of political activism in her work, so 'Gaza Strip' takes a political stance and effectively sympathises with the residents of Gaza Strip. The lyrics attempt to spell out the personal plight of residents in this area during a recent air strike. The track is introduced with a

sequence of an A minor chord moving to F minor, with a simple groove from bass and drums. The vocal comes in for two verses, with the verses linked in via a chord E major suspended, with the bass hitting the low E. The middle section follows a descending pattern from F minor down to D flat, then to a G chord with a flattened 6th. During the keyboard solo a sound effect of angry middle eastern voices is used to create atmosphere. After the final verse, the track ends with the suspended E chord, with a brief piece of improvisation on the fretless bass.

As an attempt to emulate Glasper, this was always going to be a difficult task, given the fact that Glasper is steeped in a contemporary hip hop environment and that his band will have some of the best musicians in this genre. In addition, Erykah Badu is renowned as a legendary vocalist with shades of Billie Holliday in her voice, so any attempt to capture her unique sound will present insurmountable difficulties. However, it is felt that the tune makes a nod in the direction of the sort of music that Glasper is producing.

'Echoes'

Robin Thomas, keyboard and vocals, Keith Singleton, fretless bass, Derek Smallridge, drums (Influenced by Liane Carroll and others). This song is presented as a straight-forward standard-type song, using a 4/4 swing and a conventional verse, chorus, solo structure. It attempts to make the point that away from the innovators listed above, there are many new jazz songs being written and performed by a range of more mainstream singers. Typically, a new CD being produced by mainstream singers like Jane Monheit, Stacy Kent, Liane Carroll, plus higher-profile artists like Diana Krall, Harry Connick Junior and Jamie Cullum, will contain a small number of new songs, often written by the performer or by independent writers. To balance the usual majority of standards, 'Echoes' is put forward as the kind of song which could be performed by a mainstream artist, though not necessarily one which could become widely used. Indeed, as has been stated, new original jazz songs tend to be performed only by the singer originally associated with the work.

'Echoes' is song about a person reflecting on all the paraphernalia one tends to collect in life, including mountains of photographs (in the pre-digital age). There is a feeling of regret about lost opportunities, not uncommon on a certain age group. The song is taken at a medium pace so as to get close to the kind of swing which Carroll creates and there is a piano solo in the middle. There is a small element of scat as the song nears its conclusion.

'People Gather Round'

Personel (Influenced by Patricia Barber)

An attempt will be made to replicate the type of groove which characterizes much of Barber's work, although not 7/4. Like a previous choice, the song has a gospel feel to it. It has a guitar solo to replicate the format which Barber tends to favour (piano/vocal, bass, drum and guitar), while the elements of vocal improvisation will attempt to emulate Barber's flair in this respect.

From a lyrics standpoint, the song was inspired by the fact that when there is some kind of tragedy, people generally do their best to help out and 'be there' for the person who has suffered . It's not a love song, just a general reflection that people can be surprisingly helpful and positive when things get difficult,

The track commences with a lazy, country style phrase on the piano. The drum comes in with a slow groove and a lazy feel to it. The voice comes in and takes us through to the solo passage. There follows a tenor sax solo by Colin Crichton who accurately captures the feel of the song, the voice returns and the song ends.

In terms of capturing anything of the feeling of Patricia Barber, one is faced with the same impossible task that the other tracks have highlighted. Barber is a gifted vocalist, songwriter and pianist with an expert and sympathetic rhythm section. The portfolio song suffers in comparison and perhaps the only reasonably successful; elements are the chord sequence. The tenor saxophone solo and the groove created by professional drummer.

‘I thought of You’ and ‘Ocean’

Robin Thomas, grand piano, voice and harmonica. Recorded by Alex Hart in the Phipps Hall of the university, using the university’s Steinway.

These songs have been influenced by John Taylor and his work with Norma Winstone and others). These songs were chosen because they are slow, reflective ones and they are performed with piano only. The challenge with trying to indicate the feel of these artists is that all the singers involved have exceptional voices and have the technique to tackle challenging intervals ‘I thought of You’ is done as a very slow, almost rubato version, using the chord choice modifications as suggested by American pianist and composer Fred Hersch during a tutorial which took place in New York in 2012. The lyrics are about a person finding some old photographs and being reminded of lost opportunities. With the freedom of solo playing, there was an opportunity to stretch out the introduction and ending and to capitalize on the freedom and resonance of using a high quality grand piano.

‘Ocean’ is taken as a medium swing tune, but without a rhythm section. This is a harmonica solo in the middle to give the song some atmosphere. The lyrics use a maritime analogy to demonstrate feelings, the persons mind being seen as a deep ocean which has been stirred by the relationship. The maritime idea is developed using the model of trade winds and vessels on the ocean. The track makes use of a sound effect of waves to help to create atmosphere.

‘Sunset in the Old World, Sunrise in the New’.

Robin Thomas, piano and vocal.

This song was written to reflect the idea of a couple seeking a new life in South America, with some geographical allusions and expressions of love. The beat is inspired by the Acuna performance of ‘Cigaritto. This number was recorded on the University’s Steinway, with Alex Hart as the recording engineer. It starts with a sequence of chords setting out the feel of the song with a gentle Latin metre. Ideally, this track would have had some hand-held percussion to create more of an authentic feel, but there were practical difficulties which prevented this from taking place. After the verses, there is a short piano solo, exploiting the harmonic possibilities of the

chord structure. The lyrics are intended to give a general travelogue feel of Latin America.

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4. Questionnaire Pro-Forma.

Huddersfield University: School of Music and Music Technology, M.A Research Project: ‘The Evolution of the Jazz Vocal Song: What comes after the Great American Song Book?’

As part of the above programme, I am seeking a variety of opinions to build up a body of evidence to answer the above question. I would be delighted if you complete this email questionnaire and return it to me. I will send a summary of my findings to all participants who request one and I will maintain anonymity unless you make a longer statement to which you would like attribution. Please feel free to supply additional information and if you would like to talk to me in greater depth, please tell me and I'll make contact, by phone, email or in person, if it is feasible. Please feel free to forward this email to any jazz-minded friends in your address book.

Please press ‘reply’ which will let you type your answer after each question on the email and then click ‘return’ when you have completed the questionnaire. However, it may be that your email will deal with this slightly differently.

1. Which of the following would be your **main** designation for the purposes of this exercise?
A: Jazz Instrumentalist: Professional
B: Jazz Instrumentalist: Semi-Pro/Amateur
C: Jazz Singer: Professional
D: Jazz Singer: Semi-Pro/ Amateur
E: Jazz Fan/Enthusiast
F: Academic/Critic

My designation would be: (A to F)

2. Where do you see the position of the jazz vocal song in the current jazz repertoire?
A: Very important
B: Quite important
C: Of minor significance
D: Of no real importance

Please complete (A to D):

Please add any further comment:

3. How do you see the future of the Great American Song Book (GASB) in the vocal jazz repertoire?

A GASB is supreme in jazz vocals and will remain so without much need for new material

B. The GASB is very important, but newer material is needed to keep the jazz song fresh.

C. We need to create new material and gradually move away from standards.

D. I have no strong views on this question.

Please select **A** to **D**

Please add any further comments:

4. How do you see the potential influence of other genres on the jazz vocal song in the years to come? Looking at pop/rock/folk/world/classical/others, please comment on any of these genres which might influence the development of the jazz vocal in the years to come.
5. Please mention any artists/composers/songwriters, from anywhere in the world, who strike you as indicating interesting and promising ways ahead for the jazz vocal son
6. Do you have any views on the various attempts which have been made to vary or update the jazz vocal song? These could include developments in scat singing (wordless vocal improvisation), vocalese (writing lyrics to jazz solos), writing lyrics for existing jazz tunes, wring music for existing words, e.g. poetry/verse and composition of new jazz vocal songs.
7. Technology: Given that laptops are being used in live jazz contexts, do you have any thoughts on the possibilities of using this type of technology, or other aspects of technology in the creation/performance of the jazz song?
8. If you are aware of any references relevant to this topic (articles, research, books, reviews, press items), please pass on any details or links.
9. Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

5. Lyrics to Song Portfolio

Control of my heart

Tonight there's something that I'd like to say:

It's not very clever, but it'll go a long way

To make something clear that's been there from the start.

You have taken control of my heart.

You've taken control, destroyed my defence

It's like a strong radar, a kind of sixth sense.

On my mind, in my thoughts, we're two of a kind.

And you have taken control of my mind.

You staked out your territory and built a line of forts.

Your army's taken full control and you dominate my thoughts.

The image of your face is etched upon my brain,

You dug your trenches right across my domain.

So tonight you look so radiant and charming

With a broad natural smile that's completely disarming.

And so there's no future in being apart

You have taken complete control of my heart

Lights on Water

Lights on water, green and blue.

Reflections of a ghostly hue.

Through the trees and by the tide.

A vision of beauty and time to decide.

Eyes on heaven, clouds searching the moon.

Blue rays in my head and a haunting tune.
Moon reflections on a tide that's turning.
Celestial lights and my head is burning.
Thoughts are surging, brain in confusion.
Dreams of the future, ideas in profusion.
Nothing moves, all stillness tonight.
A symphony of water and light.
Lights on water dancing moonbeams.
Colours and lights and certain dreams.

Change of Heart

I saw the writing on the wall
I saw the suitcase in the hall
Didn't know that this time was for real.
I thought that we had time to talk,
Time to stop that final walk,
I was sure that all our wounds would heal

I'm looking for a change of heart
We need to make another start
Ain't no future being apart from you

Waiting for the tide to turn.
Waiting for the fire to burn.
Wondering what the winds of time will bring.
Suffering from those winter blues.

Hoping for some better news,
Marking time and waiting for the spring.

Waiting for a better day
Wish those clouds would drift away
Waiting for the summer birds to sing.

In Paris, In Love In The Spring

Together at last we stroll on the banks of the Seine
I'm walking on air and madly in love again.
In a pavement café we get through a bottle of wine
And I can't believe after all these years that you're mine.
Through the Arc de Triomph, down Le Champs D'Elise we wing.
Together at last, in Paris, in love, in the spring

Together at last we look up at the Eiffel Tower.
We slip in the Louvre to escape a sharp springtime tower.
We chase a red balloon on the steps of Montmartre,
Buying Doisnau prints and discussing John Paul Sartre.
In La Place de La Concorde we bask in the sun's April beams.
Together at last, in love in the city of dreams.

Gaza Strip

Missiles raining from the Skies.
Brains are blown to paradise.

Rockets primed for mass destruction.
Software laced with death's instruction
Another genocidal trip
To Gaza Strip.

Living here like ancient slaves.
Preparing loved ones for their graves
People reaching desperation
Digging in the ruins of a broken nation
Someone's got to get a grip.
On Gaza Strip

So much for the Arab Spring
The whole thing's got a hollow ring.
That's why I'm jumping ship.
From Gaza Strip

Echoes

Impossible to throw away those echoes of the past.
Post cards, records, souvenirs, all the junk that I've amassed.
Each one a memento of a moment of glory.
Tickets and certificates, each one with its story

The sideboards like a treasure trove, ready to be mined.
Trophies and diaries, nostalgia's here defined.
School reports and birthday cards, in a shoebox stored.

Forbidden photographs of old flames that I've adored.

The years are passing rapidly, the past is gently fading.

I dip into the sideboard store and feel that I'm invading.

A different world, a distant age, with a warm and gentle glow.

A powerful reminder of the ghosts of years ago,

You could say there's nothing sillier

Than hoarding memorabilia.

To tidy would be monumental

At the end of the day, I'm sentimental.

People Gather Round

People gather round, they show their concern.

Your world falls apart, you're plunged in despair.

They hold out their arms in friendship and love.

When hope seems lost, people show that they care.

There's a depth of feeling, there's a common goal.

That helps the healing and restores the soul.

Chorus

'Cause people gather round, they give you their heart.

They gather round and give you their heart.

Someone to listen, find the key to your mind,

Protect you from those whose words are unkind.

Helping to overcome doubt and depression.

With helpful words and gentle expression.

There's a hand to guide you through the shadowed vale.

The touch of friendship when mere words fail.

Chorus

'Cause people gather round, they give you their heart.

They gather round and give you their heart.

'Cause people gather round, they give you their heart.

They gather round and give you their heart.

I Thought of You

I thought of you, the other day,

Looking through some photographs that I'd put away.

I can't forget, those carefree days,

Down country lanes and in the summer haze.

Now things have changed, time's moved along.

And I'm constantly reminded how I got things badly wrong.

Now things have changed, time's moved along,

And I'm constantly reminded how I got things badly wrong.

Those memories keep flooding back

The intensity just stops me in my tracks.

I've tried to blank your image from my mind.

But I keep looking at those photographs again.

Unfinished business in matters of the heart.

Searching for a way to make the pain depart.

It wasn't just the other day.

Those photographs have not been put away.

Those thoughts won't go, nor will the pain.

I want that summer in my life again.

The Ocean of My Mind

Somewhere in the ocean of my mind

You started a wave which knocked me off my feet.

A fierce tide surging up the beach,

There was no resistance I was facing defeat.

Somewhere in the ocean of my mind

You touched a nerve, released a wave of compassion.

And straight away my mind was invaded

By an urgent tide of love and passion.

And I can share your grey moments

When your vessel of hope is becalmed.

I will breathe trade winds to guide you,

To safe anchorage where you cannot be harmed.

The moon casts a ghostly spotlight

As the gale drives the rain in my eyes.

I know that when the tempest is over,

We'll be on safe ground, close to paradise.

Sunset in the Old World

Sunset in the old world, sunrise on the new.

Journey to infinity, drink a Brazilian brew

Passport at the ready, a chance to be a hero.

From Piccadilly Circus to Rio de Janeiro.

Blisters falling off my feet, muscles feel so rusty.

Forehead roasted by the sun, track so dry and dusty,

Scrambling up the Andes, floating on a boat.

Gorging on fajitas, with booze to burn my throat.

Camping in the Pampas, swig Chilean wines.

Tramp in Mato Grosso, see ancient Inca shrines.

Discovering a continent, exploring life with you

Sunset in the old world, sunrise in the new.

6. Detailed Answers to Questionnaire

Results of the Questionnaire sent out December 2012- April 2013. There were 17 replies from over 100 dispatched, on the face of it a low response. However, many of the replies went into interesting and informative detail and the results have been used more as a qualitative response. Any attempt to draw statistical conclusions would not have any validity,

1. Which of the following would be your **main** designation for the purposes of this exercise?

- A: Jazz Instrumentalist: Professional 6
- B: Jazz Instrumentalist: Semi-Pro/Amateur 5
- C: Jazz Singer: Professional 2
- D: Jazz Singer: Semi-Pro/Amateur 1
- E: Jazz Fan/Enthusiast 2
- F: Academic/Critic 2

2. Where do you see the position of the jazz vocal song in the current jazz repertoire?

- A: Very important 9
- B: Quite important 6
- C: Of minor significance 1
- D: Of no real importance

Selected Comments

'With vocal performers bridging between Pop and jazz (e.g. Amy Winehouse) there may be an emergence of enjoyment of jazz by a wider and younger audience, who much of the time may not be aware that they are listening to jazz-influenced music.'(enthusiast)

'It's more ubiquitous than instrumental jazz particularly the cutting edge variety, and draws on a bigger history within jazz lending itself to myriad forms that partly explain why jazz vocals can so often be heard' .(critic)

'Vocal interpretation of Jazz has always been of central influence in the interpretation of the emotion of the music as well contributing to the musical individuality of a song. Distinctive voices of for example, Ma Rainey, Sarah Vaughan, and Ida Cox, Billie Holiday (Chet Baker, Fats Waller, and Louis Armstrong) are so individual that a song can be a new experience with each one. A key part of Jazz is to improvise. Singers with their own idiosyncratic voices are in a great place to fulfil this requirement and inspire musicians.'(semi-professional jazz singer)

3. How do you see the future of the Great American Song Book (GASB) in the vocal jazz repertoire?

A GASB is supreme in jazz vocals and will remain so without much need for new material 3

B. The GASB is very important, but newer material is needed to keep the jazz song fresh.12

C. We need to create new material and gradually move away from standards.1

D. I have no strong views on this question.1

Selected Comments:

'I don't think the GASB is ever going to disappear. The songs are too strong and well-known. (Semi –Pro Instrumentalist)

'I think there is scope for new interpretation as well as new material, just as Be-Bop re-interpreted GASB material (Jazz Enthusiast)'

'It is essential for jazz vocal song to evolve and be influenced by other music. A good example of this are the repertoires of Sarah Vaughan and Dianne Reeves being so influenced by Brazilian music' (Academic/Musician)

“Cassandra Wilson was I thought the best example of a contemporary singer who takes aspects of the jazz tradition, the blues tradition—both those music's' vocal repertoires—and works new popular material into her albums.”

“Never really liked it when singers put words top jazz classics (e.g. Joni Mitchell doing 'Pork Pie Hat' Mingus). I'm thinking also about the place of rap / spoken word in 1 or 2 of the albums by Soweto Kinch—a British sound.” (Academic/Musician)

“It's completely subjective - but in my view standards will always be relevant. Just from a melodic perspective. Why would Keith Jarrett still play them, as someone who straddles genres as diverse as classical music and experimental.” (Pro Jazz Instrumentalist)

“I believe there is room for everything. I enjoy well done 40s/50s style jazz singing when it's done very well today, but the people that are interested in contemporary use of the voice need space too.” (Professional Jazz Instrumentalist)

“The music must be allowed to evolve whilst respecting its roots.” (Pro Jazz Instrumentalist)

“There is no reason to discard The Great American Songbook. If it is a good song, it can take rhythmic and harmonic reinterpretation and still keep the essence of itself, as has already been demonstrated many times over in the 20th and the 21st century.” (Pro Jazz Singer)

“The Great American Songbook polarises debate on the subject particularly among younger musicians. Some claim no allegiance to it at all although they tend to be instrumentalists, but singers such as Andrew Plummer for instance questions its relevance, and there is a case to be made that because of its big city nature, links with the whole notion of American-ness, and the possible conservatism of its inherent forms, that its appeal is diminishing especially in Europe.” (Critic)

“The second half "newer material is needed to keep the jazz song fresh" is troublesome however. So-called 'Standards' can be performed, fresh and 'in the moment', such that it becomes by definition, new and part of the evolution of the art form. Composition of new material is a separate issue, since jazz is an improvisation-based form. Newly composed material that is not delivered improvisationally, not being 'heard' in the moment does not qualify to be an evolution or part of the succession to GASB per se.” (Pro Jazz Instrumentalist)

“I took a few CD’s down from my shelf Michael Buble, Jamie Cullen, Madeleine Peyroux, Stacey Kent, Melody Gardot and Amy Winehouse. Less than 20% of their songs are great American song book. It’s already being consigned to the past by young modern Jazz singers who don’t have it in their memory bank.” (Semi-Pro Jazz Singer)

4. How do you see the potential influence of other genres on the jazz vocal song in the years to come? Looking at pop/rock/folk/world/classical/others, please comment on any of these genres which might influence the development of the jazz vocal in the years to come.

“Any genres can be considered, maybe classical, e.g. G. Schuller” (enthusiast)

“I quite often use pop songs in my set - Close to You (Bacharach), Little Wing (Jimi Hendrix), The Way you make me feel (Michael Jackson). People enjoy listening to this sort of thing because they recognise it. I don't necessarily give it a jazz bent, but with jazz musicians and a jazz trio, you can't help but make it sound jazzy.” (Pro Jazz Singer)

“I think pop and classical are the most likely genres to influence the jazz vocal song in the future in terms of arrangements and instrumentation.” (enthusiast)

“Ivan Lins, Esperanza Spalding, Jesse Levy (wrote many songs for Norah Jones) Tim Laphorn.” (Academic)

“The jazz vocal song does not exist so much anymore - you can't really call standards jazz vocal songs - they're songs from the shows or from pop music. Someone like Cassandra Wilson is doing some interesting things – but she's mainly

putting words to Wayne Shorter tunes or repertoire of that nature. Nowadays there are not so many interesting things happening in pop music so jazz musicians don't have the opportunity to interpret which is central to the art. That's why jazz musicians are predominantly writing their own music - but the disconnect occurs when jazz musicians don't interpret their own music. They don't play with the same abandon or the same amount of expression as they would when they play well-known standards because the material can be overly complex or restrictive” (Pro Jazz Instrumentalist)

“The Bjork/Radiohead/'contemporary pop' etc influences are already 15+ years old on the jazz scene and hardly new. I hear a lot of rock influence in today's jazz, but I suppose if you had vocals on that it would just be rock?! 'Jazz' has always been a mongrel art form and I'm sure it will continue to be in the age of near universal access to information and music.” (Pro Jazz Instrumentalist)

“I think pop/rock/folk/world/classical/others has already influenced and fused into the evolving jazz vocal song and will continue to in the future.” (Pro Jazz Instrumentalist)

“Some outstanding songs from other genres will work their way into the jazz vocal repertoire, but my observation is that relative to the number of songs in the Great American Song Book, there are very few of these.” (Semi-pro instrumentalist)

“Other genres have always influenced the jazz song/singer - especially rock, folk and world. As the world contracts and music of every genre is so easily accessible, each of these forms cannot help but affect the other. I have heard one jazz singer incorporate aspects of Indian music in her scatting, to very great effect. Most musical genres now 'borrow' from each other, to some degree, which helps to keep their music, as well as jazz, fresh and representative of the world in which we live today.”(Pro Jazz Singer)

“I think we can state that jazz has no boundaries and will always keep evolving and be affected by the vocals and rhythms of the world.” (Semi-Pro Jazz Instrumentalist)

“This has been going on for some time, as an inevitable consequence of the eclecticism of the digital age. Electronica, neo-soul, hip hop and the work of singer/songwriters are the chief areas where the influences are coming from.” (Critic)

“No differently than I view the context in which the GASB itself emerged - i.e., always drawing upon the genres/influences to hand at the time. This includes technological influences. Instruments and sound recording/processing/amplification equipment have developed in ways unimaginable to a composer who would have been hard at work in the early part of the 20th century. Their eclectic approach and magpie-thieving (in a good way) impulses should be the core element we continue seamlessly into our shared musical future(s).” (Pro Jazz Instrumentalist)

5. Please mention any artists/composers/songwriters, from anywhere in the world, who strike you as indicating interesting and promising ways ahead for the jazz vocal song?

Norma Winstone (writing lyrics to fit existing tunes). Paul McCartney is still capable of writing a decent tune e.g. My Valentine (2012) Pat Metheny John Adams, Thomas Ades

Liz Wright, Silje Nergaard, Rene Marie, Sarah Brickel
Mark Murphy, George Duke, Dave Grusin.

Cassandra Wilsons takes elements from country music. Jarle Bernhoft as well but you couldn't call it jazz vocal song . He writes pop songs with jazz references. That is what most singers with nous/aspirations for a career. Another example is Joni

Mitchell, you would not call her songs jazz vocal songs but they are played by jazz musicians. I like Sidsel Endresen as well - again though it starts to go wrong when you try and define it as jazz vocal song. It's just Sidsel's music. or Joni's songs, or Bjork's songs. Bjork did a great version of 'Like someone in love.' I would say that a lot of songs do not get recorded in the spirit of jazz performance. There are few one-take, band playing all together songs these days. Most things are layered up and very carefully produced and arranged so you can't really call it jazz because there is generally nothing unplanned about it. I am not a huge fan of writing lyrics to jazz solos (like Jon Hendricks has done) as the words are hard to understand at the pace they go by. Depends on the solo of course. (Academic)

Plus the following names, some already identified as part of the research, but also some which need further exploration: Brigitte Beraha, Christine Tobin, Fini Bearman, Jeanne Added (France), Andrew Plummer.(Pro Instrumentalist)

Esperanza Spalding and Jill Scott I think could both be considered as innovators in this field. Esperanza Spalding.(SR)Aga Zaryan, Esperanza Spalding, Theo Bleckmann, Bilal, Ayanna Witter-Johnson, Erika Stucky, Cécile McLorin Salvant (SG) Imogen Heap, Bjork, Radiohead, João Bosco, Jobim, Kurt Elling, Lionel Lueke, Joni Mitchell, Richard Bona -Robert Glasper, Esperanza Spalding, Lalah Hathaway.

6. Do you have any views on the various attempts which have been made to vary or update the jazz vocal song? These could include developments in scat singing (wordless vocal improvisation), vocalese (writing lyrics to jazz solos), writing lyrics for existing jazz tunes, writing music for existing words, e.g. poetry/verse and composition of new jazz vocal songs.

All these can work, important for jazz to keep alert to possibilities (enthusiast)

Vocalese is fantastic - Kurt Elling has brought that into the wider use of jazz repertoire brilliantly. I dislike writing lyrics for existing jazz tunes - all too often, they're cheesy, and just there for the sake of it. (pro-singer)

Aspects of technology in the creation/performance of the jazz song? The relevant criterion is the result, not the production method, but live performance is a vital part of the jazz experience. (enthusiast)

I'm open to this technology as long as it doesn't interfere with the lyric and interfere in an overly mechanical way. (Academic)

I like hearing lyrics to existing songs if the lyrics are interesting.(pro instrumentalist)

Jeanne Added has a lot of work with Le bruit du [sign] in which the voice is used very instrumentally. Also this record we made together!:

<http://loopcollective.bandcamp.com/album/twelve-tales-from-abbey-road> (JH)

'Personally, I'm not a big fan of scat singing, though it does have its place when done well. I think the potential of vocalese applied to both standard and contemporary melodies, instrumental solos and poetry etc is an area begging to be investigated more'. (pro instrumentalist)

'Jazz I feel has no boundaries, so anything goes and the result is for the ear of the beholder to enjoy or not, but I myself prefer the original standards authentically performed [or as the composer envisaged] and performed by singers such as say Billie Holiday, Sarah Lois Vaughan, Julie London, Tony Bennett and Mel Torme to mention a few'.(semi-pro instrumentalist)

'I think that in all of the aforementioned ways of 'updating' the jazz song; it has been wholly dependent on whether the person doing these exercises has good musicianship, knowledge of the genre and good musical sense. Some instrumental pieces, for instance, do not necessarily lend themselves to a good vocal interpretation. Showing technical (vocal) prowess just for the sake of it, usually only impresses those that do it and maybe a few of their misguided friends.' (pro singer)

'There have not been any major iconoclastic change in recent years. Scat is seen as a bit old fashioned if delivered in certain settings, and vocalese has been around a long time, although there are more possibilities there for innovation perhaps. A singer like Gretchen Parlato and Patricia Barber are two of the few to have developed the role and range of the jazz singer in recent years, in Parlato's case in terms of vocalese especially'.(critic)

7. Technology: Given that laptops are being used in live jazz contexts, do you have any thoughts on the possibilities of using this type of technology, or other aspects of technology in the creation/performance of the jazz song?

'Could see jazz as a fruitful medium for this.'(enthusiast)

I'm sure the modern technology will be used in the creation of the songs.
I'd like to think that the performance was still done using real live musicians.' (semi-pro instrumentalist)

'Of course. It's all just sound! I use laptop myself for the same reason. I suppose this question starts to go in the direction of what you define jazz as, which is a whole different matter.' (pro instrumentalist)

The music will inevitably become more technology based alongside the more purist tradition.(enthusiast)

'However technology is used, it should be used to enhance not replace musicianship. To created new sounds, effects, atmospheres and textures' (pro instrumentalist)

'Laptops are just a tool. I think iPads will be used more (already last year their use started to come in). It's no big deal as we're so used to synthesisers: and the machines won't play themselves!'(critic)

8. If you are aware of any references relevant to this topic (articles, research, books, reviews, press items), please pass on any details or links.

'There are lots of blogs and websites on twitter: NPR, a blog supreme ,Ethan Iverson's blog.

'There was a recent BBC jazz on 3 broadcast in which Andrew Plummer and others were interviewed about similar themes but I'm not sure if you can listen to it anywhere'.(critic)

9. Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

Selected Comments:

'American vocal song tends to be sung like an overtly American / transatlantic accent and I don't really like that with European singers, sounds just TOO imitative. Accent is a good way of distancing improvisation from American jazz'. (Academic)

'I wish people would stop saying jazz is dead!' (Pro Jazz Musician)

I often recall my good friend and great jazz guitarist Cedric West's wife saying "you should know the words of a song to express it on an instrument, this should improve the feel and phrasing of your own interpretation". (Semi-Pro Jazz Instrumentalist)

'With respect, the terms of your question(s) and direction of enquiry are not well enough defined. Too many assumptions IMHO. In particular, the question seems to be about 'jazz song' (what's that?) composition and its evolution, but never acknowledging the fundamental importance of improvisation and its processes - the very thing that is central to any connection with jazz. Just because Robbie Williams sings songs from the GASB ("Swing While You're Winning", I think it was called) does not qualify him in any way to be considered a jazz vocalist.' (Pro Jazz Musician)

'The majority of the GASB music was written as show tunes not jazz. Ira Gershwin said " We didn't know how good our music was until we heard Ella Fitzgerald sing it" So it seems that it was jazz people who turned the music into jazz. Not all of it is good and some of it is trite and unimaginative. As young jazz singers are now using pop, old ballads, recognised jazz, classical, hip hop, reggae, etc and their own written music, jazz will develop and change but this is only what has happened to it all along.' (Semi Pro Jazz Singer)

Analysis

The point about American accents is interesting in that the same phenomenon can be seen in popular music, especially European white bands imitating their US heroes. However, the rising tide of European genres in jazz, especially Scandinavian, and some UK singers influenced by folk music, suggests that singers are moving away from imitating US accents. The point about lyrics is well made, although Bill Evans, for example, did not take lyrics all that seriously. The theme of lyrics is examined in this paper.

The more fundamental point about terminology is well made and had that feedback been available at the commencement of the project, it could have altered the approach to the design of the questionnaire and it would have generated a wider discussion of terminology in the introduction to the dissertation. The term 'jazz vocal song' was used to differentiate from the word 'jazz song' which can easily be applied to jazz composition or tune where there are no lyrics. The other point, generally expressed in this paper is that the style of the singer and the musicians determines whether the term jazz song or jazz singer is appropriate. Therefore when Robbie Williams performs something from the GASB, it does not make him a jazz singer, and when the song is being performed by him, it is not a jazz song. However, when Kurt Elling or Patricia Barber performs 'Norwegian Wood', it becomes a jazz song. With all definitions, there are problems of interpretation and a forensic approach to definition has been avoided in this research, indeed, boundaries have been blurred. From the point of view of the questionnaire, most respondents, including some academics, have accepted this element of imprecision and have concentrated on their general thoughts on what the majority will accept as 'jazz singing'.