

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

AUTUMN IN NEW YORK

RECORDED BY CHARLIE PARKER

ARRANGER UNKNOWN, POSSIBLY GLENN OSSER

- PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN ARRANGED BY JOE LIPMAN -

EDITED BY JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-8016

WORDS AND MUSIC BY VERNON DUKE

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AUTUMN IN NEW YORK (1952)

Background:

When Billie Holiday signed a new recording contract with Decca Records in 1944, she told producer Milt Gabler she wanted to record with strings. Anxious to establish Holiday as a pop singer, Gabler hired six string players for her first session, and the first song recorded was *Lover Man*, one of her biggest hits. Several years later, when Charlie Parker signed with impresario/manager Norman Granz' label Clef, Parker asked for strings as well.

Granz was obviously keeping costs down, as only five string players were hired for the first session (1949), but these were the very top New York session players; some were members of the NBC symphony conducted by Arturo Toscanini. As much as he'd dreamed of playing with strings, reportedly Parker walked out of a few sessions without playing a note (the number has never been authenticated). He later explained that the sound of the strings and the thought of working with such distinguished musicians scared him; he thought they were greater artists than he. What finally took place was sheer magic. The parts for the string players were relatively easy, so they listened and enjoyed Parker's improvisations. The arrangements for the first studio session were done by Jimmy Carroll and recorded on November 30, 1949. On July 5, 1950 there was another studio recording session, this time with arrangements by Joe Lipman. This second date featured a larger ensemble including oboe, French horn, 4 violins, 2 violas, cello, harp, guitar, piano, bass, and drums. Parker also appeared with his string group on at least 4 live occasions: *Birdland* (August, 1950 and March and April, 1951), *Apollo Theater* (August 1950), *Carnegie Hall* (September, 1950), *Rockland Palace Dance Hall* (September, 1952). In 1952 Parker recorded an additional 4 arrangements by Lipman featuring a full big band with a string section.

Parker would later say that the studio recordings with his string ensemble were his favorites of his own work, despite jazz critics' condescending reactions and their claims that he was 'selling out.' As it turns out, he was selling 'in.' The albums sold well, and brought Parker to a whole new audience. As far as his own playing, many of his solos on this first album were lovely and inspired. *Just Friends* is one of Parker's finest records and his solo is remarkable; I can't be the only one who can sing it by heart at a moment's notice. It is a pity that none of the alternate takes seem to have survived. The hit side of the January, 1952 recording date (the tape boxes are not marked), *Autumn in New York*, was one of the biggest hits written by composer Vernon Duke. Duke led a double life; as Vladimir Dukelsky, he composed concert music, including a ballet commissioned by Serge Diaghilev of the Ballet Russe (*The Rite of Spring* was another Diaghilev commission). As Duke (a name suggested by his friend George Gershwin), he wrote many wonderful songs for shows that were not very successful. His music has had a resurgence of interest in recent years, with many new recordings of his scores and individual songs.

The Music:

Thanks to the rediscovery of the original scores and parts of the *Bird* with strings arrangements, we now know that Joe Lipman did not arrange *Autumn in New York*. The handwriting on the score is totally different from scores where Lipman's name is on the title page, and there is no name to be found on *Autumn*. Based on the amount of copy errors on the parts of *Temptation*, it is clear that this recording date was prepared in a hurry, and obviously Lipman could not finish all four scores scheduled. So a 'ghost' was hired to write this score.

Ghosting became very common among arrangers when radio networks (stations throughout the country grouped together by organizations such as the Columbia Broadcasting System [CBS] and the National Broadcasting Company [NBC]) were formed in the late 1920s. With the amount of local and national programming broadcast every day that demanded many pages of music to be played live, staff arrangers who got into a bind made a phone call to one or several other arrangers to get the job done. During the big band era, Horace Henderson completed arrangements for Benny Goodman that were credited to his brother Fletcher. After the war, the recording and television industries provided work for hundreds of arrangers from coast to coast, and there was more than enough activity to keep them busy. No one cared about getting credits on record labels or album covers, the arrangers just wanted the work. In New York, Marion Evans, Billy Byers, Neal Hefti, Don Costa and a few other arrangers lived within several blocks of each other in the west 70s, and it was not uncommon for one arranger to call another one to finish an arrangement while four or five copyists sat in an apartment and cranked out parts for a date that would begin twenty minutes from the arrival of the 'ghost.'

Whoever wrote *Autumn in New York* for Parker was clearly a 'commercial' writer, and this is not meant in a negative way. But there is not a saxophone besides Parker to be heard, and the bulk of the arrangement features the strings, although there are two 'written' solos played by trumpet and trombone. The arrangement is a straightforward setting that works beautifully and is not terribly difficult. One instrumentation note: this arrangement reminds us that it was easy to get top musicians in New York when an arranger could write three reed parts that call for bass clarinet.

Ever since I discovered that *Autumn in New York* was arranged by someone else, I was determined to find out who the mystery arranger was. I now believe that the arranger was Glenn Osser. My reasons are the following:

- 1) The existence of arrangements written by Glenn Osser for Helen O'Connell (now in the possession of Jazz Lines) has matching handwriting.
- 2) While it is not known if Osser was a staff arranger with Mercury Records, he had made a number of recordings under his own name for the label, and was writing many arrangements for other Mercury artists during this time. Mercury was distributing Clef Records while Parker was on the label.
- 3) This is clearly the work of a 'commercial' arranger, and Osser certainly fits that description. This is not meant in a negative way. Osser was a thorough professional whose work was commonly heard on radio and television since the mid-1940s. He would continue to be prolific for the next thirty years.
- 4) Based on recordings he arranged and conducted for Mercury in the early fifties, this sounds like his work. In particular, two of them are now available on YouTube for the reader's enlightenment.

Notes to the Conductor:

This arrangement is a perfect introduction for a jazz ensemble combined with a string section. Rarely do high school and college string players have opportunities to play popular music of this quality because it is simply not available, a situation that we at Jazz Lines Publications are slowly rectifying.

Every musician must hear the rhythm section, particularly the drums so that all players can be in synchronization. The reason this arrangement makes such a good first 'chart' for orchestra is that issues such as playing behind the beat and intonation between strings and winds are minimized.

Dynamics are pretty much as indicated by the arranger. There were instances where triple-p was written on the manuscript, which is totally impractical for live performance. Proper balance between the woodwinds and strings is crucial, as the winds can be easily buried. Amplification of the instruments may help, or the dynamics may have to be altered depending on your performance space.

Jeffrey Sultanof

- March 2012

AUTUMN IN NEW YORK

RECORDED BY CHARLIE PARKER

WORDS AND MUSIC BY VERNON DUKE

ARRANGER UNKNOWN (POSSIBLY JIMMY MUNDY)

EDITED BY JEFFREY SULTANOF

SCORE

RUBATO

The score is arranged in systems for various instruments. The top system includes Solo Alto Sax, Reed 1 (Flute/Clarinet), Reed 2 (Flute/Clarinet/Bass Clarinet), Reed 3 (Clarinet/Bass Clarinet), Reed 4 (Clarinet/Bass Clarinet), and Reed 5 (Oboe/Clarinet). The middle system includes Trumpet 1-4 and Trombone 1-4, all marked '(IN HAT)'. The bottom system includes Violin A, Violin B, Violin C, Violas, Cello, Harp, Guitar, Piano, Bass (marked '(RICO)'), and Drum Set. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*, and articulation like accents (>). The Harp part includes chordal indications: [D^b, A^b], [E^b], [A^b, D^b], and [C[#], F[#]].

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