

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

*Presents*

**THE SONG IS ENDED**

AS RECORDED BY NAT 'KING' COLE

ARRANGED BY BILLY MAY

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY ROB DUBOFF,  
DYLAN CANTERBURY, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

**FULL SCORE**

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-6036

MUSIC AND WORDS BY IRVING BERLIN

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The latter part of the 1950s saw Cole record a #1 album with Gordon Jenkins, the still-popular *Love Is the Thing*. Critics and Cole's wife Maria felt that Jenkins' style worked better with Cole than perhaps any other of the great arrangers he collaborated with.<sup>17</sup> Cole recorded albums in Spanish, as he had played in Cuba and his popularity spread throughout Latin America. He also recorded in French and Portuguese, simultaneously expanding his fan base and showing gratitude for those in various parts of the world who already loved his artistry.<sup>18</sup> In the late 1950s he increased his involvement in Hollywood, eventually starring as W.C. Handy in *St. Louis Blues* in 1958. He also developed a stage show that he toured with for years as well.<sup>19</sup>

By the end of the decade, as rock and roll was well into its ascendancy, singers like Cole, Sinatra, and Dean Martin sometimes struggled with changing tastes, as newer, younger music flooded the charts. Cole continued his busy schedule and hit it big again with 1962's *Ramblin' Rose*, which was very popular with pop and even country audiences.<sup>20</sup> He continued recording and touring through the early 1960s, finishing what would be his final album, *L-O-V-E*, in December of 1964. It would peak at #4 on the charts the following spring.

A heavy smoker who believed that cigarettes helped give his voice its unique qualities,<sup>21</sup> Cole began to suffer various ailments in the fall of 1964. When he did have himself examined, advanced lung cancer was discovered and the prognosis was daunting. He finished *L-O-V-E* with Ralph Carmichael in early December, and began intense treatment shortly thereafter.<sup>22</sup> Cole spent the new year at home with family, basking in the incredible flood of well-wishing mail he had received. Back in the hospital, he was deeply shaken by the death of his father on February 1. Despite his publicists' optimism which heartened the public, Cole's condition continued its irreversible decline, and he passed away at the young age of 45 on February 15, 1965. The outpouring of grief for a man who meant so much to so many was gargantuan. According to Daniel Mark Epstein's landmark 1999 biography, honorary pallbearers included Robert F. Kennedy, Count Basie, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Johnny Mathis, George Burns, Danny Thomas, Jimmy Durante, Frankie Laine, Steve Allen, and California Governor Pat Brown; Cole's close friend Jack Benny gave the eulogy.<sup>23</sup> Nat King Cole was buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery with so many other celebrities, eventually joined there by Maria and daughter Natalie.<sup>24</sup>

Cole and his wife Maria were very close; she had given up her singing career to raise a family, their first child being Natalie, who eventually became a star in her own right. Maria once said that "Nat wanted to improve himself...I wanted to help him improve. What he needed, I had. What I needed, he had. That's why our marriage worked."<sup>25</sup> Gordon Jenkins's son Bruce's moving biography of his father has passages that show how deeply Maria understood music and especially what her husband both brought to a session and desired: "...Gordon was the only person who could do those things with strings, to really embellish what (Nat) was doing on ballads...the only person (Nat) worked with where he was totally at ease...the arrangements were just there, perfect, and you can hear it in the records. I always felt Gordon had in his music what Nat had in his voice, and they really were wedded."<sup>26</sup> It's easy to imagine how their first child wound up as an international star selling tens of millions of records. Natalie's parents and her uncle Freddie were all jazz singers, but she forged her own path in R&B, eventually finding her greatest success with 1991's *Unforgettable...With Love*. Not always comfortable singing tunes her father was known for, this album became a huge hit for her, and the track of the two of them singing *Unforgettable* together won Grammys of its own; the project re-established her stardom and also both burnished her father's profile and introduced him to many new listeners.

Nat King Cole left behind one of the great legacies, bodies of work, and life stories in the American arts. The honors have never stopped, decades after his passing. He's received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. He has been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for his influence on early rock, as well as the DownBeat Hall of Fame for his stature in jazz piano and singing. The U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp in his honor in 1994. The iconic Capitol Records Building in L.A. is often called "The House That Nat Built" in tribute to his contribution to the legendary label's growth and success. Cole worked to bring African-American artists to the forefront of every area of the arts as well as American life in general at a time when racism haunted America in an intense, vicious manner. He is a central part of the American holiday season thanks to his version of *The Christmas Song*, a holiday essential that he brought to the fore with his initial recordings of it. He is ardently beloved by two largely mutually exclusive bodies of fans; he remains a jazz icon for his piano work, especially the early trio days, as well as his singing. Yet he is a cultural icon to the massive world of pop music fandom as well, for his dozens of magnificent hits, sung in his inimitable manner and tone. Cole, like Sinatra, left a mark very much his own on some central tunes in the Great American Songbook; *Unforgettable*, *When I Fall in Love*, *Straighten Up and Fly Right*, *Almost Like Being in Love*, and especially *The Christmas Song*. The eternal power and presence of his voice is shown so vividly in his conjuring the timeless warmth and glow of the holiday season with vivid emotional depth as he sings: "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire..." There are not many American songs that begin this memorably and have had such incredible staying power.

From humble beginnings, the great Nat Cole worked his way to the very core of the American Experience and forged a path that left him at the center of our cultural consciousness; a place that he will never leave.

#### Notes:

1-[https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/02/16/101527424.pdf?pdf\\_redirect=true&ip=0](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/02/16/101527424.pdf?pdf_redirect=true&ip=0); 2-<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/nat-king-cole-mn0000317093/biography>; 3-<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/nat-king-cole-mn0000317093/biography>; 4-<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/nat-king-cole-mn0000317093/biography>; 5-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat\\_King\\_Cole#cite\\_note-43](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-43); 6-[https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/02/16/101527424.pdf?pdf\\_redirect=true&ip=0](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/02/16/101527424.pdf?pdf_redirect=true&ip=0); 7-<https://lasentinel.net/nat-king-cole.html#:~:text=Cole%20was%20a%20heavy%20smoker,recording%20for%20that%20very%20purpose>; 8-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat\\_King\\_Cole#cite\\_note-Intimate-17](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-Intimate-17); 9-[https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/02/101527424.pdf?pdf\\_redirect=true&ip=0](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/02/101527424.pdf?pdf_redirect=true&ip=0); 10-<https://lasentinel.net/nat-king-cole.html#:~:text=Cole%20was%20a%20heavy%20smoker,recording%20for%20that%20very%20purpose>; 11-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat\\_King\\_Cole#cite\\_note-Yanow\\_Swing-16](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-Yanow_Swing-16); 12-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat\\_King\\_Cole#cite\\_note-34](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-34); 13-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat\\_King\\_Cole#cite\\_note-Levinson2005-44](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-Levinson2005-44); 14-<https://progressive.org/latest/nat-king-cole-trailblazer-unforgettable-way/>; 15-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat\\_King\\_Cole#cite\\_note-Gilbert1988-50](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-Gilbert1988-50); 16-<https://www.newsweek.com/nat-king-cole-100-years-centenary-jazz-civil-rights-1364966#:~:text=Once%20attacked%20on%20an%20Alabama,to%20The%20Los%20Angeles%20Times>; 17-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love\\_Is\\_the\\_Thing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Is_the_Thing); 18-<https://lasentinel.net/nat-king-cole.html#:~:text=Cole%20was%20a%20heavy%20smoker,recording%20for%20that%20very%20purpose>; 19-<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/nat-king-cole-mn0000317093/biography>; 20-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat\\_King\\_Cole#cite\\_note-55](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-55); 21-<https://lasentinel.net/nat-king-cole.html#:~:text=Cole%20was%20a%20heavy%20smoker,recording%20for%20that%20very%20purpose>; 22-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat\\_King\\_Cole#cite\\_note-55](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-55); 23-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat\\_King\\_Cole#cite\\_note-FOOTNOTEepstein1999360-66](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-FOOTNOTEepstein1999360-66); 24-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_burials\\_at\\_Forest\\_Lawn\\_Memorial\\_Park\\_\(Glendale\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_burials_at_Forest_Lawn_Memorial_Park_(Glendale)); 25-<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/14/arts/music/maria-cole-jazz-singer-and-wife-of-nat-dies-at-89.html>; 26-Bruce Jenkins, *Goodbye: In Search of Gordon Jenkins*, (Berkeley CA, Frog, Ltd, 2005), Pgs 190-191

## Billy May Biography:

There is perhaps no one person more unsung in shaping the sound of classic popular music than Edward William "Billy" May, Jr. Indeed, there are many people who are fans of May's music without even realizing it through his collaborations with Frank Sinatra. Even if he had never written a note for the Chairman of the Board, however, May's catalogue of work is not only of the highest quality, but also of stunning diversity.

Born on November 10, 1916 in Pittsburgh, PA, May began playing tuba as a youth on recommendation of a doctor who believed it to be an effective treatment for his childhood asthma. Switching to trumpet, May worked as both an instrumentalist and arranger for several small outlets before joining the Charlie Barnet Orchestra in 1938. May was responsible for crafting the arrangement for Barnet's hit recording of "Cherokee," which has since gone on to become one of the most frequently covered standards in part because of the Barnet version. After leaving Barnet, May worked largely as a freelance arranger and trumpeter, notably for the bands of Glenn Miller and Les Brown, for the majority of the 1940s. In the early 1950s, May caught the attention of producers at Capitol Records, who hired him as a staff arranger for their sizeable stable of vocalists. His best-known collaborations were with Frank Sinatra, as May would author the arrangements of some of Sinatra's biggest hits, including 1958's *Come Fly with Me*. In addition to Sinatra, May's arrangements graced the recordings of Ella Fitzgerald, Nat 'King' Cole and Nancy Wilson, among countless others, during this time.

By the 1960s, May became more involved in film and television. Having written his first film score in 1957, May's songs and scores became frequently heard in many different Hollywood settings, ranging from Rat Pack films to a collaboration with humorist Stan Freberg. Throughout this time, his relationship with Sinatra remained fruitful, with May continuing to write arrangements for Sinatra's albums on his newly founded Reprise Records label. The two were so close that May was an honorary pall-bearer at Sinatra's funeral in 1998.

Having largely been in retirement since the 1980s, May passed away from a heart attack on January 22, 2004. He leaves behind a list of credits that are second to none in the world of pop music as an arranger, and his signature style, featuring mercurial brass writing and "swooping" saxophone riffs, continues to serve as a template upon which many of today's top arrangers work.

## **The Music:**

There were very few singer-arranger pairings that worked as well as Nat 'King' Cole and Billy May, who recorded a series of hit singles together in the mid-1950s for Capitol Records. *The Song Is Ended* fits very nicely into this framework, featuring an excellent performance by Cole and some of May's most clever writing. This arrangement was recorded in 1957 and released on Cole's *Just One of Those Things* album.

## **Notes to the Conductor:**

The arrangement begins with the trademark Billy May instrumentation of flutes, harmon muted trumpets, and xylophone. Tenor Sax 2 doubles on oboe for this four-bar section (as well as the last four bars of the arrangement); included is an alternate part that has this double on clarinet instead. After the introduction the vocalist enters and this becomes a fabulous swing chart with all the famous, well-known Billy May elements. The charts needs to be played very easy and laid-back. May had written several of the figures as dotted-eighth - sixteenth (see below) which he often did in his writing and they are supposed to be interpreted as heavy or exaggerated swing (not a march). For this publication the use of dotted-eighth - sixteenth has been avoided and instead it is suggested that the conductor work with the ensemble to play the figures as recorded by the band backing Nat Cole. Listening to how this arrangement was recorded in 1957 is key to understanding how this should be performed.

While there is no solo section, there are two two-bar 'shout sections' where the band gets to shine. The ensemble needs to come on strong here and then quickly settle back down for the vocalist to re-enter. The arrangement then winds down with material based on the feel of the introduction before the trombones get the last word with a Db6/9(#11) chord.

In addition to the tenor saxophone 2 alternate part as stated above, the essential tuba one-bar solo in measure six is cued in the bass part and the important harp sections are cued in the piano part so, if need be, this arrangement may be played without tuba and harp.

This is not a transcription - it has been prepared from Billy May's original pencil score and the set of parts used during the 1957 recording session.

## **Doug DuBoff and Rob DuBoff**

- May 2023



Above is an example of how Billy May originally notated several of the figures to indicate heavy or emphasized swing. Although, throughout his score he was inconsistent in the way he notated that same phrase. So, for this publication we opted to notate these figures as eighth notes to avoid the possibility that they may be interpreted in a march feel.

NAT

ALTO

FLUTE 1

FLUTE 2

OBOE

BASS

HARPONS

1

Trumpets 2

3

4

Trombs. 2

3

4

XV L. (PHS) W

Drums

A

Violins B

C

TUBA

MS Note

NO R. O

CELLO

BASS

CONTRABASS

Above is the first page of Billy May's score for *The Song Is Ended*, recorded by Nat 'King' Cole in 1957.

# 2/TROMBONE

"THE SONG IS ENDED"

The musical score is written on five systems of five-line staves. The first system begins with a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a double bar line. It contains a series of chords and notes, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) below the first measure. The second system is marked with a circled 'A' and contains a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *p*. The third system continues the melodic line. The fourth system is marked with a circled 'B' and features a double bar line with a '2' above it, indicating a second ending. The fifth system is marked with a circled 'C' and contains a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *#p* (mezzo-forte). The sixth system continues the melodic line. The seventh system is marked with a circled 'D' and contains a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte).

Above is the first page of the original trombone 2 part that was used during the 1957 recording session.



5

Vox. *song is end - ed, but the mel - o - dy lin - gers on. You and the song are gone but the mel - o - dy lin - gers on. The*

Ww. 2 (Fl.) **To Alto Sax.**

Ww. 3 (Fl.) **To Tenor Sax.**

Ww 4 (Ob.) **To Tenor Sax.**

Tpt. 3 **Open**

Tpt. 4 **Open**

Tbn. 1 *sfz mp*

Tbn. 2 *sfz mp*

Tbn. 3 *sfz mp*

Tbn. 4 *sfz mp*

Tuba *Solo mp*

Gr. *mp* F6 B<sup>b</sup>9 C6 D9 Dm7 G9(♯5) Cma9 Dm7G13

Pno. *sfz mp* light fills F6 B<sup>b</sup>9 C6 D9 Dm7 G9(♯5) Cma9 Dm7G13

Bs. *sfz mp* play if no tuba F6 B<sup>b</sup>9 C6 D9 Dm7 G9(♯5) Cma9 Dm7G13

Perc. (Timp.) *sfz* **To Xylophone**

D. S. *sfz mp* (8)