

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

AS RECORDED BY LOUIS ARMSTRONG

ARRANGED BY TOMMY GOODMAN

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-6234

WORDS AND MUSIC BY GEORGE DAVID WEISS AND BOB THIELE

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A NOT-FOR-PROFIT JAZZ RESEARCH ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PRESERVING AND PROMOTING AMERICA'S MUSICAL HERITAGE.



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WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD (1967)

Louis Armstrong Biography:

It is safe to say that no musician has had a greater impact on American music from the 1920s on than Louis Armstrong. Be they instrumentalists or singers, every artist in fields ranging from jazz to blues to even rock and pop owe at least something to Armstrong's brilliance. His sound, phrasing and ability to turn even the most trite of material into transcendental masterpieces make him a truly legendary figure.

Like many legends, Armstrong's beginnings were highly unlikely. Having given himself the "all-American birth date" of July 4, 1900, baptismal records showed that Armstrong was actually born to a teenage mother and vagrant father on August 4, 1901 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Brought up in abject poverty, Armstrong dropped out of grade school to work various jobs to support his family, including singing in a barbershop quartet on street corners for tips. These odd jobs led Armstrong to develop a relationship with a local family of Lithuanian-Jewish immigrants, the Karnofskys, who took him in as a surrogate son and helped him raise the money to purchase his first cornet. The extent of Armstrong's formal musical education came during his time at the New Orleans Home for Colored Waifs, a boarding school for delinquent children that he spent time in and out of throughout his childhood. Upon being released from the Waifs' Home for good in 1914, he entered into a mentor-pupil relationship with the legendary cornetist Joseph "King" Oliver. Initially working as a musician on riverboats on the Mississippi River, Oliver would eventually convince Armstrong to move north to Chicago to join his Creole Jazz Band.

After being persuaded by his second wife, pianist Lil Hardin Armstrong, to break out from behind Oliver's shadow, Armstrong's career took its next major turn after he moved to New York in 1924 to join up with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra. His playing would have a tremendous impact on not just the individual members of Henderson's organization (such as tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins), but the band as a whole, as chief arranger Don Redman found ways to incorporate Armstrong's style and overall feel into his charts. Throughout the mid- to late-1920s, Armstrong led a series of recordings that would eventually become known as the Hot Fives and Hot Sevens. These recordings featured several musicians from New Orleans via Chicago, and are considered by many to be the first truly great jazz recordings. Most importantly, they mark the first real examples of jazz's shift away from an ensemble-oriented sound to being more focused on individual soloists.

With his celebrity expanding rapidly, the 1930s saw Armstrong fronting his own big band for the first time. He began to appear in various other forms of media, including film and radio; his brief stint substituting for crooner Rudy Vallee's popular program made him the first African-American to host a national radio broadcast. It was also during this time period that his singing started to gain equal billing with his trumpet playing, partially out of Armstrong's lifelong love of singing, but also partially due to a series of lip injuries that would force him to take time away from the trumpet altogether.

The 1940s would see Armstrong disband his big band in favor of a return to a smaller, more New Orleans-style combo after a highly successful 1947 concert at New York's Town Hall. This combo, known as the All-Stars, would become Armstrong's favored touring unit for the rest of his life. His manager, Joe Glaser, continued to find ways to expand Armstrong's career in a more pop-oriented direction during this time as well. His collaborations with other singers, most notably Ella Fitzgerald and Bing Crosby, would achieve a high level of popular success.

Although his popularity remained as high as ever, the affection showered on Armstrong by the jazz community would begin to wane in the 1950s. Due to changing cultural attitudes and the rise of the bebop movement, Armstrong's music would begin to be viewed by many as old-fashioned, even outdated. Worse, many young musicians viewed his enthusiastic and exuberant personality as being a throwback to the offensiveness of minstrelsy. Armstrong's more private actions would tell a different story, as he was actively involved in protesting the Little Rock Crisis of 1957 where Arkansas governor Orval Faubus refused to desegregate the public school system there. Armstrong's two final commercial successes would come in the 1960s. First, his 1964 release of the single *Hello, Dolly!* wound up unseating The Beatles from the top of the pop charts. This was a feat that was practically unimaginable for anybody at the time, let alone a 63-year-old jazz musician performing the title song of a Broadway musical. The second success would be 1968's *What a Wonderful World*, which was initially somewhat ignored before experiencing a surprise resurgence after being featured in the 1987 film *Good Morning Vietnam*.

The constant stresses of touring began to take a toll on Armstrong's health in his later years. Having suffered his first heart attack in 1959, he would be advised by his doctors to take breaks to recuperate on multiple occasions. Having none of that, Armstrong maintained a busy performing schedule, causing his heart condition to gradually worsen to the point where he was advised to stop playing the trumpet altogether. He would eventually suffer a heart attack and pass away in his sleep on July 6, 1971. His influence on the world of music as a whole, be it jazz or pop, as an instrumentalist or vocalist, cannot be understated, as his artistry continues to shine through to this day.

The Music:

Despite its optimistic lyrics and inviting melody, the circumstances surrounding Louis Armstrong's now-iconic *What a Wonderful World* are surprisingly complicated. Recorded during an unusually tension-filled session in 1967, the song was largely ignored upon release in the United States due to a lack of promotion by ABC Records, whose president harbored an intense dislike for it. It wasn't until over 20 years later, when the song was used in the soundtrack for the film *Good Morning, Vietnam*, that it experienced a surprise breakout in popular success, ultimately culminating in being inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1999.

Notes to the Conductor:

The arrangement itself is fairly simple, utilizing gentle held chords in the strings with some occasional easy melody lines in the woodwinds and trombone. The rhythm section maintains a steady 12/8 ballad pulse throughout, enhanced by the presence of two guitars playing with different approaches. One guitar (electric) follows a more traditional strumming technique, while the other adheres to style that is triplet-heavy and arpeggiated (acoustic). This orchestral simplicity allows Armstrong's vocals to remain the star of the show at all times. It's important for your vocalist to study his performance, as his delivery is much more straightforward and wistful than the sweetly sappy approach many assume it to be. Remember to allow an appropriate level of patience to the performance's conclusion - it should have a little bit of movement while managing to not feel overly rushed.

Note that the arrangement also calls for both acoustic bass (pizz and arco) and an electric bass guitar. However, if necessary, the arrangement may be played with only the acoustic bass. But, that player should incorporate the triplet feel that would otherwise be played by the electric bass guitar. In addition, the vibraphone should play only simple triads (beginning at measure 19).

This publication was prepared using the original parts supplied by the Louis Armstrong House Museum.

Acknowledgments:

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Doug DuBoff, Dylan Canterbury, and Rob DuBoff

- February 2024

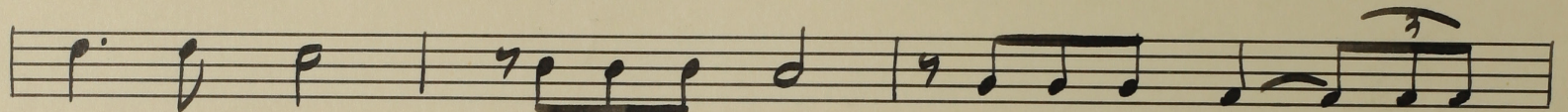
VOCAL

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

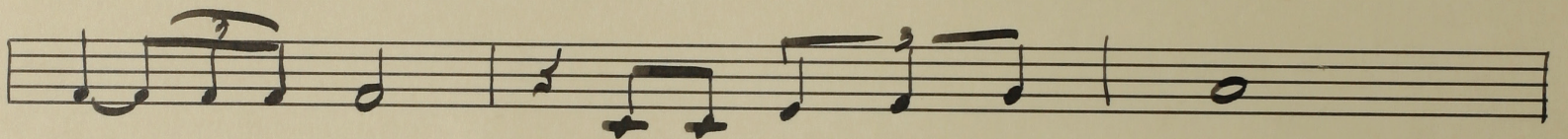
ARR. BY *Tommy Goodman*



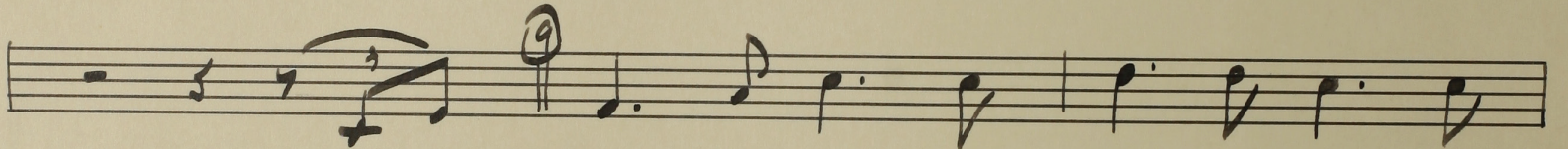
I SEE TREES OF GREEN, RED



ROS-ES TOO I SEE THEM BLOOM FOR ME AND YOU AND I



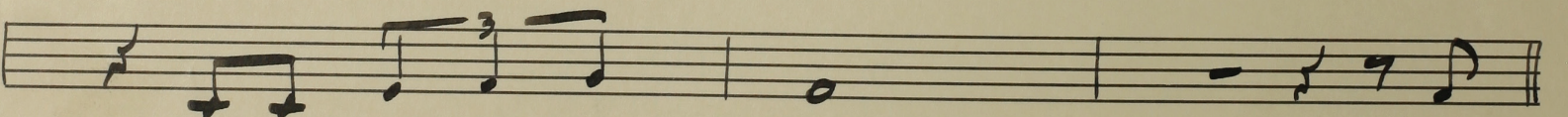
THINK TO MY-SELF WHAT A WON- DER- FUL WORLD —



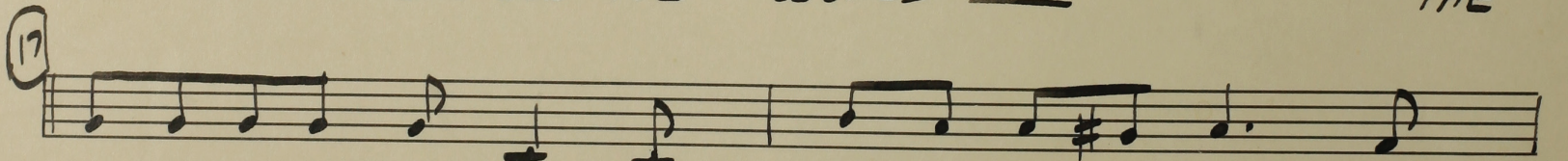
I SEE SKIES OF BLUE AND CLOUDS OF WHITE, THE



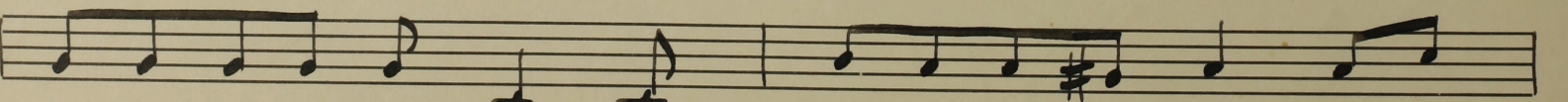
BRIGHT BLES-SED DAY THE DARK SAC-RED NIGHT AND I THINK TO MY-SELF



WHAT A WON- DER- FUL WORLD — THE



COL-ORS OF THE RAIN-BOW SO PRET-TY IN THE SKY ARE



AL-SO ON THE FAC-ES OF PEO-PLE GO-IN' BY, I SEE

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SCORE

SLOWLY ♩ = 70

3

VOCAL GROUP

Vocal

Women (3)

Men (3)

I see trees of green, red ros - es too, I see them bloom for me and you _____ and I

Woodwind 1: Flute/Clarinet

Woodwind 2: Flute

Woodwind 3: Flute/Clarinet

Woodwind 4: Bass Clarinet

Trombone

Violin 1 (4)

Violin 2 (3)

Violin 3 (3)

Viola (3)

Cello (3)

Acoustic Bass

Pizz. F Gm F Gm F Am Bb Am Gm F A7 Dm

Electric Guitar

F Gm F Gm F Am Bb Am Gm F A7 Dm

Acoustic Guitar

F₃ Gm₃ F₃ Gm₃ F₃ Am₃ Bb₃ Am₃ Gm₃ F₃ A7₃ Dm₃

Celeste

Bass Guitar

F Gm F Gm F Am Bb Am Gm F A7 Dm

Vibraphone

Drum Set

Brushes cross stick sim. feel