

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

WHO'S BLUE

ARRANGED BY BENNY CARTER

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

JLP-7344

MUSIC BY BENNY CARTER

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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COUNT BASIE SERIES

WHO'S BLUE (1961)

Background:

Next to Duke Ellington, there is no more famous band in the history of jazz than that of William "Count" Basie. Although his economical piano playing was ahead of his time compared to several of his more stride-oriented contemporaries, Basie was always best known as the face of an organization that played a continuous role in shaping the trajectory of jazz for over 50 years.

Born on August 21, 1904 in Red Bank, New Jersey, even as a youth Basie was attracted to not just music in general, but the idea of being a bandleader specifically. Settling on the piano as his main instrument as a teen, Basie's musical apprenticeship was fairly typical for the time. Most of his education stemmed from hanging around the Harlem stride piano scene of the 1920s. A series of tours with vaudeville troupes came next; when one of the troupes broke up in Kansas City in 1927, Basie found himself stranded.

This turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as it was not long before Basie found himself hired by bassist Walter Page to play with his now-legendary territory band, the Blue Devils. His notoriety rising, Basie eventually left the Blue Devils to take over the piano chair in the Bennie Moten Orchestra, considered to be the finest band in the Kansas City area. After Moten's sudden death in 1935, rather than letting the band fall apart, Basie ended up taking over the reigns himself, bringing in several of his former Blue Devils band mates, including Page himself, in the process.

It did not take long for this new band to make its impact on the world of jazz. The Basie organization specialized in arrangements that were fairly loosely organized and easy to customize on the spot, known informally as "head" arrangements. This allowed for a much more soloist-friendly environment than most of the other bands of the swing era. In addition, the band's rhythm section was responsible for a distinctive shift in the way time is kept in jazz. Spurred by drummer "Papa" Jo Jones' more free-form approach and guitarist Freddie Green's steady "rhythm" style of playing, the innovations of this organization would play a key role in setting up the eventual rise of bebop in the 1940s.

World War II was not kind to big bands for a variety of reasons, and Basie's band was no exception. Financial considerations would force him to reduce his ensemble to an octet by the end of the 1940s. By the mid-1950s, however, Basie was able to reform his big band, aided in no small part to a series of hit recordings, including a particularly popular version of the jazz standard "April In Paris." This new Basie band maintained the same relentless sense of swing as the earlier units, but was much more organized as a whole. Gone were the "head" arrangements of old in favor of a consistently expanding library of charts provided by what may have been the greatest stable of arrangers ever housed by a single band.

Basie's celebrity firmly cemented by this point, his band remained true to this new format for the rest of his life. The 1960s and 1970s would see a string of successful albums backing singers such as Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Tony Bennett, among others. In addition, the band began to see an increased presence in Las Vegas and Hollywood; Basie's famous cameo in Mel Brooks' "Blazing Saddles" is no doubt a highlight of the now-classic comedy. Basie continued a busy touring and recording schedule even when he was wheelchair-bound in his final years.

Basie passed away on April 26, 1984. The band that bears his name continues to tour to this day, performing both the favorites of the past as well as new arrangements and continuing to collaborate with some of jazz's top vocalists, including George Benson and Diane Schuur. The list of notable artists brought to prominence through the ranks of his band include saxophonists Lester Young, Frank Foster and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, trumpeters Harry "Sweets" Edison, Buck Clayton, and Thad Jones, trombonists Dicky Wells and Al Grey, and drummer Sonny Payne. Notable arrangers who contributed to the band's book include Foster, Jones, Neal Hefti, Quincy Jones and Sammy Nestico.



As a soloist, Benny Carter, along with Johnny Hodges, was the model for swing era alto saxophonists. He is nearly unique in his ability to double on trumpet, which he plays in an equally distinctive style. In addition, he is an accomplished clarinetist, and has recorded proficiently on piano and trombone. As an arranger, he helped chart the course of big band jazz, and his compositions, such as *When Lights Are Low* and *Blues In My Heart*, have become jazz standards. Carter has also made major musical contributions to the world of film and television. His musicianship and personality have won him the respect of fellow artists and audiences on every continent.

Born in New York in 1907, Carter received his first music lessons on piano from his mother. He was attracted to the trumpet through his cousin, the legendary Cuban Bennett, and a neighbor, the great Ellington brass man Bubber Miley. Carter saved for months to buy a trumpet but, failing to master it over the weekend, he exchanged it for a C-melody saxophone. Frankie Trumbauer was an early inspiration to the young Benny, who was largely self-taught. By age fifteen, Carter was already sitting in at Harlem night spots.

From 1924 to 1928, Carter gained valuable professional experience as a sideman in some of New York's top bands. He also traveled to the midwest to work with the Wilberforce Collegians, and to Pittsburgh for a stint with Earl Hines. Carter's recording debut came in 1928 as a member of Charlie Johnson's Orchestra, which was based in Harlem's Small's Paradise. Two of the arrangements recorded that day were by Carter, who had somehow managed to teach himself the craft of arranging. Later that year, Carter joined Fletcher Henderson's seminal orchestra, assuming the arranging duties previously handled by Don Redman. Carter's innovative scores, particularly his writing for the sax section, revitalized the band and, according to scholar Gunther Schuller, "Carter was now the arranger everyone followed."

In 1931, Carter became musical director of another important musical organization: the Detroit-based McKinney's Cotton Pickers. Already a major force on alto, he now returned to his first love, the trumpet. Within two years, Carter was making trumpet recordings that rivaled his alto classics. On both instruments, Carter has always displayed a rare ability to conceive a solo as a whole, without losing the spark of spontaneity. In 1932, Carter returned to New York and soon began putting together his own orchestra, which eventually would include such swing stars as Chu Berry, Teddy Wilson, Sid Catlett, and Dicky Wells. As was the case with all Carter-led units, the group was known as a "musicians' band." Unfortunately, high musical standards did not ensure commercial success, especially during the depression, and by late 1934, Carter was forced to disband.

A timely invitation brought Carter to Paris in 1935 to play with Willie Lewis's orchestra. At the suggestion of music critic Leonard Feather, he was invited to England to serve as arranger for the BBC dance orchestra. Carter played an essential role in spreading jazz abroad. Over the next three years, he traveled throughout Europe, playing and recording with the top British, French, and Scandinavian jazzmen, as well as with visiting American stars such as his friend Coleman Hawkins. In Holland during this period, Carter also led the first international, interracial band. Returning home in 1938, Carter found the big band sounds, which he had helped shape, sweeping the country. He quickly formed another superb orchestra, which spent much of 1939 and 1940 at Harlem's famed Savoy Ballroom. His arrangements were much in demand and were featured on recordings by Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Gene Krupa, and Tommy Dorsey. In 1941, Carter pared down to a sextet, which included bebop pioneers Dizzy Gillespie and Kenny Clarke. In 1942, he brought a reorganized big band to California, where he has lived ever since. In the mid-1940s, the band included important modernists, such as Miles Davis, J.J. Johnson, Max Roach, and Art Pepper, all of whom have acknowledged their debt to Carter as a teacher. As Miles Davis once said: "Everyone should listen to Benny Carter. He's a whole musical education."

On the West Coast the versatile Carter moved increasingly into studio work. Beginning with "Stormy Weather" in 1943, he arranged for dozens of feature films and television productions. His credits encompass all musical idioms, from feature films such as *A Man Called Adam* and *Buck and the Preacher* to television shows, including *M Squad* and *Chrysler Theater*. He has provided arrangements for almost every major popular singer including Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Lou Rawls, Ray Charles, Peggy Lee, Louis Armstrong, Pearl Bailey, Billy Eckstine and Mel Torme.

In the 1970s, Carter turned his talents in a new direction--education. He conducted seminars and workshops at many universities, and spent several semesters at Princeton, which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1974. In 1987, Carter spent a week as visiting lecturer at Harvard. Other recent honors include induction into the Black Film Makers Hall of Fame (1978), the coveted Golden Score award of the American Society of Music Arrangers (1980), and appointment to the music advisory panel of the National Endowment of the Arts. In 1978, Carter was a guest at the White House, where he led a group at President Jimmy Carter's celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Newport Jazz Festival. He also led an orchestra for the 1984 inaugural of President Reagan and played at the White House in 1989 as a guest of President Bush.

In 1982, New York radio station WKCR marked Carter's 75th birthday by playing his music non-stop for 177 hours. Carter was also saluted at the 1984 Kool Festival with a retrospective concert. In 1987, Carter received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. His extended work, *Central City Sketches* (recorded in 1987 for Musicmasters with the American Jazz Orchestra) was nominated for a Grammy in 1988. Carter placed first in the 1989 Down Beat International Critics Poll in the arranger's category. Carter celebrated his 82nd birthday with a concert in Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. He returned a year later to debut a new extended

work. In 1990, Carter was named “Jazz Artist of the Year” in both the Down Beat and Jazz Times International Critics’ polls.

In 1995 MusicMasters Records embarked on a project to bring Carter’s songwriting gifts to the fore. Sixteen leading singers collaborated on a unique recording project, The Benny Carter Songbook, which includes some thirty Carter songs--old and new--with Carter as featured soloist. Volume One of this collection has been issued and includes such vocal greats as Joe Williams, Dianne Reeves, Ruth Brown, Shirley Horn, Peggy Lee, and Bobby Short. 1996 also saw the release on home video of the highly acclaimed documentary on Carter, *Symphony in Riffs*.

In March of 1996 Carter’s multifaceted musical gifts were on display in a major event at Lincoln Center in New York. Carter appeared with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra conducted by Wynton Marsalis in an evening of Carter’s music. In addition to performing some Carter classics, the Orchestra premiered a new suite, *Echoes of San Juan Hill*, the composer’s musical depiction of the New York neighborhood where he grew up.

Constantly evolving and absorbing, Carter’s playing retained the basic foundations that have always made it readily identifiable. He toured the world many times, written and performed five extended works, played unaccompanied saxophone on a film soundtrack, delivered a commencement address, jammed with the King of Thailand, and recorded over a dozen CDs in every conceivable setting (for which he received seven Grammy nominations and two Grammy awards). As he liked to say, “My good old days are here and now.” Benny Carter proved it every time he stepped on a stage. It is not surprising that, in a music populated by royalty, Benny Carter was known to his fellow musicians as “King.”

The Music:

The 1962 album *The Legend* brought together two of the swing era’s biggest titans: pianist/bandleader Count Basie and saxophonist/composer Benny Carter. Despite their markedly different musical histories, these two luminaries’ styles merged together in such a way that their individual personalities still shined through while creating an unforgettable unified sound. While retaining Carter’s distinct musical identity, it manages to be an excellent fit for the classic Basie band style at the same time.

Who’s Blue occupies a frequently overlooked niche in the jazz world: a slow tempo swinger that is not a ballad. Although the melody is not over a traditional 12-bar blues form, the solo sections are, and the entire arrangement should be approached with an appropriately soulful inflection.

Notes to the Conductor:

A four bar Basie piano solo (transcribed for your pianist’s convenience) sets up the moody melody, handled by a saxophone trio of two tenors and baritone. The piano should add some running commentary around the melody, but nothing too busy or distracting. A slight build in volume sets up the full band’s entry for the final few bars of the melody at measure 17, followed by a blues chorus of piano.

Measure 33 sees the arrival of the shout chorus. The trickiness here comes from the shifting back and forth between double time and regular time feels, with the brass providing some surprisingly bebop-ish interjections during the double time segments. This culminates in a single chorus of trumpet solo, handled with tasteful aplomb on the original recording by longtime Basie-ite Al Aarons.

The arrangement ends much the same way it started. The melody returns in the same sax trio as before, with the full band coming in for the final four bars of the form. The only real difference is that the final two bars of the melody are tagged at a lower volume level, with the final ensemble chord displaying a hint of sour dissonance.

With the exception of Count Basie’s improvised piano introduction, this publication is not a transcription - it has been prepared from Benny Carter’s original score.

Acknowledgments:

Special thanks to Hilma Carter and Benny’s late longtime manager Ed Berger for entrusting us to preserve and protect Benny Carter’s legacy.

Doug DuBoff and Dylan Canterbury

September 2018

✓ *Who's Blue*

Conductor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

4

1st Alto

2nd Alto

1st Tenor

2nd Tenor

Baritone

1

2

3

4

Trumpets

1

2

3

4

Trombones

Guitar

Piano

Bass

Drums

No. 118

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Here is the first page of Benny Carter's pencil score for *Who's Blue* written in 1961 for the Count Basie Orchestra. Notice that the opening melody was originally to be played by Basie. This section wound up being played by two tenor saxophones and the baritone saxophone.

WHO'S BLUE

RECORDED BY COUNT BASIE

SCORE

MUSIC BY BENNY CARTER

ARRANGED BY BENNY CARTER

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

SLOW SWING ♩ = 70

The score is arranged for a jazz ensemble. The piano part features a solo section with the following chord progression:

(SOLO)	$A^{\flat 6}$	$A^{\circ 7}$	$B^{\flat m 6}$	$B^{\circ 7}$	$A^{\flat 6}/C$	$B^{\circ 7}$	$B^{\flat m 7}$	$E^{\flat 9}(F_6)$	$A^{\flat 6}$	$G^{\flat 7}$	$F 7$	$B^{\circ 9}$	$B^{\flat 9}$	$E^{\flat 7}(F_9)$	(END SOLO)
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2

3

4

⑤

5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Chord symbols: $A^{\flat 6}$, D^6 , $D^{\flat 6}$, E^7 , $G^{\flat 7}$, A^7 , $A^{\flat 7}$, $D^{\flat 7}$, $G^{\flat 7}$, A^7 , B^7 , D^7 , $D^{\flat 7}$, E^7 , $E^{\flat 7}$

Performance instructions: *mp*, *fill*, *(4)*, *(8)*