

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

THERE'S A BOAT DATS
LEAVIN' SOON FOR NEW YORK

AS RECORDED BY THE MILES DAVIS/GIL EVANS ORCHESTRA

ARRANGED BY GIL EVANS

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-7557

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY GEORGE GERSHWIN, DUBOSE AND DOROTHY HEYWARD AND IRA GERSHWIN

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THERE'S A BOAT DATS LEAVIN' SOON FOR NEW YORK (1958)

Background:

George Gershwin's folk opera *Porgy and Bess* has now achieved classic status as one of the finest operas ever composed, and one of the most ambitious theater works created by an American. Charleston, South Carolina native DuBose Heyward's novel *Porgy* was published in 1925 and told the story of Porgy, a crippled, impoverished African-American beggar, and Bess, the troubled woman who he falls in love with. It was such a success that Heyward and his wife Dorothy adapted the work for the stage in 1927. The resulting play *Porgy* was also a major success on Broadway, and Heyward was soon considering adapting it into a musical.

Gershwin read *Porgy* in 1926 and corresponded with Heyward suggesting that they collaborate on bringing a new operatic adaptation of the work to the stage. Gershwin's very heavy schedule did not allow this to happen for years; he had been considering writing an opera for some time, and during this period he received a commission from the Metropolitan Opera. *Porgy* was the story he wanted to use, but the racial situation at the time made using African-American actors impossible at the Metropolitan Opera. He considered other works, but ultimately decided that *Porgy* was the ideal vehicle for what he hoped to achieve. There was other interest in *Porgy*, as Jerome Kern proposed writing the score with Al Jolson playing the lead, but nothing ultimately came of this. Finally, an agreement was reached with the Theater Guild in 1933 for a folk opera based on *Porgy* with an all African-American cast.

George Gershwin spent time on an island near Heyward's hometown of Charleston (where the story was based) and he and Ira Gershwin began working with Heyward. Their collaboration was an amicable and fruitful one, but it took nearly two years for what was to become *Porgy and Bess* to be created. Heyward wrote the libretto and contributed lyrics, with Ira Gershwin ultimately finalizing many of them; Stephen Sondheim has written that the lyrics are the finest ever written for the American musical theater. The complete version of the opera is very long, and Gershwin was philosophical about much of his music being cut, believing that one day the full work would be presented in an opera house.

Porgy and Bess ultimately opened in the fall of 1935 at the Alvin Theater in New York and its initial run was something of a disappointment, with its 124 performances receiving decidedly mixed reviews and less-than-hoped-for financial success. Many loved the score and the production, while others such as composer/critic Virgil Thomson and Duke Ellington criticized the work (although there is some evidence that Ellington may not have actually written what was published under his name, as he praised Gershwin in his autobiography and eventually recorded some of the songs from *Porgy and Bess*).

Still, the work began to firmly root itself in the American consciousness, with *Summertime* soon becoming an American popular music and jazz standard, and other songs from the work were performed and recorded as well. But Gershwin did not live to see the work achieve ultimate success, tragically dying in 1937 from a brain tumor. There were revivals of the play in the early 1940s with more cuts, and these were much more successful. Over the next decade, there were performances literally all over the world, but by the mid-1950s, *Porgy and Bess* began to fall into a decline, surely due in part to the Civil Rights battles that were growing, and a planned production was ultimately unable to occur in its hometown of Charleston.

Later in the 1950s, a major Hollywood production of a movie based on the work was planned, and this resulted in a new revival of interest in *Porgy and Bess* in the musical community. The 1959 movie did win awards, but ultimately was neither a financial nor a critical success. The next decade and a half were not kind to *Porgy and Bess*, as it seemed out of step with the turbulent and rapidly-changing times. It was the 1976 Houston Grand Opera production which revived the work and ultimately was responsible for it eventually taking its rightful place in American cultural history.

The Houston production was the first professional performance of the entire opera, with all of the previous cuts restored, allowing the work to be seen and heard precisely in the form in which it was originally intended. The reception led to productions at Radio City Music Hall and even finally at the Metropolitan Opera House. There have since been many more productions of *Porgy and Bess*, as well as recordings of the score and its various songs.

The depictions of African-Americans led to much controversy over the decades, but today *Porgy and Bess* has reached a place of being a nearly universally beloved American Classic. It had a postage stamp issued in its honor and has been named the official opera of the state of South Carolina. Nearly everyone knows the song *Summertime*. It is performed all over the world, and its music - like so many other classic works - is timeless; it sounds as fresh, relevant, vibrant, and beautiful today as it must have sounded when George Gershwin first heard it in his head.

Gil Evans Biography:

Gil Evans spent his earliest years traveling around Canada with his family, as they were regularly forced to move in order to follow the availability of mining jobs for his stepfather. In 1922 the family settled in Berkeley, and it was shortly afterward that Gil first developed an interest in music, inspired by a Duke Ellington concert he had been brought to by a family friend. His training began with piano lessons, but he largely taught himself through listening to and transcribing from his record collection. While in high school he took jobs in hotels as a pianist, and after graduation he formed an ensemble that would serve as the house band for the Rendezvous Ballroom in Balboa Beach for two years; in 1937 the band relocated to Hollywood, where it provided music for Bob Hope's radio broadcasts. Through his work for Hope, Evans was hired as an arranger for Claude Thornhill's orchestra, whom he continued to work alongside until 1948 - although with an interruption of several years when World War II prompted Evans to enlist in the army.

After his discharge from the military in 1946 Evans settled in New York. His efforts with Thornhill had gained him a solid reputation in the jazz community, leading to his involvement in the Miles Davis nonet in 1948; with this group he recorded the landmark album *The Birth of Cool* between 1949 and 1950, the album being finally released in 1953. During the first half of the 1950s Evans remained largely inactive, focusing his attention on musical study while occasionally arranging for television and radio, and for singers such as Tony Bennett and Johnny Mathis. He resumed his collaboration with Miles Davis in 1956, contributing to the following year's *Miles Ahead* and continuing with several more notable recordings up through the early 1960s. His first recordings under his own name were also made during this period, which would see him established as one of the leading names in the jazz world.

In 1964 Evans had his first of two children with his second wife, and for the majority of the remainder of the 1960s he devoted himself to raising his family. When he became active again in 1969, his work reflected the emerging music of the time, integrating electric instruments into the jazz-ensemble framework. A strong interest in the music of Jimi Hendrix developed during this time, and a record of jazz arrangements of his songs would be released in 1974 after Hendrix's death brought an end to plans for an actual collaboration between the two. Regular touring of the States and Europe continued throughout the 70s and 80s, with most of his recorded output being culled from these performances; several ventures into film scoring were also made in the 1980s, including contributions to *Absolute Beginners* and *The Color of Money*. A residency at the New York club Sweet Basil was established in 1984, which continued until Evans' death in 1988.

The Music:

Miles Davis and Gil Evans, one of the greatest collaborative teams in jazz history, first teaming in 1949 on *Birth of the Cool*, a jazz landmark, began to show interest in *Porgy and Bess* in the late 1950s. Due to the success of Davis and Evans's 1957 *Miles Ahead* LP, Columbia Records, their label, allowed them more freedom in choosing material for future recording sessions. Davis had been delving deeply into modality and symphonic music and ultimately decided to take on *Porgy and Bess* in this context. Evans's unique and considerable orchestration skills and Davis's new dedication to experimentation with modality led their *Porgy and Bess* to become a landmark record in jazz history.

Joined by other like-minded collaborators such as Cannonball Adderley and Paul Chambers, Davis and Evans ultimately created what is considered a classic of orchestral jazz. Evans knew the material very well, and was able to use different musicians and instruments to ideally represent themes in the music. Davis's uniquely beautiful and evocative sound was truly an ideal vehicle to express the emotional impact the work conveys. They created something very new and different, while at the same time staying very faithful to the intentions of its creators.

Despite the overall optimistic nature of the song, *There's a Boat Dats Leavin' Soon For New York* ultimately serves the role of setting up the tragic ending of George and Ira Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. After Porgy is arrested for killing Bess's former boyfriend Crown while defending her, drug dealer Sportin' Life successfully seduces Bess into leaving Catfish Row with him to embark on an adventure to New York City.

Notes to the Conductor:

Sportin' Life's promises of fun and excitement are very accurately reflected in Gil Evans' arrangement right from the start. The melody is stated by the trio of solo trumpet, alto saxophone and trombone, with the rest of the ensemble providing appropriately excited and upbeat accompaniment throughout the melody. One of the more clever moments of this arrangement comes at measure 36, where Evans makes a reference to an earlier movement, 'Gone, Gone, Gone,' in the brass that serves as a send off back to the melody. A brief but powerful ensemble blast followed by a drum break sets up an improvised trumpet solo at measure 57, with some slightly foreboding backgrounds in the woodwinds and trumpets that eventually lead up to a bombastic brass blast featuring some high note trumpet acrobatics.

After a brief held tone, the trumpet soloist improvises over the song's final A section before an ensemble shout chorus begins at measure 89. This shout is undeniably difficult, and will require a significant amount of attention in order to execute properly. The trumpet soloist returns for an improvisation on the bridge, with some more intense backgrounds that ultimately lead up to another powerful brass blast at measure 119. After one final send-off, the trio of trumpet, alto saxophone and trombone resume melody duties for the final A section. The trumpet soloist resumes improvising at measure 138 as the orchestra continues to build to a thrilling climax underneath. The final chord, perhaps keeping in mind the tragic events in Porgy's life that are to come, is jarringly ominous, and should taper off rapidly to a near whisper.

Dynamics in all of Evans's music is of prime importance. Minimal miking of the flutes is recommended so that they can be heard, but they must not be louder than the brass. As has been discussed in other Jazz Lines Publications, the original parts for the *Porgy and Bess* album are for four reed players, one of which is an alto sax, the remainder doubling on woodwinds of all sizes and types. Clearly Evans wanted the sound of a brass orchestra with woodwinds as color and acoustic support; he did not conceive these settings for live performance. In the studio, the instrumental balance was worked out so that the woodwinds sounded as Gil wished. For live performances, some amplification is needed so that the alto flutes and bass flute are heard. Please do not over amplify them; they are not meant to be as loud as the brass in ensemble passages.

Doug DuBoff, Dylan Canterbury, Rob DuBoff, and Jeffrey Sultanof

- June 2016

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RECORDED BY MILES DAVIS

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY GEORGE GERSHWIN,
DUBOSE AND DOROTHY HEYWARD AND IRA GERSHWIN
ARRANGED BY GIL EVANS

SCORE

BRIGHT SWING ♩ = 180

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

①

The score is for a jazz ensemble and includes the following parts:

- SOLO TRUMPET OR FLUGELHORN:** Melodic line starting with a *mf* dynamic.
- WOODWIND 1: ALTO SAX:** Melodic line starting with a *mf* dynamic.
- WOODWIND 2: BASS CLARINET/ALTO FLUTE:** Melodic line starting with a *mf* dynamic.
- WOODWIND 3: BASS CLARINET/ALTO FLUTE:** Melodic line starting with a *p* dynamic.
- WOODWIND 4: BASS CLARINET/PICCOLO:** Melodic line starting with a *p* dynamic.
- TRUMPET 1-4:** Four trumpet parts, mostly resting.
- HORN IN F 1-3:** Three horn parts in F major, with dynamics ranging from *p* to *mf*.
- TROMBONE 1-4:** Four trombone parts, with dynamics ranging from *mf* to *p*.
- TUBA:** Melodic line starting with a *p* dynamic.
- BASS:** Harmonic line starting with a *mf* dynamic.
- DRUM SET:** Includes hi-hat and snare patterns, with dynamics *mf* and *sim*.

The score is in 4/4 time and consists of 4 measures. Measure numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are indicated at the bottom of the page.

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**THERE'S A BOAT DATS
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SCORE - PAGE 2

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. It includes staves for:

- Solo Tpt. (Trumpet)
- Ww 1 (A. Sax.) (Alto Saxophone)
- Ww 2 (Bs. Cl.) (Bass Clarinet)
- Ww 3 (Bs. Cl.) (Bass Clarinet)
- Ww 4 (Bs. Cl.) (Bass Clarinet)
- Tpt. 1-4 (Trumpets)
- Hn. 1-3 (Horns)
- Tbn. 1-4 (Trombones)
- Tuba
- Bs. (Bass)
- D. S. (Drum Set) with a Ride Cymbal (RIDE CYM.)

The score is in 4/4 time and features dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, and *mp*. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The page is numbered 5 through 9 at the bottom.

THERE'S A BOAT DATS LEAVIN' SOON FOR NEW YORK

SCORE - PAGE 3

10

Solo TPT.

Ww 1 (A. Sax.)

Ww 2 (Bs. Cl.)

Ww 3 (Bs. Cl.)

Ww 4 (Bs. Cl.)

TPT. 1

TPT. 2

TPT. 3

TPT. 4

HN. 1

HN. 2

HN. 3

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

Tuba

Bs.

D. S.

mf

f

(4)