

*Presents*

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS  
**ROBOT PORTRAIT**

ARRANGED BY BILLY BYERS

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

**FULL SCORE**

JLP-7821

MUSIC BY BILLY BYERS

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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# **BILLY BYERS SERIES**

## **ROBOT PORTRAIT (1961)**

### **Background:**

Quincy Jones has been a ubiquitous presence on the American music scene for over 50 years. His impact on the worlds of jazz and pop music cannot be understated, as he has been involved in crafting the sounds of some of these genres' most crucial works. Born in Chicago in 1933, Jones spent his teenage years in Seattle, Washington. Music became his life's calling while attending Garfield High School, studying trumpet and arranging. His studies eventually led him east to Boston to study at the Berklee College of Music. He would also spend time in the late 1950s studying with renowned educators Nadia Boulange and Olivier Messiaen. Jones' first major musical experiences came as a member of the trumpet section of Lionel Hampton's band; this section also included such future heavy hitters as Clifford Brown and Art Farmer. Continued work as a trumpeter and arranger came while a member of Dizzy Gillespie's famed big band of the mid 1950s. Inspired by these experiences, Jones formed his first band in 1960. Although this band was staffed by some of the greatest musicians in the jazz world at the time, it would not be able to survive a European tour that year due to lack of financial support.

The 1960s saw Jones begin to enter the industry side of the music world. Becoming vice president of Mercury Records in 1964, Jones also embarked on a lengthy career in film and television scoring during this time, beginning with 1964's *The Pawnbroker*. Despite his increasingly busy schedule, he continued to release albums under his own name during this time period, several of which received widespread acclaim, in particular the Frank Sinatra/Count Basie collaboration *It Might As Well Be Swing*. Jones' career took a substantial turn toward pop music starting in the 1970s. Moving into the world of production, Jones was responsible for producing the soundtrack to 1978's *The Wiz*. This would bring him into professional contact with Michael Jackson; Jones would go on to produce Jackson's all time bestselling album *Thriller* in 1982. In addition to these musical successes, Jones would become involved in more general entertainment production as well, where his labors would result in, among other things, the hit 1990s TV show *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. Although Jones' pace has slowed in recent years, he continues to be one of the most heralded figures in the world of music. Some of the many honors he has received over the years include a Grammy's Legend Award, a BET Humanitarian Award, and an honorary doctorate from the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Tony award winner Billy Byers began playing trombone professionally while still in his teens, joining Karl Kiffle's Hollywood Canteen Kids. He maintained that being a trombone player made him a better arranger, giving him a seat in the band that allowed him to hear all the other instruments. Byers played with and arranged for jazz greats including Buddy Rich, Benny Goodman, Harold Arlen, Bing Crosby, Duke Ellington, Barbra Streisand, Sarah Vaughan, Quincy Jones, Frank Sinatra and Count Basie. In a career that spanned five decades, Byers scored over 100 films, wrote arrangements for hundreds of television shows, and orchestrated dozens of Broadway shows.

### **The Music:**

Recorded by the Quincy Jones Orchestra for their 1962 album *The Quintessence*, *Robot Portrait* is actually an arrangement from the pen of Billy Byers. This jaunty minor blues has some challenging ensemble moments and difficult brass ranges, but is undeniably a blast to both listen to and play.

### **Notes to the Conductor:**

The introduction starts with a descending riff in the low horns underpinning a simple melody line in the trumpets and tenor saxes before the rest of the ensemble joins them a few measures in. After a screaming trumpet rip, the melody enters at the pickup to measure 9. Carried by a duet of alto sax and trumpet, it is a simple, but extraordinarily catchy riff that is cleverly complimented by some punchy rhythmic figures in the trombones and piano. Melody duties get handed over to the sax section at measure 25 with the brass barking behind them. The saxes and trumpets offer up competing tag lines before another sharp, ripping trumpet line that sets up three choruses of solo tenor saxophone (played on the



original recording by Oliver Nelson). Background figures gradually gather behind the tenor solo, starting first with stabbing muted trombones, and eventually adding a trumpet and alto sax riff that is reminiscent of, but not identical to, the melody. Next up is a two chorus trumpet solo (handled originally by Freddie Hubbard). Both choruses feature background figures - first a variation of the main theme in the saxes, followed by some simple rhythmic figures in the trombones.

Said trombone backgrounds actually form the basis of the arrangement's shout chorus, which begins at measure 88. The saxes and brass trade brief, but biting, figures back and forth for two blues choruses. The second chorus (at measure 100) sees the arrangement briefly change from F minor to Bb minor. These two choruses should have a sense of gradual building all the way to the return of the arrangement's original key at measure 112. The saxes play a riff inspired by the main melody, with the brass poking and prodding as they did earlier. Everything culminates in one screaming blast before the melody proper returns at measure 124. There is a slightly extended tag at one point before the introduction is re-used for the arrangement's conclusion at measure 148. The grand finale features a moody brass chord and a brief, somewhat teasing, sax riff.

An alternate 5th trumpet part has been included as a substitute for horn in F. The trumpet backgrounds at measure 51 were not played on the original recording, but have been included with an optional tacet mark if you wish to play the arrangement as it was originally written.

**Doug DuBoff and Dylan Canterbury**

*December 2019*



# ROBOT PORTRAIT

RECORDED BY QUINCY JONES

## SCORE

MUSIC BY BILLY BYERS

ARRANGED BY BILLY BYERS

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND SEFFREY SULTANOF

MEDIUM SWING ♩ = 120 ①

ALTO SAX. 1  
ALTO SAX. 2  
TENOR SAX. 1  
TENOR SAX. 2  
BARITONE SAX.  
TRUMPET 1  
TRUMPET 2  
TRUMPET 3  
TRUMPET 4  
HORN IN F  
TROMBONE 1  
TROMBONE 2  
TROMBONE 3  
TROMBONE 4  
GUITAR  
PIANO  
BASS  
DRUM SET

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8



