

Presents

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS
OL' MAN RIVER

ARRANGED BY BENNY CARTER

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

FULL SCORE

JLP-7973

MUSIC BY JEROME KERN, LYRICS BY OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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BENNY CARTER BIG BAND SERIES

OL' MAN RIVER (1942)

Background:

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 Tormé.

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 University, which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1974. In 1987, Carter spent a week as visiting lecturer at Harvard University. Other 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:

Benny Carter's 1942 arrangement of *Ol' Man River* turns the Kern/Hammerstein *Showboat* classic on its head, swapping out the traditional dirge-like tempo the song is typically associated with for a blisteringly fast 2-beat. If executed well, this chart is a thrilling show-stopper, but be advised that it will give your ensemble quite a challenge.

Notes to the Conductor:

The intensity is already at near-maximum levels right from the start, with the brass gradually building atop a saxophone drone before the melody practically explodes into being at measure 21. Handled at first by the saxes, the brass play some hard-punching hits to keep things moving along before taking the melody themselves on the bridge. A thunderous send-off sets up Carter for an alto sax solo at measure 106 before the trombone section gets to shine with a slip-sliding soli at measure 137.

A fanfare-like interlude establishes a key change for a trumpet solo at measure 157. Halfway through this chorus, the sax section is handed the spotlight for a relentlessly brisk soli section that strongly hints at the at-the-time burgeoning bebop movement. The drama kicks into high gear at measure 205 with an implied half-time feel in the melody in the brass before an 8 bar drum break sets up another key change for the finale. The tempo suddenly cuts in half before the trumpets scream atop the rest of the band for an appropriately powerful conclusion.

Benny originally wrote the arrangement to feature himself on both alto saxophone and trumpet; however, for the performances he stayed on alto saxophone throughout. This publication was prepared using Benny Carter's original pencil score - this is not a transcription.

Acknowledgments:

We are thankful for the support and enthusiasm of Benny's widow Hilma Carter and the late Ed Berger.

Doug DuBoff, Dylan Canterbury, and Rob DuBoff

- June 2023

Ol' man River

Violins
Sob Alto 1
Alto 2
Sax. 3
Trumpets 1, 2, 3
Trombones 1, 2
Bass or Tuba 3
Guitar
Drums (Bells)
Piano or Harp

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 bars

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Above is the first page of Benny Carter's 1942 score for *Ol' Man River*, originally written to feature himself on both alto saxophone and trumpet.

OL' MAN RIVER

RECORDED BY BENNY CARTER

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SCORE

FAST SWING $\text{♩} = 180$

The score is arranged for a jazz ensemble. The saxophone section (Alto, Tenor, Baritone) plays a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *f*. The trumpet and trombone sections provide harmonic support with various articulations and dynamics. The piano part features a steady accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *f*. The bass line is simple and rhythmic, and the drum set provides a consistent swing feel. The score is divided into measures 1 through 8, with measure numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 printed below the staff.

21 *SEMPRE LEGATO*

Solo A. Sax. *mf*

A. Sax. 1 *SEMPRE LEGATO*

A. Sax. 2 *SEMPRE LEGATO*

T. Sax. 1 *SEMPRE LEGATO*

T. Sax. 2 *SEMPRE LEGATO*

B. Sax. *SEMPRE LEGATO*

Trpt. 1 *mf*

Trpt. 2 *mf*

Trpt. 3 *mf*

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Gtr. *mf*

Pno.

Bs.

Dr.

(4) (8)

21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

FIN PAGE