

*Presents*

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

**JUST FRIENDS**

ARRANGED BY ROB MCCONNELL

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY DYLAN CANTERBURY AND ROB DUBOFF

**FULL SCORE**

JLP-8002

MUSIC BY JOHN KLENNER, LYRICS BY SAM M. LEWIS

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## **ROB MCCONNELL BOSS BRASS SERIES**

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### **JUST FRIENDS (1981)**

#### **Background:**

Rob McConnell was one of the finest composer/arrangers of the 20th century. And his is a unique story. As writer/lyricist Gene Lees (himself a Canadian) once told me, "Rob is one of very few people born in Canada who is known all over the world who didn't have to go anywhere else to become famous. Musicians such as Oscar Peterson and Kenny Wheeler, and actors such as William Shatner and Lorne Greene became famous by touring or moving to the U.S. or England. Rob stayed home for the most part." And became a musical legend!

McConnell was born in Toronto in 1935 and took up the slide trombone in high school (later switching to the valve trombone). He studied with Gordon Delamont, a legendary educator and author of several books on theory, arranging and composition that are still in use. McConnell once gave an interview stating that he and Delamont had a highly contentious relationship, Delamont wanting McConnell to do something his way, with McConnell refusing.

McConnell came to New York in 1963 and worked with several bands, most notably with fellow Canadian Maynard Ferguson, who was leading a popular big band at the time. Instead of staying, he returned to Toronto to become part of the active studio musician pool for recordings, radio and television. The Boss Brass was originally made up of trumpets, trombones, French horns and rhythm section, and focused more on pop songs than jazz. Its first album was released by RCA Canada in 1968. By 1971, a saxophone section was added, and by 1976, the ensemble had 22 musicians. The band made several albums which were only available in Canada. Despite the lack of widespread availability, copies were heard by musicians all over the world, and word was soon out that an incredible big band was making striking, original music, played by Toronto's finest musicians. By 1979, some of these albums finally found distribution in the United States. From that time on, McConnell was encouraged to tour, but he always refused given the huge expense of carrying all those players, and his insistence on working with his regular ensemble instead of using substitutes. In 1981, a gig on the west coast was arranged, and resulted in many appearances at clubs, concerts and festivals all over the world. These were usually sellouts.

McConnell won five Juno Awards, three Grammy Awards, was elected to the Canadian Hall of Fame in 1997, and was made an officer of the Order of Canada in 1998. He lived and worked in Toronto except for a brief period in 1988 when he moved to Los Angeles to teach at the Dick Grove School of Music. In the last years of his life, he concentrated on a tentet rather than the large band. He continued to play and write until he passed away of liver cancer in 2010.

McConnell's music runs the gamut of emotions, from wildly funny to very romantic. It is quirky and often goes in unexpected directions, but it always knows where it is going. His manuscripts are clean and meticulous, and his work is inventive, inspiring, surprising, and always swinging.



## **The Music:**

Recorded on *Big Band Jazz, Vol. 1*, (1981) Rob McConnell's take on the classic standard *Just Friends* can best be summed up in one word: intense. This is a highly challenging arrangement that will require a significant amount of attention to technically execute, not to mention make it swing.

## **Notes to the Conductor:**

The arrangement starts off on a fairly conventional note with an 8 measure piano solo setting up the straightforward melody treatment in the saxophones at measure 9. The brass enter with a semi-unison counter line on the second half of the melody beginning at measure 25. Things begin to get tricky at measure 41, where the rhythm section completely drops out to leave the horns to an a capella soli chorus over the tune's form. Appropriately enough, this is the only part of the arrangement that dips below a medium loud volume level, as well.

The rhythm section re-enters with the pickups to measure 73, where an ensemble blast sets up the first in a succession of three soloists. First is a two chorus trombone solo with backgrounds at measure 105. A brief ensemble shout at measure 137 diverts the spotlight to a two chorus tenor sax solo at measure 145, recycling the backgrounds from the trombone solo beginning at measure 169.

Before the final solo, McConnell's arrangement takes an unexpected turn at measure 201, where a unison soli featuring the trombone section and bass takes center stage for a full chorus. This soli section is undeniably challenging and will require a strong group of players to execute properly. Another ensemble fanfare at measure 233 launches into a two chorus trumpet solo, with a different set of backgrounds entering at measure 265.

The final melody statement at measure 297 should feature the band playing at maximum intensity. The main line is handled in the saxophones, while the brass provide some powerful counterpoint. The final few measures of the form are tagged before the brass and rhythm section set up several ensemble breaks that are filled in by a corkscrewing saxophone line. The arrangement comes to an appropriately high-octane conclusion with a dissonant held chord followed by one final big ensemble blast.

This arrangement is for jazz big band with additional parts for two horns in F and a percussionist doubling on vibraphone and xylophone. The two horn in F parts may alternately be played by a 5th trumpet and a 5th trombone. This is not a transcription - it has been prepared from Rob McConnell's original set of parts.

## **Acknowledgements:**

We thank the generosity of Rob's widow Anne for her permission and participation in making these arrangements available for the first time for bands to play, audiences to enjoy, and musicians to study.

**Jeffrey Sultanof and Dylan Canterbury**

- March 2018

# JUST FRIENDS 104

ALTO I

*(TACIT)* *8 BARS INTRO*

*f*

*A* *Soli PLAY*

*B*

Measures 1-28 are numbered. Measure 1 has a circled '1' above it. Measure 28 has a circled '1' above it.

CBC STOCK E-20

*VERY EASY - NO RHYTHM*

Measures 29-68 are numbered. Measure 32 has a circled '1' above it.

CBC STOCK E-20

Here are the first two pages of the original alto saxophone I part, as used during the 1981 recording session.

# JUST FRIENDS

## SCORE

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ARRANGED BY ROB MCCONNELL

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

BRIGHT SWING ♩ = 220

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 1

HORN IN F 2

TROMBONE 1

TROMBONE 2

TROMBONE 3

BASS TROMBONE

GUITAR

PIANO

BASS

PERCUSSION  
VIBRAPHONE/XYLOPHONE

DRUM SET

2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9

A Sax 1 *mf*

A Sax 2 *mf*

T Sax 1 *mf*

T Sax 2 *mf*

B Sax *mf*

Gtr

PNO

B.S.

Dr.

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

$B^b_{ma13}$   $B^b_{m7}$   $E^b_{13}(9,11)$   $F_{ma13}$   $A^b_{m7}$   $D^b_{9}(9,11)$

(4) (8)

(17)

A. Sax. 1

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax. 1

T. Sax. 2

B. Sax.

Gtr.

Pno.

B.S.

Dr.

17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

(4) (8)