

# JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

*Presents*

## **LAURA**

AS RECORDED BY CHARLIE PARKER WITH STRINGS

ARRANGED BY JOE LIPMAN

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY JEFFREY SULTANOF AND ROB DUBOFF

## **FULL SCORE**

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-8031

LYRICS BY JOHNNY MERCER, MUSIC BY DAVID RAKSIN

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## LAURA (1950)

## Background:

When Billie Holiday signed a new recording contract with Decca Records in 1944, she told producer Milt Gabler she wanted to record with strings. Anxious to establish Holiday as a pop singer, Gabler hired six string players for her first session, and the first song recorded was *Lover Man*, one of her biggest hits. Several years later, when Charlie Parker signed with impresario/manager Norman Granz' label Clef, Parker asked for strings as well.

Granz was obviously keeping costs down, as only five string players were hired for the first session (1949), but these were the very top New York session players; some were members of the NBC symphony conducted by Arturo Toscanini. As much as he'd dreamed of playing with strings, reportedly Parker walked out of a few sessions without playing a note (the number has never been authenticated). He later explained that the sound of the strings and the thought of working with such distinguished musicians scared him; he thought they were greater artists than he was. What finally took place was sheer magic. The parts for the string players were relatively easy, so they listened and enjoyed Parker's improvisations. The arrangements for the first studio session were done by Jimmy Carroll and recorded on November 30, 1949. On July 5, 1950 there was another studio recording session, this time with arrangements by Joe Lipman. This second date featured a larger ensemble including oboe, French horn, 4 violins, 2 violas, cello, harp, guitar, piano, bass, and drums. Parker also appeared with his string group on at least 6 live occasions: Birdland (August, 1950 and March and April, 1951), Apollo Theater (August, 1950), Carnegie Hall (September, 1950), and Rockland Palace Dance Hall (September, 1952). In 1952 Parker recorded an additional 4 arrangements by Lipman featuring a full big band with a string section.



Parker would later say that the studio recordings with his string ensemble were his favorites of his own work, despite jazz critics' condescending reactions and their claims that he was 'selling out.' As it turns out, he was selling 'in.' The albums sold well, and brought Parker to a whole new audience. As far as his own playing, many of his solos on this first album were lovely and inspired. *Just Friends* is one of Parker's finest records and his solo is remarkable.

## The Music:

The discovery of the *Bird with Strings* original scores and parts has allowed historians to study the many arrangements written for Parker, whether for recording dates or live performances. It is natural that this library would contain arrangements and compositions that were never recorded and may not have been played publicly by Parker. Included were some interesting surprises such as *Ezz-thetic* by George Russell, *Moon Mist* by Mercer Ellington, and *Yardbird Suite* by Gerry Mulligan, now available from Jazz Lines Publications.

David Raksin's *Laura* was already a jazz standard by 1950, a distinction it acquired because of its lovely melody and its interesting chord progression. The story of its creation has been told many times by the composer but is worth repeating here. Raksin had been in Hollywood since 1936, working for Charles Chaplin orchestrating the master's score for the film *Modern Times*. Alfred Newman at 20th Century-Fox considered him a major talent and Raksin soon became part of the Fox music staff. The motion picture *Laura* was considered a run-of-the-mill whodunit when it was in production and Raksin was called in to write the score. Production began with the legendary director Rouben Mamoulian in the director's chair, but he was fired and Otto Preminger was signed to take over. Preminger wanted to use Duke Ellington's *Sophisticated Lady* as the musical theme of the picture, but Raksin felt that an original theme would suit the film better. He was given the weekend to come up with the theme. He labored over this for the better part of a weekend, and then remembered that he'd received a letter from his wife that he hadn't really read when he had previously opened it. He took out the letter, which was in effect telling him that she was filing for divorce. He put the letter on the piano and improvised as he read it over and over. Soon his fingers were playing the theme we now know as *Laura*. The rest is music history: the theme was heard by moviegoers who wanted the sheet music, lyrics were added by Johnny Mercer, and *Laura* became one of the most popular songs of 1944. By the time of the 1950 *Charlie Parker with Strings* date, the song was a standard.



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LAURA

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## CHARLIE

Handwritten musical score for Charlie Parker's 'Laura', arranged by Joe Lipman in 1950. The score is written on five staves. The first staff is for STRINGS, FR. H., and OBOE. The second staff is for VIOLIN, OBOE, and SOLO. The third staff is for RALL. The fourth staff is for FMAJ7 [ADD9]. The fifth staff is for Fmi7, Abmi, EbMAJ7, and Eb. The sixth staff is for Cmi6, D7(=5), D7(-9), and GMAJ7 (ADD9). The seventh staff is for GMAJ7 and GMAJ7. The eighth staff is for Gmi9, Gmi9, C+7(-9), and FMAJ7 (ADD9). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Above is the first page of Charlie Parker's original part for *Laura*, arranged by Joe Lipman in 1950.





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**RUBATO** **RALL.**

SOLO ALTO SAX. (STRINGS) (OBOE) 3 (F. HORN) 3 (SOLO VIOLIN) 3 (OBOE) 3

OBOE (SOLO) *mf* 3 3 3 3

HORN IN F (SOLO) *mf* 3 3 3 3

VIOLIN 1 PONT. *pp* NAT. (SOLO) *mf* 3 > *sfz* NAT. >

VIOLIN 2 PONT. *pp* NAT. > *sfz* NAT. >

VIOLIN 3 PONT. *pp* NAT. > *sfz* NAT. >

VIOLIN 4 PONT. *pp* NAT. > *sfz* NAT. >

VIOLA 1 PONT. *pp* NAT. > *sfz* NAT. >

VIOLA 2 PONT. *pp* NAT. > *sfz* NAT. >

CELLO PONT. *pp* NAT. > *sfz* NAT. >

HARP APREGGIATE > *p* E $\sharp$  F $\sharp$  G $\sharp$  A $\sharp$  D $\sharp$  C $\sharp$  B $\sharp$  E $\flat$  A $\flat$  B $\flat$  C $\flat$  E $\sharp$  D $\sharp$  A $\flat$  PLAY FLOURISH

GUITAR (OPT.)

PIANO/CELESTE (CELESTE) *p* (TO PIANO)

BASS (ARCO) *pp* > *sfz*

DRUM SET (BRUSHES) > *sfz*

1 2 3 4 5

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