

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME

RECORDED BY CHARLIE PARKER

ARRANGED BY JOE LIPMAN

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY JEFFREY SULTANOF AND ROB DUBOFF

FULL SCORE

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-8043

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY GEORGE GERSHWIN AND IRA GERSHWIN

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A NOT-FOR-PROFIT JAZZ RESEARCH ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PRESERVING AND PROMOTING AMERICA'S MUSICAL HERITAGE.



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THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME (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 *Yarbird Suite* by Gerry Mulligan, now available from Jazz Lines Publications.

The arrangements for the first string album were written by Jimmy Carroll (Caruana), who, along with Mitch Miller and Alec Wilder, attended the Eastman School of Music at the same time. Originally a clarinetist, Carroll was part of the very influential ensemble the Alec Wilder Octet (no doubt Parker knew these recordings). Carroll was almost certainly Miller's suggestion as arranger. Miller was A&R chief of Mercury Records at the time of the recordings (Mercury distributed Granz's Clef label during this period). In later years, Carroll and Miller would often work together when Miller took over as A&R for popular recordings at Columbia Records and Little Golden Records, and Carroll was chief arranger for Miller's television program based on his popular albums, *Sing Along with Mitch*. Carroll's brother Frank was a successful bassist in the studios as well, and was often included on his brother's record dates.

They Can't Take That Away from Me comes from the second Charlie Parker with strings album, recorded on July 5, 1950, arranged and conducted by Joe Lipman. This was one of George Gershwin's last songs, written for the motion picture *Shall We Dance* and introduced by Fred Astaire. George Gershwin had great affection for this song; when Astaire recorded it for Brunswick Records with John Green's orchestra, Gershwin was noticeably moved when he heard a test pressing of the recording. After having had many negative experiences in Hollywood where his songs were either poorly presented or cut altogether from films, this song served as a re-affirmation that his talent could not be denied. George Gershwin died two months after *Shall We Dance* was released.

Notes to the Conductor:

Interestingly, some arrangements written for the Charlie Parker with Strings sessions featured other musicians as well, showing how Parker was generous with the spotlight and appreciative of his fellow musicians. This particular arrangement was written specifically to feature pianist Bernie Leighton. Leighton may not be a household name as a jazz soloist, but he was one of the best and busiest pianists in the New York recording and broadcast studios. He recorded with Tony Bennett, Billie Holiday, Artie Shaw, Bud Freeman, Benny Goodman, James Moody, Bob Wilbur, as well as under his own name.

The score directs him to play the opening solo chorded, although it does not specify notes; these have been added for this publication. It is probable that Granz and/or Parker wanted to capture listeners' attention by copying the George Shearing sound, very popular at the time. This is a fairly straightforward arrangement, with the strings playing sustained notes against Parker's improvisations. If your ensemble is playing a concert of these arrangements, this might be a good piece to rehearse first so that everyone gets comfortable, and the ability for everyone to hear the rhythm section is addressed.

This publication was prepared using Joe Lipman's pencil score and the original set of parts used during the 1950 recording session.

Jeffrey Sultanof and Rob DuBoff

- October 2023

PIANO

Tempo

Solo
PLAY CHORDS

3

G⁷(-5) E⁷(-5)

G⁷(-5) E⁷(-5) D^{b7}(-5)

Solo *3*

G⁷(-5) E⁷(-5) D^{b7}(-5)

E^bMAT⁷ Fmi⁷ Gmi⁷ Gbo

B⁷(-5) A

Fmi⁷ Fmi⁹ E^b E⁷9 E^b9 E^{b7}(-9)

Above is the first page of Bernie Leighton's part for *They Can't Take That Away from Me*, recorded by Charlie Parker with Strings in 1950.

They Can't Take That Away from Me

Solo G⁷(-5)

25 ①

CHARLIE

Oboe

HORN

A+B

Violins

C

Viola

Cello

Bass

Drums

Solo PLAY

G⁷(-5)

E⁷(-5)

G⁷(-5)

Solo

G⁷(-5)



1595 Broadway, N. Y. C.

39

50

Above is the first page of Joe Lipman's original score for *They Can't Take That Away from Me*, written in 1950.

THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME

RECORDED BY CHARLIE PARKER

SCORE

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY GEORGE GERSHWIN AND IRA GERSHWIN

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MEDIUM SWING ♩ = 120

①

Solo

E7^(b5)

English Horn

f

The score is for a jazz ensemble. It includes parts for Alto Sax, English Horn, Horn in F, Violin 1-4, Viola 1-2, Cello, Harp, Guitar, Piano, Bass, and Drum Set. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The tempo is Medium Swing at 120 beats per minute. The score begins with a first ending bracket (①) and a 'Solo' section for the English Horn. The piano part features complex chordal textures and triplets. The bass line is primarily eighth-note patterns. The drum set part provides a steady swing feel.

The musical score is arranged for the following instruments: A. Sax., Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vln. 3, Vln. 4, Vla. 1, Vla. 2, Vc., Hp., Gtr., Pno., Bs., and D. S. The score is divided into measures 5, 6, 7, and 8. Chord changes are indicated above the staff lines: $D^{\flat 7(\flat 5)}$ above the Saxophone staff, $E 7(\flat 5)$ above the Guitar staff, $B^{\flat 7(\flat 5)}$ above the Bass staff, $G 7(\flat 5)$ above the Bass staff, and $E 7(\flat 5)$ above the Bass staff. Dynamic markings include *mf* and *sfz*. The Pno. part features a complex chordal accompaniment with many accidentals. The D. S. part consists of a simple bass line.