

Presents

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

RHAPSODY IN BLUE

RECORDED BY CHARLIE BARNET

ARRANGED BY JOHNNY RICHARDS

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

FULL SCORE

JLP-8807

MUSIC BY GEORGE GERSHWIN

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CHARLIE BARNET SERIES

RHAPSODY IN BLUE (1949)

Background:

Charlie Barnet had been leading bands since the early 1930s, but stardom finally arrived when in July of 1939 when his band recorded Billy May's arrangement of Ray Noble's *Cherokee*. Barnet's stylings were based on his love of the music of Count Basie and particularly Duke Ellington, but his band could also play beautiful treatments of ballads as well. After WWII, the main focus of pop music was vocalists – singers took over the airwaves and the recording industry. Although several bandleaders broke up their groups in 1946, some were back on the road in the months ahead, and ensembles continued to tour the country playing ballrooms, clubs and theaters. It was only until television became a commercial staple by 1949 that the band world felt the pressures of attendance drying up. With ballrooms closing and theaters doing less business, things looked bleak.

They also looked bleak for another reason: the jazz world embraced a new style called bebop. More and more, the music world tried to embrace this new music. Such was the music scene that Charlie Barnet tried to navigate when he was signed to Capitol Records in 1948. By the end of that year, Capitol's top big band, led by Stan Kenton, had disbanded, and Barnet was encouraged to fill the 'progressive jazz' void. Starting in January of 1949, Barnet's band made some of the finest big band sides of that time, with music arranged by Manny Albam, Gil Fuller, Pete Rugolo, Dave Matthews and the underrated Paul Vilepigue.

However, the Barnet band made history in another way during his Capitol contract. Two of the band's recordings were refused licenses by the composer's estates. The first was a Dennis Farnon arrangement of Jerome Kern's *All the Things You Are*, featuring Maynard Ferguson (the arrangement was originally written for Ferguson's own orchestra when he lived in Canada). Ferguson later played this arrangement in the initial concerts of Stan Kenton's Innovations Orchestra, and the estate demanded that it be withdrawn.

The second recording to be refused a license is the subject of this publication.

It is now well known how George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* came to be commissioned by Paul Whiteman and premiered in 1924. By 1949, it was the most performed concert composition in American music, and remains so to this day. History has not recorded whose idea it was for Johnny Richards to create a version of *Rhapsody in Blue* for the Barnet band, but the idea was pretty daring. The Gershwin estate was known for being very protective of the composition, as well as the music from the opera *Porgy and Bess*. Any treatment that misrepresented the work was bound to be rejected by the publisher on behalf of the estate.

But something fascinating occurred that may never be fully explained. Examination of the parts shows that instructions to stand and sit are clearly marked, so this arrangement was certainly played when the band was booked in movie theaters. An article in *Variety Magazine* dated March 9, 1949 stated that the publisher of the work demanded that the arrangement be destroyed, and yet the Barnet band recorded this version of *Rhapsody in Blue* on March 16th. Why would Capitol record a piece of music knowing full well that not only would it never be released, but that the publisher wanted it eradicated for all time?

Obviously the arrangement was not destroyed; except for Trumpets 1 and 2, the parts exist and have been used to prepare this publication. The Barnet recording of *Rhapsody in Blue* was bootlegged on LP back in the 1970s. Capitol Japan (Toshiba) released it on CD where *Rhapsody in Blue* has been in the public domain since 1988. The recording has still not been officially released in the United States!



Notes to the Conductor:

Johnny Richards achieved his greatest notoriety as one of the chief arrangers for the Stan Kenton Orchestra in the 1950s. His arrangement of George Gershwin's seminal *Rhapsody in Blue* for Charlie Barnet predates this period by a few years. Nevertheless, it displays all of the trademarks of Richards' style that would eventually earn him awards with Kenton's organization.

The bombastic introduction sounds less like Gershwin and more like Bartok or Stravinsky, featuring blaring brass cadences that set up a couple of short alto sax cadenzas from Barnet. The melody proper finally comes in at measure 16. It seems like the arrangement is going to settle into more conventional territory at this point, but a series of rhythmically displaced sax riffs quickly quash those notions. The introductory melody pokes its head up again in the brass at measure 28, but is once again followed up quickly by more sax riffs and dissonant fanfares. The arrangement finally starts to settle into a more steady tempo at measure 35, but doesn't fully relax until Barnet's re-appearance a few measures later due to some unsettling harmonies in the saxes and trumpets. The plunger-muted trombones at measure 43 imply an almost *Tuxedo Junction*-like feel, one of the rare non-volatile moments of the chart. This is followed up by a trumpet rip to bring back the more dramatic overtones that have defined the arrangement so far.

Out of nowhere, the tempo doubles up at measure 59, with 8 measures of pounding tom-toms to allow the rest of the band to get into the swing of things. The next major melodic theme begins at measure 67, with the band taking on a much more traditionally big band feel at this point. The brass largely handle the melody work, with the saxes interjecting with some light speed bebop influenced counterpoints that will undeniably give your section a workout. Barnet peaks his head up at measure 93 before actually taking the spotlight for a solo at measure 103. The backgrounds behind this solo are impressively multi-layered; the saxes play a Basie-inspired rhythmic riff, the trombones bark out accented hits in response, and the trumpets employ a Doppler Effect mimicking series of wahs in the background. Barnet's solo is eventually passed off to another upcoming Kenton star, a young Maynard Ferguson. He partakes in some of his trademark high note shenanigans while being egged on by the (now plunger muted) trombones and saxes.

Ferguson's solo is wrapped up by a sharp and dissonant full-band fanfare that serves as a surprising yet highly effective transition to the final melodic theme at measure 163. Barnet, having switched to soprano sax, leads the section in a melody statement that should be warm but not overly saccharine. The brass fill in the gap by providing either soaring chromatic rips (the trumpets) or punchy clanks (the trombones). After the listener has been lulled into a false sense of relaxation, the arrangement suddenly launches into a double-time feel at measure 197. This serves as an abrupt wake-up call before the band retreats to more typically big band territory at measure 211, where the double-time ends.

The arrangement's conclusion begins with Barnet, now back on alto, playing a sharp fanfare. Said fanfare is tossed around the rest of the band before a riotous sax line returns the band to a re-statement of the hard swinging riffs previously heard at measure 85. This time, Ferguson's trumpet can be heard screaming over the top of the band as they launch into one final re-statement of the introductory theme at measure 235. Barnet plays a quick cadenza with the full band swelling around him, all the way up to the final ensemble blast featuring Barnet and Ferguson competing to see who can out high-note the other.

This arrangement is for jazz big band featuring solo alto and soprano saxophone. This publication has been based on the original set of parts used during the recording session with the exception of the first and second trumpet parts, which were lost over the years. These two parts have been transcribed from the original 1949 recording.

Jeffrey Sultanof and Dylan Canterbury

- June 2020

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RHAPSODY IN BLUE

CONDUCTOR
ALTO SAX

pesante *CON BRAVURA* *ALTO Solo*

RALL *TEMPO PRIMO*

Solo *RALL* *TEMPO PRIMO*

Solo *RALL* *Poco AGITATO*

mf *p.*

Here is the first page of the original solo alto saxophone/soprano saxophone part as played by Charlie Barnet.

RHAPSODY IN BLUE

RECORDED BY CHARLIE BARNET

TRANSPOSSED SCORE

MUSIC BY GEORGE GERSHWIN

ARRANGED BY JOHNNY RICHARDS

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

♩ = 100

(ALTO SAX)

RUBATO A7⁽⁹⁾

SOLO ALTO SAX / SOPRANO SAX

ALTO SAX. 1

ALTO SAX. 2

TENOR SAX. 1

TENOR SAX. 2

BARITONE SAX.

TRUMPET 1

TRUMPET 2

TRUMPET 3

TRUMPET 4

TROMBONE 1

TROMBONE 2

TROMBONE 3

PIANO

BASS

(ARCO)

(TIMPANI)

2 3 4 5 6 7

Detailed description of the musical score: This is a transposed score for a jazz band. It features ten staves for saxophones (Solo Alto/Soprano, Alto 1 & 2, Tenor 1 & 2, Baritone), four staves for trumpets, three staves for trombones, piano, bass, and timpani/drum set. The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 100. It includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *p*, and performance instructions like *RUBATO* and *ARCO*. The saxophones play a melodic line with triplets and slurs. The brass section provides harmonic support with rhythmic patterns. The piano and bass play a steady accompaniment. The score is numbered 2 through 7 at the bottom.

8 IN TIME ♩ = 100

FREELY

D^b13(b9)

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The top section includes Solo A. Sax. (treble clef), A. Sax. 1 & 2 (treble clef, key signature of one sharp), T. Sax. 1 & 2 (treble clef, key signature of one sharp), and B. Sax. (treble clef, key signature of one sharp). The middle section features Trp. 1-4 (treble clef, key signature of one sharp) and Tbn. 1-3 (bass clef, key signature of one sharp). The bottom section includes Pno. (grand staff), B.S. (bass clef, key signature of one sharp), and Time (bass clef, key signature of one sharp). The score is marked with dynamics such as *ff* and *l*. A 'FREELY' section begins at measure 12, indicated by a *D^b13(b9)* chord symbol. The Solo A. Sax. part features a complex, rapid melodic line starting in measure 12. The saxophone parts (A. Sax. 1 & 2, T. Sax. 1 & 2, B. Sax.) play sustained chords and melodic fragments. The brass parts (Trp. 1-4, Tbn. 1-3) play rhythmic patterns, including triplets. The piano part (Pno.) provides harmonic support with chords and a left-hand line. The bass (B.S.) and time (Time) parts provide the rhythmic foundation.

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16 IN TIME ♩ = 100

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The top section includes the Solo A. Saxophone part, followed by pairs of A. Saxophones (1 & 2) and T. Saxophones (1 & 2). Below these are the B. Saxophone, four Trumpets (Tpt. 1-4), three Trombones (Tbn. 1-3), Piano (PNO.), Bass (Bs.), and Time. The score spans measures 16 to 21. Measure 16 begins with a tempo marking of 100 beats per minute. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score contains numerous triplets, dynamic markings such as *ff* and *mf*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. A section starting at measure 19 is marked with an asterisk (*). The score concludes at measure 21 with a double bar line.

Musical score for Rhapsody in Blue, Transposed Score - Page 4. The score includes parts for Solo Alto Saxophone, Alto Saxophones 1 and 2, Tenor Saxophones 1 and 2, Baritone Saxophone, Trumpets 1-4, Trombones 1-3, Piano, Bass, and Drums. The score spans measures 22 to 27. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. Performance instructions include accents and a "Rit." marking.