

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

SEPTEMBER SONG

RECORDED BY FRANK SINATRA

ARRANGED BY AXEL STORDAHL

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

JLP-9546

WORDS BY MAXWELL ANDERSON

MUSIC BY KURT WEILL

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SEPTEMBER SONG (1962)

Background:

Francis Albert Sinatra was one of the greatest figures in the history of American entertainment and pop culture. Born December 12, 1915, in Hoboken, New Jersey, he developed an early interest in music, becoming proficient as a singer and arranging for bands by his teens. He soon dropped out of high school to pursue a career in music. Following the exposure resulting from a successful appearance on the then-popular *Major Bowes Amateur Hour* radio show, he came to the attention of Harry James, who hired him to front his big band. While he gained experience and released his first records with James, they did not sell well and he soon grew frustrated with the James band and left to join Tommy Dorsey, with whom he had his first huge successes. Seeing his popularity begin to skyrocket, Sinatra soon felt the need to become a solo artist, and left Dorsey, taking arranger Axel Stordahl with him; this would be the first of several very close relationships Sinatra would enjoy with arrangers over the years.

During the World War II era, he became a sensation, earning the nickname 'The Voice' and gaining a following of young women that would presage the later crazes for Elvis and the Beatles. By 1946 he was topping the charts, selling millions of records, and also receiving serious acclaim for the quality and depth of his work. Tastes change however, and by the late 1940s he was suffering a significant decline in popularity. Exacerbated by the death of his publicist George Evans and the breakup of his marriage as the 1950s began, it was hard for many to believe how far Sinatra had sunk, but it would have been truly impossible to envision the future heights he would reach. By late 1951 his performances were often poorly attended, and Columbia, the label on which he became a superstar, dropped him.

Sinatra was also a successful actor, and he believed a part in the film *From Here to Eternity* would begin a career revival; it did, and remarkably so. The 1953 film was hugely popular and Sinatra won an Oscar for best supporting actor. He had also signed with Capitol Records, and began what was to be the most significant collaboration of his career with arranger Nelson Riddle. After the legendary first session, which included *I've Got the World on a String*, Sinatra was shocked at how well Riddle seemed to understand his abilities, ideas, and aspirations. Riddle knew how to treat dynamics beautifully, and how to craft an arrangement in order to allow the singer to clearly be the star while at the same time giving him rich, creative backing. They recorded a series of albums, including *In the Wee Small Hours*, *Songs For Swingin' Lovers*, and *A Swingin' Affair*, that both defined the genre and turned Sinatra into a massive superstar.

As the 1960s dawned, desiring more creative power and independence, Sinatra formed Reprise Records, which became another huge success for him, signing many other successful artists as well as being his recording home. He began working with other arrangers, hiring Don Costa, who had a great mind for commercial success in various genres. He also worked with the Count Basie Orchestra and Quincy Jones during this period, their greatest success and notoriety coming from the Rat Pack era appearances at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas. During the rest of the sixties, Sinatra memorably recorded with Antonio Carlos Jobim and Duke Ellington, and he continued to be an eminent presence around the world, recording and touring for the next thirty years, while receiving endless honors and accolades.

While he became one of the most famous musicians in history, and certainly had a well-publicized and colorful personal life, much is not widely known about this brilliant and complex man. He never had formal music training, but was blessed with an incredible ear and innate musical understanding which often surprised musicians he worked with. His voice was incredibly powerful, his diction precise, and perhaps no popular singer has had a more unique gift for interpreting lyrics. Classical musicians marveled at his skills, and even his conducting ability surprised those who worked with him. His combination of rare musical gifts and perfectionism, as well as his insistence on working with the best writers and arrangers, fused to create an unmatched catalog of definitive versions of many of America's greatest standards.

Sinatra had a temper, which he showed often to the world, and he could be profane, bullying, and gruff. But he also most definitely had a very serious different side as well. He was known for treating collaborators and musicians well, and was generous to a fault. Perhaps less-known is his tremendous charitable streak. Sinatra contributed generously, gave many benefit concerts, and often very quietly donated money to many causes. He was also politically active for his entire life, at first with the Democrats, and after the famous rift with JFK, the GOP. One of the most admirable parts of his character was his lifelong battle against racism. Growing up in a time and place where Italian-Americans were often heavily discriminated against, he quickly developed a visceral hatred for racism. He performed with African-American musicians during his entire career, he worshiped Billie Holiday and said that Ella Fitzgerald was the only singer he feared, and in a time when Las Vegas was much like the Jim Crow South, he fought for the rights of his close friends Sammy Davis Jr. and Count Basie and others.

Frank Sinatra passed away with his wife at his side in Los Angeles on May 14, 1998, at the age of 82. The outpouring of grief, respect, and tributes was tremendous for a figure whose only rivals among 20th century western musicians were Bing Crosby, Elvis Presley, and the Beatles. The 100th anniversary of his birth in 2015 saw countless concert tributes as well as documentaries and major new books. This is a man whose music will be listened to as long as the world continues to turn. The voice of Sinatra in his prime is peerless-powerful and comforting, historic and vibrant; he had the rare ability to make a newly-written song instantly his own, and to breathe new life into decades-old standards while creating their definitive expressions. Jazz Lines Publications is very proud to publish dozens of his best and most important original arrangements written by Nelson Riddle, Billy May, Neal Hefti, Quincy Jones, Billy Byers, and Don Costa.

The Music:

Frank Sinatra's 1962 album *Point of No Return* marked a key transitional moment in his career. It was both his final album for Capitol Records, as well as the final time he would collaborate with arranger Axel Stordahl. Clearly in a nostalgic mood during the recording, Sinatra and Stordahl's work on *September Song* hearken back to the sound and style that initially made Sinatra an icon in the 1940s.

Notes to the Conductor:

A rubato introduction with some sweeping string and woodwind figures sets the tone for the overall moody performance. Sinatra enters with the verse at measure 5, continuing the elastic feel from the introduction. The backgrounds are mostly simple, save for some brief woodwind flutters and continuous harp strumming. It is of utmost importance for the ensemble to follow the vocalist's pacing at all times until the tempo finally kicks in at measure 18.

Moving at a dirge-like speed, Sinatra is allowed ample time to luxuriate in the dark yet embracing melody, with Stordahl expertly orchestrating various ensemble figures throughout to fill in the gaps. The most complex figures reside in the woodwind and string parts, and need to be approached with care in order to sound as effortless and romantic as possible. Although nothing in the brass parts are overly technically difficult, your musicians should constantly strive to attain a full, almost orchestral tone at all times. The arrangement never reaches an exceedingly high volume, but be sure to have some level of presence in order to allow for the ending to decay to near-nothingness.

This publication was based on Axel Stordahl's original pencil score and the set of parts used during the 1962 recording session.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to an agreement with Frank Sinatra Enterprises, LLC, many of the classic arrangements written for Sinatra will be available from Jazz Lines Publications. As music fans who were greatly influenced by these magnificent arrangements, it is a great honor and thrill to work on these using the original manuscripts.

Doug DuBoff, Dylan Canterbury, and Rob DuBoff

- March 2021

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Pi. 1. *col. Dist. A*

Pi. 2.

Pi. 3.

SAXES

Eng. H.

Clar. 1.

Clar. 2.

B. Clar.

TRB. 1.

TRB. 2.

TRB. 3.

VOICE

MALLETS

Guitar

BASS

BASS ONLY

BELLS

Above is the first page of Axel Stordahl's pencil score for *September Song*, recorded in 1962 and released on *Point of No Return*.

5 FREELY IN 2 DIRECTED

Vox. I was a young man court - ing the girls, I played me a wait - ing game. If a maid re - fused me with toss - ing curls, I let the old earth take a

C Fl. 1 *p* *mp*

C Fl. 2 *p* *mp*

C Fl. 3 *p* *mp*

E. Hn. *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Cl. 1 *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *soli w/ bells*

Cl. 2 *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Bs. Cl. *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Hn. 1 *p*

Hn. 2 *p*

Hn. 3 *p*

Tbn. 1 *p*

Tbn. 2 *p*

Tbn. 4 *p*

Vln. I *pp* *cresc.* *p*

Vln. II *pp* *cresc.* *p*

Vln. III *pp* *cresc.* *p*

Vla. *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *cresc.* *p* *pp* *cresc.* *p*

Vc. *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *cresc.* *p*

Hp. *pp* *G \flat C \flat* *G \flat E \flat* *E \flat C \flat* *G \flat C \flat* *E \flat G \flat* *C \sharp* *E \flat* *F \sharp* *G \flat B \flat* *p* *G \flat C \flat B \flat*

Bs. *pp* *p*

Perc. Bls. *p* *soli w/ clarinet*

D. S. *pp*

5 6 7 8 9 10 11