

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

GET HAPPY

RECORDED BY ELLA FITZGERALD

ARRANGED BY BILLY MAY

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

JLP-9706

LYRIC BY TED KOEHLER, MUSIC BY HAROLD ARLEN

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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ELLA FITZGERALD SERIES

GET HAPPY (1960)

Background:

Truly the First Lady of Song, Ella Fitzgerald was one of the greatest singers in American history. As her official website perfectly states, “Her voice was flexible, wide-ranging, accurate, and ageless. She could sing sultry ballads, sweet jazz, and imitate every instrument in an orchestra.” She enthralled audiences all over the world for decades, worked with everyone from Duke, Dizzy, and Count Basie to Nat King Cole and Sinatra, and left a recorded legacy that is second to none.

Born Ella Jane Fitzgerald on April 25, 1917 in Newport News, Virginia, Ella endured some rough times as a child. Following the split of her parents, she moved with her mother to Yonkers, NY, and sadly lost her mother at age 15. Fighting poverty, Ella eventually used these difficult times as motivation in life, and continued to harbor dreams of being an entertainer. She made her public singing debut at the Apollo Theater in Harlem on November 21, 1934 at age 17. Buoyed by her success, she continued to enter and win singing contests, and soon was singing with Chick Webb’s band. In 1938 she quickly gained acclaim with her version of *A-Tisket, A Tasket*, which was a huge success and made her famous at age 21; for over 50 years she remained a star.

Following Webb’s death in 1939, Ella briefly led the band, and soon struck out on her own as a solo artist, taking on various projects as well as making her film debut. While on tour with Dizzy Gillespie in the mid-1940s, Ella began to respond to the massive changes in the jazz world, as swing was giving way to bebop; she began incorporating scat singing into her repertoire as a reaction to the improvisational nature of bebop. As she recalled years later “I just tried to do [with my voice] what I heard the horns in the band doing.” During this period, she also met bassist Ray Brown, whom she was to marry and adopt a son with. Through Brown, she met jazz impresario and producer Norman Granz, and this relationship led to her greatest stardom and achievements.

Ella joined Granz’s Jazz at the Philharmonic Tour, recorded classic albums with Louis Armstrong, and from 1956-1964 worked on what may be her greatest legacy, the Song Book series, featuring the music of Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, the Gershwins, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern, and Johnny Mercer. It can be argued that along with the seminal work of Frank Sinatra, these records created some of the greatest and most definitive versions of a huge portion of what comprises the Great American Songbook. Ira Gershwin famously remarked, “I never knew how good our songs were until I heard Ella Fitzgerald sing them.” Ella also did what music can uniquely do in tying together many strands of American culture at a time when race relations were a major issue in American society. Critic Frank Rich expressed it so well shortly after Ella’s death, writing about her Song Book series: “Here was a black woman popularizing urban songs often written by immigrant Jews to a national audience of predominantly white Christians.”

Ella toured constantly during these years, and she and Granz did their part to help the burgeoning civil rights movement, fighting inequality and discrimination at every turn, bravely even in the Deep South. During the 1960s Ella continued to tour and record, also appearing in movies and being a regular guest on all of the most popular talk and variety TV shows. Throughout the 1970s, she kept touring all over the world, and became even more well-known through a series of high-profile ad campaigns. Anyone who grew up in the 1970s remembers Ella’s “Is it live or is it Memorex” commercials.

One of the lesser-known aspects of her life at the time was her charitable side. She was known as a very shy person who was protective of her privacy. As a way to help others avoid what she went through as a child, she gave frequent generous donations to all sorts of groups and organizations that helped underprivileged youth, and her official website even suggests that continuing to be able to this was a major driving force behind the unrelenting touring schedule she continued to maintain. She cared for her sister Frances’ family after Frances passed as well.

By the 1980s, she had acquired countless awards and honors, among them 13 Grammys including the Lifetime Achievement Award and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. But the endless touring schedule did begin to take its toll, and Ella began to experience serious diabetes-related health problems. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s she suffered a series of surgeries and hospital stays, and by 1996 she had tired of spending so much time in hospitals. She spent her last days enjoying being outdoors at her Beverly Hills home, sitting outside and simply being with she and Ray Brown’s adopted son Ray, Jr. and her granddaughter Alice. Many sources report that during her last days she reportedly said, “I just want to smell the air, listen to the birds, and hear Alice laugh.”



She died in her home on June 15, 1996 at the age of 79, and the tributes were instant, huge, and international. Befitting someone of her stature, who was at the pinnacle of the entertaining world for nearly half a century and left behind a legacy that will never diminish in its beauty and importance, her archival materials reside at the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian.

There are few figures in American history who left behind what Ella did. A shy, reticent woman from very humble beginnings, she thrilled countless millions all over the world with her beautiful voice and her singular way of interpreting a tune. She sang in so many styles, worked with so many of the best composers and arrangers in the music business, performed with most of the other greatest stars of her era, and left a body of work that truly enhances the American experience.

The Music:

Ella Fitzgerald was no stranger to Ted Koehler and Harold Arlen's *Get Happy*, having used it as the title track for her 1959 album. This Billy May arrangement, however, is taken from her 1961 album *Ella Fitzgerald Sings The Harold Arlen Song Book*, recorded in 1960.

Notes to the Conductor:

May's arrangement begins with a simple but effective call and response between the preacher (the trumpets) and the congregation (the saxophones) with some steady accompaniment from the trombones, baritone saxophone and rhythm section. Things get more complicated upon the vocalist's entry at measure 16, where the tempo suddenly drops out for a mostly rubato interpretation of the verse. During these rubato sections, the saxophones hand the role of preacher over to Fitzgerald while they (along with the arco bass) fall into the position of being the "organist." The bright swing tempo briefly kicks back in at measure 31 before Fitzgerald resumes her rubato solo, before allowing the band to play a triumphant fanfare that leads into the melody at measure 43.

From here on out, the arrangement becomes much more conventional with the saxophones and brass each taking turns providing their "amens" underneath Fitzgerald's sermon. May brings back the call and response in the ensemble at measure 75 before a series of brass blasts set up and then accompany an alto sax solo. Fitzgerald returns to more ensemble "amens" at measure 107 before the call-and-response figure returns for the ending at measure 135. The arrangement ends on a bit of a sweet and sour note. The sweet part is the brass holding a warm Maj 7(#11) chord; the sour part is the saxophones play a unison but loose interpretation of the first few bars of the melody, ending on a flatted 9th.

This arrangement has been based on the original Billy May pencil score and the set of parts used during the 1960 recording session.

Doug DuBoff, Dylan Canterbury, and Rob DuBoff

- April 2017

GET HAPPY INTRO

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INTRO

ELLA FITZGERALD

Handwritten musical score for the introduction of "Get Happy" by Billy May. The score is arranged for a big band and includes parts for the following instruments:

- Conductor (with handwritten letters A through H)
- 1st Alto
- 2nd Alto
- 1st Tenor
- 2nd Tenor
- Baritone
- Trumpets (4 parts, numbered 1-4)
- Trombones (4 parts, numbered 1-4)
- Guitar
- Piano
- Bass
- Drums

The score is divided into measures corresponding to the conductor's letters A through H. The music is written in a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The piano part includes chord notations such as Bbm7 (CM), Dm7 (CM), Bbm7 (CM), Dm7 (Bbm7), Dm7 (CM), Bb9, and Bb9. The drums part shows a simple rhythmic pattern in the first measure.

Here is the first page Billy May's pencil score of Get Happy, recorded by Ella Fitzgerald in 1960.

GET HAPPY

RECORDED BY ELLA FITZGERALD

SCORE

LYRIC BY TED KOEHLER, MUSIC BY HAROLD ARLEN

ARRANGED BY BILLY MAY

PREPARED BY ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

BRIGHT SWING ♩ = 200

Score for various instruments including Vocal, Woodwind 1-5 (Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax), Trumpet 1-4, Trombone 1-3, Bass Trombone, Guitar, Piano, Acoustic Bass, and Drum Set. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *mf*, and articulation like accents. The guitar and piano parts include chord diagrams for various chords including B^bma⁷, Cm⁷, Dm⁷, E^bma⁷, and B^b13.

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Vox. Hal - le - lu -

Ww. 1 (A. Sax.)

Ww. 2 (A. Sax.)

Ww. 3 (T. Sax.)

Ww. 4 (T. Sax.)

Ww. 5 (B. Sax.)

Tpt. 1 To Straight Mute

Tpt. 2 To Straight Mute

Tpt. 3 To Straight Mute

Tpt. 4 To Straight Mute

Tbn. 1 To Straight Mute

Tbn. 2 To Straight Mute

Tbn. 3 To Straight Mute

Bs. Tbn. To Straight Mute

Gr. E^bma7 Fm7 Gm7 Fm7 E^bma7 Fm7 Gm7 Fm7 E^bma7 Fm7 Gm7 E^bma7 B^b6 Cm7 F7(9)B^bm6

Pno. E^bma7 Fm7 Gm7 Fm7 E^bma7 Fm7 Gm7 Fm7 E^bma7 Fm7 Gm7 E^bma7 B^b6 Cm7 F7(9)B^bm6

Bs. E^bma7 Fm7 Gm7 Fm7 E^bma7 Fm7 Gm7 Fm7 E^bma7 Fm7 Gm7 E^bma7 B^b6 Cm7 F7(9)B^bm6

D. S. (12) (14)

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

GET HAPPY

SCORE - PAGE 3

17 RUBATO, DIRECTED

The musical score is arranged in six staves. The top staff is for the voice, with lyrics: "jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! Come you sin - ners, gath - er 'round. Hal - le - lu -". The woodwind section consists of five parts: Ww. 1 (A. Sax.), Ww. 2 (A. Sax.), Ww. 3 (T. Sax.), Ww. 4 (T. Sax.), and Ww. 5 (B. Sax.). The bass line is labeled "Bs." and includes the instruction "arco". The score spans measures 17 to 24. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and mezzo-piano (*mp*). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music features long, sustained notes with phrasing slurs.