

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

THE JEFFREY SULTANOF MASTER EDITION

WHEN LIGHTS ARE LOW

AS PERFORMED BY BENNY CARTER

ARRANGED BY BENNY CARTER

EDITED BY JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-8460

WORDS BY SPENCER WILLIAMS

MUSIC BY BENNY CARTER

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BENNY CARTER BIG BAND SERIES

WHEN LIGHTS ARE LOW

Background:

In 1935, Carter left the United States to play and write in Europe, and his presence there had an immediate effect on European jazz and dance musicians. After staying in France for nine months, Carter accepted an invitation to arrange for the BBC Dance Orchestra under the direction of Henry Hall, and while he could not play with the orchestra because of British music union rules, he could play on a series of recordings contracted by the Vocalion (UK) label.

The Music:

On June 20, 1936, Carter and a quartet (which included Americans Gene Rodgers and Bernard Addison) made the first recording of *When Lights Are Low* with a vocal by fellow expatriate, vocalist Elisabeth Welch (lyrics were written by Spencer Williams). The first recording of the song for big band was recorded in Holland by the Kai Ewans Orchestra, and the song became the band's theme. Carter took the vocal himself on this recording. 'When Lights Are Low' is Carter's most popular song, recorded many times over the years. Perhaps the most famous was made by Miles Davis in 1953, who unfortunately used a different bridge than the one Carter wrote, and this 'bridge' has been recorded many times in error.



Benny Carter at the Savoy, 1939.

Standing: Tyree Glenn; at his right: Vic Dickenson; sitting L to R: Carl Frye and Ernie Powell.

The arrangement presented here was first performed by an all-star big band led by Carter for a concert at Princeton University on December 3, 1973. The parts reveal that Carter made quite a few changes over many performances of this setting; there are cross-outs, paste-overs and rewrites in pencil by several hands. This is the final version of Carter's arrangement.

Notes to the Conductor:

Benny Carter's arrangements are models of taste, economy and they warrant study by students and professionals alike. They are almost Mozartean with regard to voice-leading and clarity, with not one wasted note. Many have saxophone soli for which Carter was well-known.

When Lights Are Low is not difficult and can even be played by many Middle School bands. But like Mozart, this music does present challenges that can test a professional ensemble. The sax soli must sound like one person, and since the baritone saxophone doubles the first alto, both players should practice together to master the intonation challenges in the high register. Articulation should be followed exactly, and the piece should not be played too fast. Finally, please make the distinction between the swing eighth and the dotted eighth-sixteenth figures, but such figures should not sound overly exaggerated. There are no saxophone doubles.

Jeffrey Sultanof

-July 2010



WHEN LIGHTS ARE LOW

SCORE

(RECORDED BY BENNY CARTER)

WORDS BY SPENCER WILLIAMS

MUSIC BY BENNY CARTER

ARRANGED BY BENNY CARTER

EDITED BY JEFFREY SULTANOF

① MEDIUM SWING ♩ = 120

The score is arranged for a jazz ensemble. The instruments listed on the left are: 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, TROMBONE 4, GUITAR, PIANO, BASS, and DRUM SET. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'MEDIUM SWING' with a quarter note equal to 120 beats per minute. The score consists of 8 measures. The piano part includes a 'SOLO' section starting at measure 1, marked with a forte 'f' dynamic. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line of quarter notes in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

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(B)

A. Sax. 1, A. Sax. 2, T. Sax. 1, T. Sax. 2, B. Sax., Tpt. 1, Tpt. 2, Tpt. 3, Tpt. 4, Tbn. 1, Tbn. 2, Tbn. 3, Tbn. 4, Gtr., PNO, BASS, D. S.

Chord progression: F⁹ C7(♭9) F^{ma7} C7(♭9) F⁹ C7(♭9) F^{ma7} F^{♯7} Gm7 C7 E^{♭9} D⁹ A^{♭9} G⁹ Gm7 C7(♭9) F⁶

Drum notation: (4) (8)