

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS

AS RECORDED BY NAT 'KING' COLE

ARRANGED BY BILLY MAY

PREPARED BY JEFFREY SULTANOF AND ROB DUBOFF

FULL SCORE

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-9814

WORDS AND MUSIC BY COLE PORTER

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JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS (1957)

Nat 'King' Cole Biography:

Nat 'King' Cole was one of the most popular, charismatic, and versatile American entertainment stars of the 20th century. In his 45 years he was a trailblazing jazz piano trio leader, a star of radio, screen, and stage, a songwriter, the first black American to host a weekly TV series, a crusader for equality, and ultimately one of the greatest and most beloved singers of all time.

Nathaniel Adams Coles was born on March 17, 1919 in Montgomery, Alabama. The family moved to Chicago when he was four and his father became minister of the True Light Baptist Church.¹ Born into a musical family, Cole's mother was a church organist and his older brother Eddie was a bassist/pianist. Surrounded by music from an early age, he quickly gravitated to the piano, becoming proficient in gospel, classical, and jazz, giving him the diverse background that would accentuate his ability to appeal naturally to a wide variety of audiences. From the informal music he was immersed in from early childhood to the classical training he soon received, young Nat's aptitude for music was constantly nourished.

He was playing in bands by his teenage years; seeing early jazz piano pioneer Earl Hines had a tremendous influence on him, just as Hines impressed and influenced so many future jazz giants. Cole and his brother Eddie's sextet had their first recording session with Decca in 1936.² The band performed in a musical called *Shuffle Along*; Cole traveled with them and remained in Los Angeles when the show ended there.³ Cole's girlfriend, Nadine Robinson, was a dancer in the show; this was a major factor in his winding up in L.A. They married in Michigan before moving to California. After about 11 years of marriage, Cole saw Maria Hawkins sing in 1948 and immediately fell for her. He soon divorced Nadine and married Maria. They would raise a family and remain together for the rest of Cole's life.^{4,5}

Eventually dropping the "s" from his last name, there are various stories about the genesis of the Nat "King" Cole moniker; his Los Angeles piano trio eventually took the name The King Cole Trio in the late 1930s. One legend says it was a supportive club owner who gave him a crown to wear⁶; the more popular story today strongly suggests that the trio borrowed it from the old children's nursery rhyme. It worked quite well and remains most appropriate to this day. After Cole hired guitarist Oscar Moore and bassist Wesley Prince, the trio began radio appearances and recordings along with their regular live performances. During this era, Cole largely pioneered the piano-led jazz trio, demonstrating the depth of his talent in showing what a virtuoso pianist with the right accompanists could do in this small-group setting. At the height of the big band era this was especially eye-opening and influential for future greats like Oscar Peterson, Ahmad Jamal, and others who took note of what Cole was able to do with simply guitar and bass; his skills were so formidable that he almost rendered drums unnecessary.⁷

His beginnings as a singer also are somewhat shrouded in mystery; one story says that a drunken patron one night demanded to hear him sing.⁸ A more likely one is that a business-minded club owner beseeched him to give his fans what they wanted, and to sing *Sweet Lorraine*.⁹ Other sources simply suggest that early on Cole would sing on request in between the Trio's sets, and people really enjoyed it.¹⁰ Whichever was the case, he did sing *Sweet Lorraine*, and recorded it in 1940 for his first hit.¹¹ While not possessing the physical vocal wizardry of some star singers, Cole's warm, intimate, emotionally soothing sound immediately began making its mark, and the move from instrumentalist to singing sensation was a very natural progression. He had a way of immediately drawing one in with his voice; not shocking with his range, or dazzling with the most unique phrasing-more just making every listener feel like he was singing directly to them, and in the most comforting way.

In the coming years, Cole's career had a unique bifurcation. Already established as a great jazz pianist by the mid 1940s, having been a part of the early Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts, and working with such notables as Lester Young, his transition to jazz/pop vocal superstar greatly enhanced his profile while at the same time upsetting often highly protective and conservative jazz purists. The singing remained just a part of the act for a while, but when he had a major hit on several charts in 1944 with his *Straighten Up and Fly Right*, Cole's musical life began to take a dramatic turn. As he shifted his focus to singing, over the course of the rest of the 1940s he cemented his status as one of America's most popular vocalists.

1947's *The Christmas Song* became one of the most enduring holiday classics and remains so to this day. (*Get Your Kicks*) *On Route 66*, *Nature Boy*, *Mona Lisa*, *Orange Colored Sky*, *Too Young*, and other hits made him a bona fide cultural superstar by the early 1950s. He began touring the world, having residencies at Las Vegas casinos as that city became an entertainment mecca, recording with arrangers such as Nelson Riddle and Billy May, performing at the *Cavalcade of Jazz*, taking small acting roles, and charting song after song.

It is said that Cole's trio was the first African-American group to have its own sponsored radio show. His star became so bright that in 1956 he became the first African-American to have his own regular weekly television program, *The Nat King Cole Show*. Racial attitudes being what they were in America at that time, the show sadly did not find a sponsor, and was cancelled after a year; Cole dryly commented that "Madison Avenue is afraid of the dark."¹² Cole had been attacked on stage by violent racists in Alabama in 1956, and refused to return to the area or to play other locations in the still very segregated South. Cole and the civil rights movement has been an area of controversy; despite receiving criticism from some civil rights figures during the early part of the era for not being vocal or active enough, Cole was indeed an activist from the beginning. He felt that his path to force change was via the arts. In addition to the aforementioned achievements, he was the first black star to achieve the level of popularity enjoyed by white singers such as Frank Sinatra and others; this by definition paved the way for others. He settled into a home in an affluent all-white area of Los Angeles; when neighbors suggested that they did not want "undesirables" in the area, Cole boldly responded, "Neither do I. And if I see anybody undesirable coming in here, I'll be the first to complain."¹³ He did play for all-white audiences on occasion, but eventually ceased that practice, and he also sued hotels that refused to allow him and his family to stay at the same place he was performing.¹⁴ By the 1960s he had become an ardent supporter of the civil rights movement and this intensified as the decade moved on; he donated to it generously, and used his celebrity to work with presidents Kennedy and Johnson in this area and help plan the 1963 March on Washington.¹⁵ Ultimately, Cole felt that he could do more with his art than by being outspoken; his daughter Timolin quoted him as saying, "I may be able to bring harmony among people with my music."¹⁶

The latter part of the 1950s saw Cole record a #1 album with Gordon Jenkins, the still-popular *Love Is the Thing*. Critics and Cole's wife Maria felt that Jenkins's style worked better with Cole than perhaps any other of the great arrangers he collaborated with.¹⁷ Cole recorded albums in Spanish, as he had played in Cuba and his popularity spread throughout Latin America. He also recorded in French and Portuguese, simultaneously expanding his fan base and showing gratitude for those in various parts of the world who already loved his artistry.¹⁸ In the late 1950s he increased his involvement in Hollywood, eventually starring as W.C. Handy in *St. Louis Blues* in 1958. He also developed a stage show that he toured with for years as well.¹⁹

By the end of the decade, as rock and roll was well into its ascendancy, singers like Cole, Sinatra, and Dean Martin sometimes struggled with changing tastes, as newer, younger music flooded the charts. Cole continued his busy schedule and hit it big again with 1962's *Ramblin' Rose*, which was very popular with pop and even country audiences.²⁰ He continued recording and touring through the early 1960s, finishing what would be his final album, *L-O-V-E*, in December of 1964. It would peak at #4 on the charts the following spring.

A heavy smoker who believed that cigarettes helped give his voice its unique qualities,²¹ Cole began to suffer various ailments in the fall of 1964. When he did have himself examined, advanced lung cancer was discovered and the prognosis was daunting. He finished *L-O-V-E* with Ralph Carmichael in early December, and began intense treatment shortly thereafter.²² Cole spent the new year at home with family, basking in the incredible flood of well-wishing mail he had received. Back in the hospital, he was deeply shaken by the death of his father on February 1. Despite his publicists' optimism which heartened the public, Cole's condition continued its irreversible decline, and he passed away at the young age of 45 on February 15, 1965. The outpouring of grief for a man who meant so much to so many was gargantuan. According to Daniel Mark Epstein's landmark 1999 biography, honorary pallbearers included Robert F. Kennedy, Count Basie, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Johnny Mathis, George Burns, Danny Thomas, Jimmy Durante, Frankie Laine, Steve Allen, and California Governor Pat Brown; Cole's close friend Jack Benny gave the eulogy.²³ Nat King Cole was buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery with so many other celebrities, eventually joined there by Maria and daughter Natalie.²⁴

Cole and his wife Maria were very close; she had given up her singing career to raise a family, their first child being Natalie, who eventually became a star in her own right. Maria once said that "Nat wanted to improve himself...I wanted to help him improve. What he needed, I had. What I needed, he had. That's why our marriage worked."²⁵ Gordon Jenkins's son Bruce's moving biography of his father has passages that show how deeply Maria understood music and especially what her husband both brought to a session and desired: "...Gordon was the only person who could do those things with strings, to really embellish what (Nat) was doing on ballads...the only person (Nat) worked with where he was totally at ease...the arrangements were just there, perfect, and you can hear it in the records. I always felt Gordon had in his music what Nat had in his voice, and they really were wedded."²⁶ It's easy to imagine how their first child wound up as an international star selling tens of millions of records. Natalie's parents and her uncle Freddie were all jazz singers, but she forged her own path in R&B, eventually finding her greatest success with 1991's *Unforgettable...With Love*. Not always comfortable singing tunes her father was known for, this album became a huge hit for her, and the track of the two of them singing *Unforgettable* together won Grammys of its own; the project re-established her stardom and also both burnished her father's profile and introduced him to many new listeners.

Nat King Cole left behind one of the great legacies, bodies of work, and life stories in the American arts. The honors have never stopped, decades after his passing. He's received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. He has been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for his influence on early rock, as well as the DownBeat Hall of Fame for his stature in jazz piano and singing. The U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp in his honor in 1994. The iconic Capitol Records Building in L.A. is often called "The House That Nat Built" in tribute to his contribution to the legendary label's growth and success. Cole worked to bring African-American artists to the forefront of every area of the arts as well as American life in general at a time when racism haunted America in an intense, vicious manner. He is a central part of the American holiday season thanks to his version of *The Christmas Song*, a holiday essential that he brought to the fore with his initial recordings of it. He is ardently beloved by two largely mutually exclusive bodies of fans; he remains a jazz icon for his piano work, especially the early trio days, as well as his singing. Yet he is a cultural icon to the massive world of pop music fandom as well, for his dozens of magnificent hits, sung in his inimitable manner and tone. Cole, like Sinatra, left a mark very much his own on some central tunes in the Great American Songbook; *Unforgettable*, *When I Fall in Love*, *Straighten Up and Fly Right*, *Almost Like Being in Love*, and especially *The Christmas Song*. The eternal power and presence of his voice is shown so vividly in his conjuring the timeless warmth and glow of the holiday season with vivid emotional depth as he sings: "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire..." There are not many American songs that begin this memorably and have had such incredible staying power.

From humble beginnings, the great Nat Cole worked his way to the very core of the American Experience and forged a path that left him at the center of our cultural consciousness; a place that he will never leave.

Notes:

1-https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/02/16/101527424.pdf?pdf_redirect=true&ip=0; 2-<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/nat-king-cole-mn0000317093/biography>; 3-<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/nat-king-cole-mn0000317093/biography>; 4-<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/nat-king-cole-mn0000317093/biography>; 5-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-43; 6-https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/02/16/101527424.pdf?pdf_redirect=true&ip=0; 7-<https://lasentinel.net/nat-king-cole.html#:~:text=Cole%20was%20a%20heavy%20smoker,recording%20for%20that%20very%20purpose>; 8-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-Intimate-17; 9-https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/02/101527424.pdf?pdf_redirect=true&ip=0; 10-<https://lasentinel.net/nat-king-cole.html#:~:text=Cole%20was%20a%20heavy%20smoker,recording%20for%20that%20very%20purpose>; 11-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-Yanow_Swing-16; 12-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-34; 13-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-Levinson2005-44; 14-<https://progressive.org/latest/nat-king-cole-trailblazer-unforgettable-way/>; 15-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-Gilbert1988-50; 16-<https://www.newsweek.com/nat-king-cole-100-years-centenary-jazz-civil-rights-1364966#:~:text=Once%20attacked%20on%20an%20Alabama,to%20The%20Los%20Angeles%20Times>; 17-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Is_the_Thing; 18-<https://lasentinel.net/nat-king-cole.html#:~:text=Cole%20was%20a%20heavy%20smoker,recording%20for%20that%20very%20purpose>; 19-<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/nat-king-cole-mn0000317093/biography>; 20-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramblin%27_Rose; 21-<https://lasentinel.net/nat-king-cole.html#:~:text=Cole%20was%20a%20heavy%20smoker,recording%20for%20that%20very%20purpose>; 22-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-55; 23-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nat_King_Cole#cite_note-FOOTNOTEEpstein1999360-66; 24-[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_burials_at_Forest_Lawn_Memorial_Park_\(Glendale\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_burials_at_Forest_Lawn_Memorial_Park_(Glendale)); 25-<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/14/arts/music/maria-cole-jazz-singer-and-wife-of-nat-dies-at-89.html>; 26-Bruce Jenkins, *Goodbye: In Search of Gordon Jenkins*, (Berkeley CA, Frog, Ltd, 2005), Pgs 190-191

Billy May Biography:

There is perhaps no one person more unsung in shaping the sound of classic popular music than Edward William "Billy" May, Jr. Indeed, there are many people who are fans of May's music without even realizing it through his collaborations with Frank Sinatra. Even if he had never written a note for the Chairman of the Board, however, May's catalogue of work is not only of the highest quality, but also of stunning diversity.

Born on November 10, 1916 in Pittsburgh, PA, May began playing tuba as a youth on recommendation of a doctor who believed it to be an effective treatment for his childhood asthma. Switching to trumpet, May worked as both an instrumentalist and arranger for several small outlets before joining the Charlie Barnet Orchestra in 1938. May was responsible for crafting the arrangement for Barnet's hit recording of *Cherokee*, which has since gone on to become one of the most frequently covered standards in part because of the Barnet version. After leaving Barnet, May worked largely as a freelance arranger and trumpeter, notably for the bands of Glenn Miller and Les Brown, for the majority of the 1940s. In the early 1950s, May caught the attention of producers at Capitol Records, who hired him as a staff arranger for their sizeable stable of vocalists. His best-known collaborations were with Frank Sinatra, as May would author the arrangements of some of Sinatra's biggest hits, including 1958's *Come Fly with Me*. In addition to Sinatra, May's arrangements graced the recordings of Ella Fitzgerald, Nat 'King' Cole and Nancy Wilson, among countless others, during this time.

By the 1960s, May became more involved in film and television. Having written his first film score in 1957, May's songs and scores became frequently heard in many different Hollywood settings, ranging from Rat Pack films to a collaboration with humorist Stan Freberg. Throughout this time, his relationship with Sinatra remained fruitful, with May continuing to write arrangements for Sinatra's albums on his newly founded Reprise Records label. The two were so close that May was an honorary pall-bearer at Sinatra's funeral in 1998.

Having largely been in retirement since the 1980s, May passed away from a heart attack on January 22, 2004. He leaves behind a list of credits that are second to none in the world of pop music as an arranger, and his signature style, featuring mercurial brass writing and "swooping" saxophone riffs, continues to serve as a template upon which many of today's top arrangers work.

The Music:

The title track from a 1957 album by Nat 'King' Cole, *Just One of Those Things* features several sounds that Billy May essentially trademarked: swooping saxophones, cutesy flutes, and rocket-powered brass, all wrapped up in a relentlessly swinging package.

Notes to the Conductor:

The brisk pace of the arrangement is established right off the bat, with a quickly moving syncopated ensemble figure riding on top of the pounding backbeat in the rhythm section. Cole enters with the melody at measure 9, supported by a series of clever and diverse background figures in the band. Initially, May's swooping saxes dominate the accompaniment, followed by some brightly punchy brass hits around fluttering flutes at measure 33. A gently ascending figure in the saxes and trombones at measure 41 gives way to a screaming trumpet rip, followed by a retreat back to the swooping saxes at measure 57.

The band doesn't get a full fledged shout section all to themselves. Instead, they trade figures on the melody with Cole's vocals beginning at measure 73 with some riffs that resemble but do not replicate those from the introduction. Cole takes the spotlight back for himself at measure 105, with the band backgrounds operating at a much simpler level than before. Some more brief back and forth between Cole and the band occurs at measure 129, before the band plays one last riff before landing on the warm but powerful final chord.

This arrangement is for jazz big band featuring male vocalist. It also includes parts for harp and percussion; the percussionist doubles on bells, xylophone, marimba, vibraphone and timpani. The harp is cued in the piano part. It is not a transcription - it has been prepared from Billy May's original score and the set of parts used during the 1957 recording session.

Doug DuBoff and Dylan Canterbury
- March 2018

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RECORDED BY NAT 'KING' COLE

MUSIC AND WORDS BY COLE PORTER

SCORE

ARRANGED BY BILLY MAY

PREPARED BY JEFFREY SULTANOF AND ROB DUBOFF

FAST SWING ♩ = 200

Vocal

Woodwind 1: Alto Sax. *ff*

Woodwind 2: Alto Sax./Flute *ff*

Woodwind 3: Tenor Sax./Flute *ff*

Woodwind 4: Tenor Sax. *ff*

Woodwind 5: Baritone Sax. *ff*

Trumpet 1 *ff*

Trumpet 2 *ff*

Trumpet 3 *ff*

Trumpet 4 *ff*

Trombone 1 *ff*

Trombone 2 *ff*

Trombone 3 *ff*

Trombone 4 *ff*

Tuba (or Bass Trombone)

Harp

Guitar *f*

Piano *f*

Acoustic Bass *f*

Percussion: Bells/Xylophone/Marimba/Vibraphone/Timpani

Drum Set *f*

E♭ F♯ G♯ A♭
D♯ C♯ B♭

*Cm*⁶ *G*⁹

*Cm*⁶ *G*⁹

*Cm*⁶ *G*⁹

Bells

backbeat *sim.* (4)

Vox. It was

Ww. 1 (A. Sax.)

Ww. 2 (A. Sax.)

Ww. 3 (T. Sax.)

Ww. 4 (T. Sax.)

Ww. 5 (B. Sax.)

Tpt. 1 To Harmon Mute

Tpt. 2 To Harmon Mute

Tpt. 3 To Harmon Mute

Tpt. 4 To Harmon Mute

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

Gr. B^bm⁶ E^b₉ E^b₉sus A^bMA⁷ G⁹ Dm⁶ G⁹

Pno. B^bm⁶ E^b₉ E^b₉sus A^bMA⁷ G⁹ Dm⁶ G⁹

Bs. B^bm⁶ E^b₉ E^b₉sus A^bMA⁷ G⁹ Dm⁶ G⁹

D. S. (5) (8)

5 6 7 8