

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

THE JEFFREY SULTANOF MASTER EDITION

REPETITION

AS RECORDED BY CHARLIE PARKER, 1950

ARRANGED BY NEAL HEFTI

EDITED BY JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-8037

MUSIC BY NEAL HEFTI

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REPETITION (1950)

Background:

When Billie Holiday signed a new recording contract with Decca Records in 1944, she told producer Milt Gabler she wanted to record with strings. Anxious to establish Holiday as a pop singer, Gabler hired six string players for her first session, and the first song recorded was *Lover Man*, one of her biggest hits. Several years later, when Charlie Parker signed with impresario/manager Norman Granz' label Clef, Parker asked for strings as well.

Granz was obviously keeping costs down, as only five string players were hired for the first session (1949), but these were the very top New York session players; some were members of the NBC symphony conducted by Arturo Toscanini. As much as he'd dreamed of playing with strings, reportedly Parker walked out of a few sessions without playing a note (the number has never been authenticated). He later explained that the sound of the strings and the thought of working with such distinguished musicians scared him; he thought they were greater artists than he. What finally took place was sheer magic. The parts for the string players were relatively easy, so they listened and enjoyed Parker's improvisations. The arrangements for the first studio session were done by Jimmy Carroll and recorded on November 30, 1949. On July 5, 1950 there was another studio recording session, this time with arrangements by Joe Lippman. This second date featured a larger ensemble including oboe, French horn, 4 violins, 2 violas, cello, harp, guitar, piano, bass, and drums. Parker also appeared with his string group on at least 4 live occasions: *Birdland* (August, 1950 and March and April, 1951), *Apollo Theater* (August 1950), *Carnegie Hall* (September, 1950), *Rockland Palace Dance Hall* (September, 1952). In 1952 Parker recorded an additional 4 arrangements by Lippman featuring a full big band with a string section.



Parker would later say that the studio recordings with his string ensemble were his favorites of his own work, despite jazz critics' condescending reactions and their claims that he was 'selling out.' As it turns out, he was selling 'in.' The albums sold well, and brought Parker to a whole new audience. As far as his own playing, many of his solos on this first album were lovely and inspired. *Just Friends* is one of Parker's finest records and his solo is remarkable; I can't be the only one who can sing it by heart at a moment's notice. It is a pity that none of the alternate takes seem to have survived.

The story is well known now, but for many years the facts were hazy. Norman Granz commissioned recordings from a select group of composers, bandleaders and soloists, including Billy Strayhorn, Machito, George Handy, Charlie Parker and Neal Hefti (one side had been in the can for some years: Nat Cole and Lester Young). The project would be called *The Jazz Scene*, the first of a series of albums where some of the most influential jazz creators of the time would contribute a recording unavailable anywhere else. As it turned out, Granz could not get everyone he wanted because some artists already had record deals. The album finally came out in early 1950 as a limited edition 78 RPM album that cost \$25.00; it was later reissued as a regularly-priced long-play release.

The musician's union was about to strike again in 1948; no union musicians would make recordings from January until the end of October, so record labels were furiously stockpiling recordings by their artists at the end of 1947. Recording studios were busy twenty-four hours a day. Granz needed some recordings for his album, so he booked the two studios at Carnegie Hall, the smaller room for Charlie Parker (where he recorded *The Bird*), the larger room for Neal Hefti and a full orchestra. Granz brought Parker down to Hefti's session and asked Neal if he could use Bird. Hefti suggested that Parker be added to the repeat of the tune he was recording, *Repetition*. Without seeing the music beforehand, Parker improvised a solo over the ensemble, which amazed the many who were there.

The Music:

This version of *Repetition* is well known to us via the 1950 live recording from a Carnegie Hall concert. It was a given that when Bird was assembling a book for a touring edition of *Charlie Parker with Strings*, *Repetition* would be included. For many years it was also a given that Hefti arranged this version. However, some historians have questioned this, and examination of the parts adds to the mystery (the score is missing). The new arrangement has a two-bar ending that is different harmonically than the orchestral recording; changes are written in by hand by the players to conform to the record. Why would Hefti change the ending of his composition? Neal himself was never asked about this, but he did tell me that the original score for *Repetition* was thrown out in the late 1970s with the rest of his music library. He was moving to Massachusetts so that his wife, singer Frances Wayne, would spend her last years with her family, and since she had cancer, nothing else mattered.



Bowings have been reproduced here from the hand-written notations on the original parts, one of which even has fingerings.

Notes to the Conductor:

It is instructive that on the 1950 Carnegie Hall recording, the ensemble drags at times. The tempo is somewhat faster than on the original Hefti track, and the larger the string section, the more chances of the strings playing behind the beat at the faster tempo. Both tempi have their individual challenges, but at whatever speed, the string figures need to be cleanly played and must not drag. In my experience, the figure at bar 39 works best played at the tip of the bow; the original parts have spiccato here, but this has been crossed out in the 1st violin.

Jeffrey Sultanof

- November 2010

REPETITION

(AS RECORDED BY CHARLIE PARKER)

MUSIC BY NEAL HEFTI

ARRANGED BY NEAL HEFTI

EDITED BY JEFFREY SULTANOF

SCORE

BRIGHT LATIN ♩ = 170

1 (STRINGS)

ALTO SAX.

OBOE

VIOLIN A

VIOLIN B

VIOLIN C

VIOLA

CELLO

HARP

GUITAR

PIANO

BASS

DRUM SET/
VIBES

mf

[C♯, D♯, E♯, F♯, G♯, A♯, B♯]

E♭m⁹ A^b7^(♯5) D^bm⁹ G^b7^(♯5) Bm⁹ E7^(♯5) Am⁹ D7^(♯5)

E♭m⁹ A^b7^(♯5) D^bm⁹ G^b7^(♯5) Bm⁹ E7^(♯5) Am⁹ D7^(♯5)

E♭m⁹ A^b7^(♯5) D^bm⁹ G^b7^(♯5) Bm⁹ E7^(♯5) Am⁹ D7^(♯5)

1 2 3 4

mf

(4)

(A)

A. SX.

Ob.

Vln. A

Vln. B

Vln. C

Vla.

Vc.

HP.

GTR.

PNO.

BASS

D. S.

5 6 7 8

(4)

(Sim. Latin Feel)

Gm⁹ C7^(#5) Fm⁹ B^{b7}(#5)

(Sim. Latin Feel)

Gm⁹ C7^(#5) Fm⁹ B^{b7}(#5)

Gm⁹ C7^(#5) Fm⁹ B^{b7}(#5)