

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER LIBRARY — BLUE ENGINE RECORDS

MAMA G (AKA NELLIE BLY)

FROM THE MUSIC OF WAYNE SHORTER (2020)

Wayne Shorter

Arranged by Christopher Crenshaw

Full Score



JAZZ  LINCOLN CENTER

MAMA G (AKA NELLIE BLY) • INSTRUMENTATION

Reed 1 – Alto Sax

Reed 2 – Alto Sax

Reed 3 – Tenor Sax

Reed 4 – Tenor Sax

Reed 5 – Baritone Sax

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

Trumpet 3

Trumpet 4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Trombone 3

Piano

Bass

Drums

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION

Composer • Wayne Shorter

Arranger • Christopher Crenshaw

Recorded • May 14-16, 2015 at Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Frederick P. Rose Hall

Original issue • Blue Engine Records BE0023

Currently available on CD, LP, and digital stream

Personnel • Sherman Irby, Ted Nash (alto sax), Víctor Goines, Walter Blanding (tenor sax), Paul Nedzela (baritone sax), Ryan Kisor, Kenny Rampton, Marcus Printup, Wynton Marsalis (trumpet), Vincent Gardner, Chris Crenshaw, Elliot Mason (trombone), Dan Nimmer (piano), Carlos Henríquez (bass), Ali Jackson (drums), Wayne Shorter (tenor & soprano saxophones)

Soloists • Wayne Shorter (tenor saxophone), Elliot Mason (trombone), Dan Nimmer (piano), Carlos Henríquez (bass), Ali Jackson (drums)

THE MUSIC OF WAYNE SHORTER NOTES

How would I describe Wayne Shorter? It would be way too easy to call him something like a “legend” or a “genius.” Those are words that get thrown around much too easily in today’s 140-character culture. Wayne’s career is well-known and widely celebrated by not only the jazz community, but by music lovers all over the world. Simply put, he helped to expand the language of modern American music as both a composer and a saxophonist. All of his music has been truly beautiful music, in the sense that it celebrates the beauty and joy of optimism—but, if I had to choose one word to describe Wayne and his music outside of the obvious superlatives, the word that comes to mind is “imagination.”

Wayne Shorter’s imagination got its start in the gritty, soulful city of Newark, New Jersey. He was born there in 1933 and developed a deep fascination with science fiction and superheroes that would fuel his creative energy forever. The inside jacket of his 1987 Columbia album *Phantom Navigator* includes samples of a teenage Wayne’s artwork. It was a revelation to many that, to the naked eye, young Wayne was already on his way to becoming perhaps the next great animator. But there was something more revealing about his artwork—it was actually a sci-fi short story that Wayne had both written and animated. He called it “Other Worlds.” Although there are only 12 panels of artwork and story on the inside jacket, the story called to mind H. G. Wells or Arthur C. Clarke.

There are two stories that come to mind that exemplify the imagination and daring that Wayne Shorter brought to his career as a composer and bandleader. The first was told to me by pianist Renee Rosnes and involves her first rehearsal with Wayne’s group in the late 1980s. As the musicians gathered in Wayne’s rehearsal room, he asked them to first sit and watch the Ridley Scott classic *Alien*. Midway through the viewing, Wayne got up to pause the tape just as the famous, gory scene of an alien bursting through a human chest unfolded. As most of the band sat squirming in their seats while this bloody creature was frozen on the screen, Wayne pointed at it and said, “THIS... is how I want this band to sound.”

The second story happened in 2002, when I played a performance with Wayne Shorter’s quartet in Den Haag. Upon my arrival, I was quite trepidatious about the gig, as I wasn’t going to have much time to rehearse with the quartet. I called Wayne in his hotel room to let him know I arrived. When I shared my fear of playing with him unrehearsed, Wayne paused and said, “If I remember, you’re a big comedy fan, right? Well, play that. Play me some comedy.” What I learned from Wayne is that, with a strong imagination (and skill), uncharted territory becomes less intimidating... and sometimes quite fun.

Wayne’s music has become basic instrumental vocabulary for all of us who came after him. For anyone wishing to play jazz, it is a must that you come through the music of Ellington, Monk, and Shorter. Much of Wayne’s music is architecturally perfect in terms of its harmonic and melodic structure. As creative musicians, we take liberties with interpretations of every legend’s music, while keeping a conscious eye on a song’s DNA.

The bulk of the material that the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis chose to arrange for this performance was composed in the first decade of Wayne’s career. “Mama G,” “Armageddon,” “Contemplation,” “Hammer Head,” “Teru,” and “Lost” were all written between 1959 and 1966. His material from this period has become part of the foundation of modern jazz. “Diana” (pronounced “Gianna”) was composed in 1974 just as jazz fusion and, particularly, Weather Report were reaching their zenith. “Endangered Species” and “The Three Marias” both come from Wayne’s 1985 flagship album *Atlantis*. This album’s foundation was 80s keyboards and other various electric instruments. The JLCO does a remarkable job of creatively arranging Wayne’s music while keeping a watchful eye on the core structure of these songs. Most importantly, Wayne’s trust of the band is evident.

To describe each song’s orchestral highlights would be, I feel, antithetical to Wayne’s modus operandi of daring to experience the unknown. I encourage you to listen yourself and, of course, to use a little imagination.

—*The Music of Wayne Shorter* liner notes by Christian McBride, 2019

GENERAL PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

1. Rhythm Section and Balance • The rhythm section determines the style, groove, and feel of each piece. It is the section that can comfortably play alone, and regularly does. In a typical 3-piece rhythm section, there is one string instrument (bass), and two percussion instruments (piano and drums); in a 4-piece section (with the addition of guitar), there are two string and two percussion instruments. In order for the rhythm section to achieve a swinging balance, it is crucial that the string instruments are clearly audible. The voices of these instruments must be respected by the two percussionists.

The drummer acts as the ‘President’ of the group, with the quick power to make dramatic and definitive changes to every aspect of the music.

The bass is the ‘Judiciary,’ holding the responsibility of constraining the volume and power of the drums. Their second responsibility is to play the mobile, lower melody that defines the integrity of the rhythm/harmony progression.

The piano is the ‘Congress,’ and has the ability to function as drummer, bassist, soloist, and accompanist; weaving in, out, and in between all of these roles to represent the widest range of voices and possibilities.

In a 4-piece section, the guitar acts as the ‘conscience’ or integrity of the rhythm and volume of the entire ensemble. They prevent the drummer and bassist from rushing or dragging and forces them to play softer and listen more closely.

The members of the rhythm section should know exactly what the names of grooves mean: *boogaloo*, *12/8 shuffle*, *bossa nova*, *2/3 clave*, etc. Every groove has a detailed function and definition. The top and bottom parts of the groove (drums and bass) must work together; at the same time, the interlocking rhythms of the piano and guitar must cooperate, honoring the context of the groove while also not interfering with each other.

When improvising with the rest of the band, the rhythm section should create a clear, basic, and danceable groove. They should also feel a sense of accomplishment from swinging with consistency and emotion.

When accompanying, the rhythm section should not feel compelled to have a constant stream of dialogue with the band; just like a friendly conversation, the dynamic should feel natural, with give and take. The goal is not to create constant “chatter.” Be proud of accompanying and swinging—they remain essential elements to any successful performance.

Members of the rhythm section must remain conscious of constraining power. For balance to be maintained, one must give up their desire to play louder than the other members of the section. As in any relationship, it is the constraint of power that creates the equilibrium within the section.

On the bandstand, each musician should be aware of balance at all times. This requires constant adjustment. The most important relationship is the drums and bass. If they are out of balance, the band does not sound or feel good. Do not let the PA system become your default ‘balance’ position.

Like a good democracy, the big band functions best when adhering to a system of checks and balances. Ultimately, the band should balance to the dynamic of the bass (as the softest acoustic instrument). Each section in the big band should both follow and play under their respective lead player.

2. Improvisation • A solo is an opportunity to express your personality and to exert tremendous influence on the success of a performance.

Responsibilities of the soloist:

1. Know the melody.
2. Understand the rhythm in relation to the groove.
3. Understand the harmonic progression.
4. Solo with emotional commitment and try to develop thematic material or musical ideas that relate to some aspect of the song.
5. Understand the function of background or accompanying parts.
6. Create your solo inside, outside, and alongside the arranged parts.
7. Create an ending for your solo that either leads into the next written part, hands off something good for the next soloist to play, or finishes with the right mood.
8. Do your absolute thing!

3. Follow the Lead • Within each section, know who has the lead (it isn’t always in the “first” part) and always play under that part. Do not assume that the lead player can tell if you are too loud; constantly re-assess within your section, in relation to other sections, and across sections if you are under the lead. Follow their phrasing, style, articulations, dynamics, and breathing. Lead players: you have a greater responsibility than others—be definitive in your concept, but not dogmatic. You must know the arrangement, including how your part fits into the overall dramatic and thematic objectives of the piece. You have to make musical decisions that help your colleagues follow you.

4. Personalize Your Parts • When referring to the performance of parts, clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton once said, “This is Duke Ellington’s music; it’s not written in stone. Duke always told us, ‘Personalize your parts.’” When done tastefully, all of the various vocal expressions that we can muster (i.e. vibrato, bends, swoops, shakes, moans, and vocal effects) will create a warmer and more human performance. Your parts should be played with the feeling and vocal expression of an improvised solo. These elements allow an audience to feel your humanity, and also welcomes them into nuances of your feeling. (You can do this while also following the lead).

5. Internalize the Form • Form is your defense against chaos. Every member of the ensemble has a responsibility to understand the architecture of each piece they play. Ask yourself, *Is it a blues? AABA form? An extended form? Where is the coda?* Be aware of entrances, repeats, and endings in relation to the form of the piece. *Is this an interlude or a shout chorus?* Sections often hand off phrases to other sections with an almost psychic level of awareness and nuance. At the very first rehearsal, begin figuring out how the piece is structured to achieve the composer’s goals. Focus on understanding the total architecture and the function of your individual part within the context of the piece. Remember, everyone in the ensemble has the responsibility of understanding and fulfilling both the most complex and most basic requirements of the arrangement.

6. Have Integrity When Rehearsing • *Your time is too valuable to waste.* Always be professional. Arrive on time and pay attention to everything—whether it’s a general concept or the most minute details. Take yourself and the music seriously at all times, and you’ll be shocked to see how much better you get just by changing your attitude in rehearsal. Be conscientious about playing better each day, and over time the improvement will be exponential.

7. Listen to Jazz • Go to every conceivable performance of jazz possible—whether you like it or not—so that you can develop both a feeling and understanding of the music. There is an almost infinite amount of diverse and high-quality recordings of jazz at your disposal, which create a sonic history of the music that can inform, enlighten, and inspire you. The more music you know, the more you will enjoy.

To listen to the recording from Blue Engine Records, please visit jazz.org/wayneshorter.

CONDUCTOR

Jazz at Lincoln Center Library - Blue Engine Records

MAMA G (AKA NELLIE BLY)

Wayne Shorter

Arranged by Christopher Crenshaw

Swing ♩ = 220 - 260

The musical score is arranged for a conductor and includes parts for Reeds (Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax), Trumpets (1-4), Trombones (1-3), Piano, Bass, and Drums. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked as Swing, 220-260. The score is divided into 8 measures. The Reeds, Trumpets, Trombones, Piano, and Bass parts are mostly rests, with some notes in the final measure. The Drums part features a complex rhythmic pattern with accents and dynamics markings (mf).

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Mama G (aka Nellie Bly)

A

Musical score for 'Mama G (aka Nellie Bly)' featuring vocal parts (Alto, Tenor, Bari) and instrumental parts (Tpts, Tbns, Pno, Bs, Drs). The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *cresc.*, *f*, *mf*, and *dim.* Measure numbers 9 through 16 are indicated at the bottom.

Mama G (aka Nellie Bly)

This musical score is for the piece "Mama G (aka Nellie Bly)". It is arranged for a vocal ensemble and a full orchestra. The score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The vocal parts include Alto, Tenor, and Bari. The instrumental parts include Tpts. 1-4, Tbns. 1-3, Pno., Bs., and Drs. The score is divided into measures 17 through 24. Dynamics include *dim.*, *mp*, and *mf*. The vocal parts feature melodic lines with some rests, while the instrumental parts provide harmonic support and texture. The piano part features a steady accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The bass and drums provide a rhythmic foundation.