

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

VIOLETS FOR YOUR FURS

AS RECORDED BY BILLIE HOLIDAY

ARRANGED BY RAY ELLIS

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-6377

BY TOM ADAIR AND MATT DENNIS

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PUBLISHED BY THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.,

A NOT-FOR-PROFIT JAZZ RESEARCH ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PRESERVING AND PROMOTING AMERICA'S MUSICAL HERITAGE.



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BILLIE HOLIDAY SERIES



VIOLETS FOR YOUR FURS (1958)

Billie Holiday Biography:

When one thinks of jazz vocalists, fewer come to mind quicker than Billie Holiday. Born Eleanora Fagan, Holiday lived a troubled childhood before embarking on a career as a vocalist while still a teenager. She was discovered by famed record producer John Hammond in 1933, who booked her to sing with his other recent star creation, Benny Goodman. In the mid-1930s, Holiday, with help from Hammond and pianist Teddy Wilson, led several classic recording sessions that firmly established her as jazz's top female vocalist.

Holiday sang with several of the top big bands of the 1930s and 1940s before achieving her greatest commercial success in the 1940s. Her career began to take a turn for the worse by the end of the decade, however, as she struggled with drug addiction and ensuing legal problems from said addiction. Her performances during this time period took on a much darker, harsher tone, but are considered nowadays to perhaps be the apex of her career. Sadly, she could never escape the personal demons that chased her her entire life, and she passed away from complications of cirrhosis in 1959.

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, Jimmy Mundy began developing his arranging skills in the 1920s while playing with local bands led by Erskine Tate, Tommy Miles, and Carroll Dickerson. In 1932 he wrote and sold a few arrangements to Claude Hopkins, and at about the same time joined Earl Hines' famous Grand Terrace ballroom band in Chicago. Hines hired him originally as a saxophonist, for whom he worked over the course of the next four years. During this period Mundy developed a reputation as a prolific arranger in the emerging "swing" style and began writing and selling arrangements to other bandleaders in order to supplement his income.

Late in 1935, Goodman and his band worked their way east to Chicago where they began their historic six-month booking in the Joseph Urban room of the Congress Hotel. After selling one of his arrangements to Goodman, Goodman hired Mundy on a full-time basis. Until 1938, Mundy became one of Goodman's principal staff arrangers, joining Spud Murphy and Fletcher Henderson. From the moment he was hired, it was Mundy upon whom Goodman relied to create up-tempo "flag-waving" musical numbers. Mundy's list of "killer-dillers" include the 1936 (revised) version of Bugle Call Rag, Jam Session (an original composition by Mundy), and the band's 1937 adaptation of Ridin' High. Mundy was adept at arranging standard popular tunes: You Turned the Tables on Me (1936) and And the Angels Sing" (1939).

When Gene Krupa left the band in 1938, Mundy left shortly after as well to write for Krupa's new outfit, although he continued to contribute scores to Goodman on a free-lance basis. He briefly led his own band in 1939 and throughout the 1940s Mundy supplied a significant number of original compositions and arrangements to Count Basie (ca. 1940 to ca. 1947), Artie Shaw (1944-45), Dizzy Gillespie (1949), Harry James, Charlie Spivak, Paul Whiteman and many others. He wrote the score to the 1955 Broadway musical The Vamp" which starred Carol Channing. The 1957 musical Livin' The Life and the 2010 dance revue Come Fly Away also used some of his music. In 1959, he moved to Paris, where he was musical director for Barclay Records. He returned to the U.S. in the 1960s and continued with his active career as a writer into the 1970s.

Ray Ellis Biography:

Raymond Spencer Ellis was born in Philadelphia on July 28, 1923. He was an American record producer, arranger and conductor. During a career that spanned almost 65 years, he arranged for performers including Billie Holiday, Tony Bennett, Doris Day, the Drifters, Connie Francis, Judy Garland and Ray Price.

He took saxophone lessons as a teenager and played in dance bands in the Northeast before going into the Army in 1943. He found his way into the band of the 1st Armored Division; he played dances and tried his hand at arranging. After the war, he played saxophone, clarinet and flute for Paul Whiteman's band and tenor sax in the Gene Krupa Band. He also performed live on TV with jazz combos on WCAU in Philadelphia. His big break came in 1955 when a friend introduced him to producer Mitch Miller of Columbia Records and under the famed bandleader's guidance, Ellis arranged a string of top 10 records for acts including the Four Lads, Mathis, Bennett, Darin and Chris Connor.

In 1958, he gained notice as the arranger for Billie Holiday's last two albums, including *Lady in Satin*, which at the time received mixed critical notice. The album, gaining acceptance over the years and now considered a classic, was inducted in the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2000.

With Jerry Wexler at Atlantic Records, Ellis arranged R&B classics for the Drifters (*Under the Boardwalk*), Brook Benton (*There Goes My Baby*), Ben E. King (*Spanish Harlem*) and Etta James (*C.C. Rider*). Ellis became A&R director at M.G.M. Records in 1959, creating hits for Connie Francis (*Where the Boys Are*), Frankie Laine and Clyde McPhatter (*Lover's Question*). Later, he worked with such artists as Lena Horne, Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand, Anthony Newley, Michelle Lee, Liza Minnelli and Maurice Chevalier.



Ellis's work encompassed all areas of music, from records to film, commercials, and television. In the early 1960s, Ellis had a contract to produce his own easy listening record albums with RCA Victor, MGM, and Columbia, the most popular probably being *Ellis in Wonderland*. His television credits include theme music for *NBC News At Sunrise* with Connie Chung and the background and incidental music for the original *Spider-Man* cartoons.

In 1970, he produced Emmylou Harris's debut LP *Gliding Bird*. Ellis also composed two extended themes for *The Today Show*, the first in 1971. It was used as the Friday closing theme (and eventually the show's full-time theme) until the end of the decade. However, in *Herald Square Music v. Living Music*, the District Court of the Southern District of New York "found the instrumental arrangement and harmonization of defendant's melody to be substantially similar to that of *Day by Day*," a Stephen Schwartz song from the musical *Godspell*. As a result, Ellis composed a second *Today Show* theme based on the trademark NBC chimes. That theme was the NBC show's signature from 1978 to 1985 and has appeared irregularly on the morning program ever since.

Using many different pseudonyms Ellis and Norm Prescott composed nearly all of the background music for cartoon studio Filmation from 1968 to 1982, according to DVD booklets for *Ark II*, *Space Academy*, and *Jason of Star Command*. Ellis also composed the music for 1968's *Fantastic Voyage*, also on some of Filmation's early '70s output and its feature films and 1969's *The Hardy Boys*. On 1978's *Fabulous Funnies*, Ellis was credited as "Mark Jeffrey". However, Ray Ellis was credited with his real name for background music to *The Archie Show* and *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. Also the animated *Star Trek* series in the early 1970s

Ellis, who resided in Los Angeles, also composed the music for the 1980s U.S. edition of *Sale of the Century* theme, along with *Hot Streak*, *Scrabble*, *Scattergories* and *Time Machine* with his son Marc Ellis. He also composed the theme from the short-lived U.S. version of *Catch Phrase*.

Before his retirement Ellis worked on projects with Adam Sandler, Barry Manilow, and Bette Midler. Ellis died at the age of 85 of complications from melanoma on October 27, 2008, at an assisted-living facility in Encino, California.

The Music:

Recorded in 1958 for the final album to be released in her lifetime, *Lady in Satin*, Billie Holiday is accompanied by a Ray Ellis arrangement that provides a lush setting for her iconic vocal style. Not overwhelmingly difficult technically, it will provide your singer and ensemble with a formidable musical challenge.

Holiday enters after a brief harp strum, and is primarily accompanied by strings and rhythm section during her first pass through the melody. The occasional appearances of the woodwinds occur at very specific parts in the lyrics, and should be played with a sprightly brightness. A trombone solo at measure 33 (likely played by the eminent J.J. Johnson) is the only real spot where any of the instrumentalists get to shine, but its brevity should not invite your soloist to overplay. Holiday carries the final strain of the melody, with some lovely rising and falling string and woodwind figures bringing the performance in for a gentle conclusion.

This publication was prepared from Ray Ellis's original pencil score - this is not a transcription.

Special thanks to Las Vegas violinist Geri Thompson for supplying string bowings and slurs.

Doug DuBoff, Rob DuBoff, and Dylan Canterbury

- November 2025

"VIOLETS"

(2)

Flut (bb) (A)

Flut

OBOE

Bellon

CLAY

1

Trumpets 2

3

1

Trombs. 2

3

Drums

Solo

MUTE

A

Violins B

C

Viola

Cello

Bass

cm⁷ F⁷(13)

Bbm⁷

Ebm⁷ Ab⁷(13)

Bbm⁷

595 BROADWAY, N.Y.

No. 36

SYMBOL OF QUALITY

KING BRAND

Above is the first page of Ray Ellis's score for *Violets for Your Furs*.

VIOLETS FOR YOUR FURS

SCORE

AS RECORDED BY BILLIE HOLIDAY

BY TOM ADAIR AND MATT DENNIS

ARRANGED BY RAY ELLIS

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

① SLOWLY ♩ = 60

Vocal Soloist

You brought me vi - 3 - o - lets for my furs _____ and it was spring for a while, re - mem - ber? _____

Female Choir

Woodwind 1: Flute

Woodwind 2: Flute

Oboe

Woodwind 3: Oboe/Flute

Woodwind 4: Bass Clarinet

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Bass Trombone

Violin 1

Violin 2

Violin 3

Viola

Cello

Harp

Guitar

Piano

Piano/Celeste

Bass

Vibraphone

Drum Set

Brushes

1 *pp* 2 3 4

Solo Vocal

You brought me vi - o - lets for my furs _____ and there was A - pril in that De - cem - ber. _____ The

Fem. Choir

Ooh →

To Flute

Ww. 3 (Ob.)

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vln. 3

Vla.

Vc.

Hp.

Gtr.

Pno.

Bs.

Vib.

D. S.

5 6 7 8

(8)

p