

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND

ARRANGED BY ROB MCCONNELL

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

JLP-7000

BY IRVING BERLIN

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THIS ARRANGEMENT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED WITH THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE ESTATE OF ROB MCCONNELL.

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND (1974)

Background:

Rob McConnell was one of the finest composer/arrangers of the 20th century. And his is a unique story. As writer/lyricist Gene Lees (himself a Canadian) once told me, "Rob is one of very few people born in Canada who is known all over the world who didn't have to go anywhere else to become famous. Musicians such as Oscar Peterson and Kenny Wheeler, and actors such as William Shatner and Lorne Greene became famous by touring or moving to the U.S. or England. Rob stayed home for the most part." And became a musical legend!

McConnell was born in Toronto in 1935 and took up the slide trombone in high school (later switching to the valve trombone). He studied with Gordon Delamont, a legendary educator and author of several books on theory, arranging and composition that are still in use. McConnell once gave an interview stating that he and Delamont had a highly contentious relationship, Delamont wanting McConnell to do something his way, with McConnell refusing.

McConnell came to New York in 1963 and worked with several bands, most notably with fellow Canadian Maynard Ferguson, who was leading a popular big band at the time. Instead of staying, he returned to Toronto to become part of the active studio musician pool for recordings, radio and television. The Boss Brass was originally made up of trumpets, trombones, French horns and rhythm section, and focused more on pop songs than jazz. Its first album was released by RCA Canada in 1968. By 1971, a saxophone section was added, and by 1976, the ensemble had 22 musicians. The band made several albums which were only available in Canada. Despite the lack of widespread availability, copies were heard by musicians all over the world, and word was soon out that an incredible big band was making striking, original music, played by Toronto's finest musicians. By 1979, some of these albums finally found distribution in the United States. From that time on, McConnell was encouraged to tour, but he always refused given the huge expense of carrying all those players, and his insistence on working with his regular ensemble instead of using substitutes. In 1981, a gig on the west coast was arranged, and resulted in many appearances at clubs, concerts and festivals all over the world. These were usually sellouts.

McConnell won five Juno Awards, three Grammy Awards, was elected to the Canadian Hall of Fame in 1997, and was made an officer of the Order of Canada in 1998. He lived and worked in Toronto except for a brief period in 1988 when he moved to Los Angeles to teach at the Dick Grove School of Music. In the last years of his life, he concentrated on a tentet rather than the large band. He continued to play and write until he passed away of liver cancer in 2010.

McConnell's music runs the gamut of emotions, from wildly funny to very romantic. It is quirky and often goes in unexpected directions, but it always knows where it is going. His manuscripts are clean and meticulous, and his work is inventive, inspiring, surprising, and always swinging.



The Music:

Rob McConnell's treatment of the classic Irving Berlin standard *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, recorded on 1974's *The Best Damn Band in the Land*, is not for the faint of heart. Featuring several sudden shifts in tempo and feel (not to mention the demanding brass ranges), this is a very challenging chart that will push even the most talented bands to their technical limits.

Notes to the Conductor:

McConnell makes this known right off the bat in the introduction, a hard-swinging medium tempo take on the final few bars of the melody featuring some screaming lead trumpet work. A brief walking bass solo sets up the quick shift to a double time swing feel at measure 10. Harmonically, the chart takes some cues from McConnell's fellow valve trombonist Bob Brookmeyer at first with its highly contrapuntal approach until measure 26, where things become a little more straight ahead for 8 measures. The tempo drops back to the original swing briefly at measure 50, featuring more screaming trumpet work, before the double time returns for the final few measures of the melody.

The next three choruses of the chart are solo choruses for alto sax (the first two) and trumpet (the third). Each chorus features simple but highly effective backgrounds. The conclusion of the trumpet solo at measure 206 sees a sudden drop in volume, followed by an equally sudden swell into the shout chorus at measure 210. The tempo once again drops to the original speed, this time with the drums laying into a heavy backbeat under the blues-inflected horns. Once again, the brass ranges during this section are quite high and require a strong lead (and even 2nd) trumpet and trombone player to pull off effectively.

The arrangement's finale is nearly identical to its beginning, as the band plays the final half of the melody with the same harmonic and rhythmic tricks as before. The melody climbs to one final ensemble blast, and is brought to a conclusion by a quick, crisp tom tom thud.

This arrangement is for jazz big band. It is not a transcription - it has been prepared from Rob McConnell's original score. The second chorus of the alto sax solo (from measure 102 to 165) was written as an insert and did not appear on the original recording. This additional solo section has been included with an optional cut to allow you to perform the chart as you see fit.

Acknowledgements:

We thank the generosity of Rob's widow Anne for her permission and participation in making these arrangements available for the first time for bands to play, audiences to enjoy, and musicians to study.

Jeffrey Sultanof and Dylan Canterbury

- May 2018

ALEXANDER'S RAG-TIME BAND

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Reeds

Trumpets

Trombones

Guitar

Piano

Bass

Drums

The score is written in pencil on aged paper. It features seven staves. The top staff is for Reeds, with sub-staves for Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, and Contrabass. The second section is for Trumpets, with four staves. The third section is for Trombones, with four staves. The fourth staff is for Guitar, showing chord progressions and some melodic lines. The fifth staff is for Piano, mostly containing rests. The sixth staff is for Bass, with the word 'Acoustic' written above it. The seventh staff is for Drums, with 'Solo' written above it and 'Bum! Boom!' written below it. A large red circle is drawn around the first measure of the Alto Sax staff. A large bracket on the right side of the Reeds and Trumpets sections indicates a first ending. The bottom left corner has a small logo and the text 'No. 535'.

Here is the first page of Rob McConnell's pencil score for Alexander's Ragtime Band, written in 1974.

ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND

SCORE

RECORDED BY ROB MCCONNELL

BY IRVING BERLIN

ARRANGED BY ROB MCCONNELL

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

TWICE AS FAST

MEDIUM SWING ♩ = 140

The musical score is arranged for a 12-piece band. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Alto Sax 1 & 2:** Play melodic lines with dynamics ranging from *f* to *mf*.
- Tenore Sax 1 & 2:** Provide harmonic support and melodic counterparts.
- Baritone Sax:** Plays a steady harmonic accompaniment.
- Trumpet 1-4:** Play melodic lines with dynamic markings of *f*, *ff*, and *mf*.
- Horn in F 1 & 2:** Provide harmonic support.
- Trombone 1-4:** Play melodic lines with dynamic markings of *f*, *ff*, and *mf*.
- Guitar & Piano:** Play chordal accompaniment. The guitar part includes chord symbols: *F9*, *B13^(#11)*, *F9 B^b ma⁹*, *B^o7*, *E7^(#9)*, *F9*, *E^b7^(#9)*, *D7^(#9)*, *G13^(#11)*, *D^b9 C7^(#9)*, and *F9*.
- Bass:** Plays a walking bass line. A 'Solo' section is indicated for measures 7-9.
- Drum Set:** Provides a steady swing rhythm.

The score is divided into measures 1 through 9. Measure 1 is the start of the piece. Measures 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are numbered at the bottom of the page.

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10

A.Sx. 1
A.Sx. 2
T.Sx. 1
T.Sx. 2
B.Sx.
Trp. 2
Trp. 3
Trp. 4
Hrn. 1
Hrn. 2
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
Tbn. 4
Gtr.
Pno.
Bs.
Dr.

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

18

A Sax. 1
A Sax. 2
T Sax. 1
T Sax. 2
B. Sax.
Trpt. 1
Trpt. 2
Trpt. 3
Trpt. 4
Hrn. 1
Hrn. 2
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
Tbn. 4
Gtr.
Pno.
Bs.
Dr.

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

B⁷

26

A Sax. 1
A Sax. 2
T Sax. 1
T Sax. 2
B Sax.
TPT. 1
TPT. 2
TPT. 3
TPT. 4
HN. 1
HN. 2
TBN. 1
TBN. 2
TBN. 3
TBN. 4
Gtr.
PNO.
BS.
DR.

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33