Jazz Lines Publications

Presents

MOON DREAMS

AS RECORDED BY THE MILES DAVIS NONET

ARRANGED BY GIL EVANS

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY JEFFREY SULTANOF AND ROB DUBOFF

FULL SCORE

JLP-8010

WORDS BY JOHNNY MERCER, MUSIC BY CHUMMY MACGREGOR

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.
PO BOX 1236
SARATOGA SPRINGS NY 12866 USA

MOON DREAMS (1949)

Background:

Gil Evans's apartment on 55th Street in New York City became a hangout for many musicians who came to visit, listen to music that Gil borrowed from the library (Prokofiev, Bartok, and Ernest Bloch were some of the composers Evans was studying at the time), sleep, and socialize with other performers. Some even came to live with him for extended periods of time. The door was always open, even if Evans was not there. Gil said that if someone took something without telling him, such as money, he figured that person probably needed it more than he did. Among the guests who frequently came to the apartment were Charlie Parker, Dave Lambert, Blossom Dearie, John Carisi, George Russell, John Lewis, Johnny Mandel, and Gerry Mulligan.

It was at Evans's apartment that Carisi, Russell, Mulligan, Mandel, and Lewis discussed the formation of a small band that would duplicate the sound and homogeneity of the Claude Thornhill Orchestra. Evans had been its chief arranger and musical director before and after World War II, but he and the pianist had parted amicably by 1948 as Thornhill no longer wanted to continue the 'modern jazz' direction Evans favored.

One of the musicians whom everyone envisioned in the trumpet chair of this new ensemble was Miles Davis. Not only was Davis interested, he took over leadership of the ensemble, calling rehearsals, and getting the band a gig at the Royal Roost. By that time Mandel had gone to California to establish residency there, but everyone else contributed music. Mulligan wrote the majority of music that was later recorded, but for many years his considerable contribution to this ensemble was not properly acknowledged.

The ensemble ceased to exist by 1950, leaving behind twelve recordings for Capitol Records and two radio broadcasts. Some of the sides were not released at the time, and the response to the ensemble was generally not very enthusiastic. When eleven of the Capitol sides were released on LP in 1956, the reaction was overwhelmingly positive, particularly in Europe. In 1971, all twelve recordings appeared on LP in Europe, and in 1972 were released in the U.S. These recordings are considered as important as Louis Armstrong's *Hot Five and Seven* recordings, the series by the Ellington band from 1940-42, and Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue*.

Music historians now consider The Miles Davis Nonet one of the most important ensembles in the history of jazz. Certainly such composers as Shorty Rogers, Andre Previn, Marty Paich, John Graas, Jack Montrose, Manny Albam, and Andre Hodeir were heavily influenced by the nonet, as their music shows.

Happily, most of the original parts from this nonet, plus parts for other compositions and arrangements, were discovered in three cartons of music that Miles Davis put into storage in Philadelphia (they were found after his death). In 2002, my edition of 12 scores from the repertoire of this ensemble was published by the Hal Leonard Corporation. An article detailing the editing process and errata in the folio was published by the Journal of Jazz Studies in 2010.

The Music:

Moon Dreams was originally set in 1947 by Gil Evans as part of a medley for the Claude Thornhill Orchestra; the titles of the medley were *Easy Living, Everything Happens to Me*, and *Moon Dreams*. Additionally, the orchestration included three flutes, an added section of the Thornhill orchestra which did not exist for very long. This version of *Moon Dreams* is also available through Jazz Lines Publications (JLP-8122).

Since Evans had already arranged this title, there is every indication that this may have been the very first score prepared for the nonet. It is also the only one that has an extracted clarinet part; according to Gerry Mulligan, this was clearly intended for Thornhill clarinetist Danny Polo, who was not available to play in the nonet. (Polo, a very underrated musician who spent some years playing in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s, passed away in 1949.) The exact same part was transposed for alto sax (another alumnus from Thornhill, Lee Konitz). This arrangement was played frequently during the 1948 gig at the Royal Roost. Audiences were confounded by the music beginning at Letter E, which seems never to have been played correctly based on existing broadcasts, and even the 1950 Capitol recording. French horn player Gunther Schuller has said that he conducted this section while playing his part. It didn't help.

Notes to the Conductor:

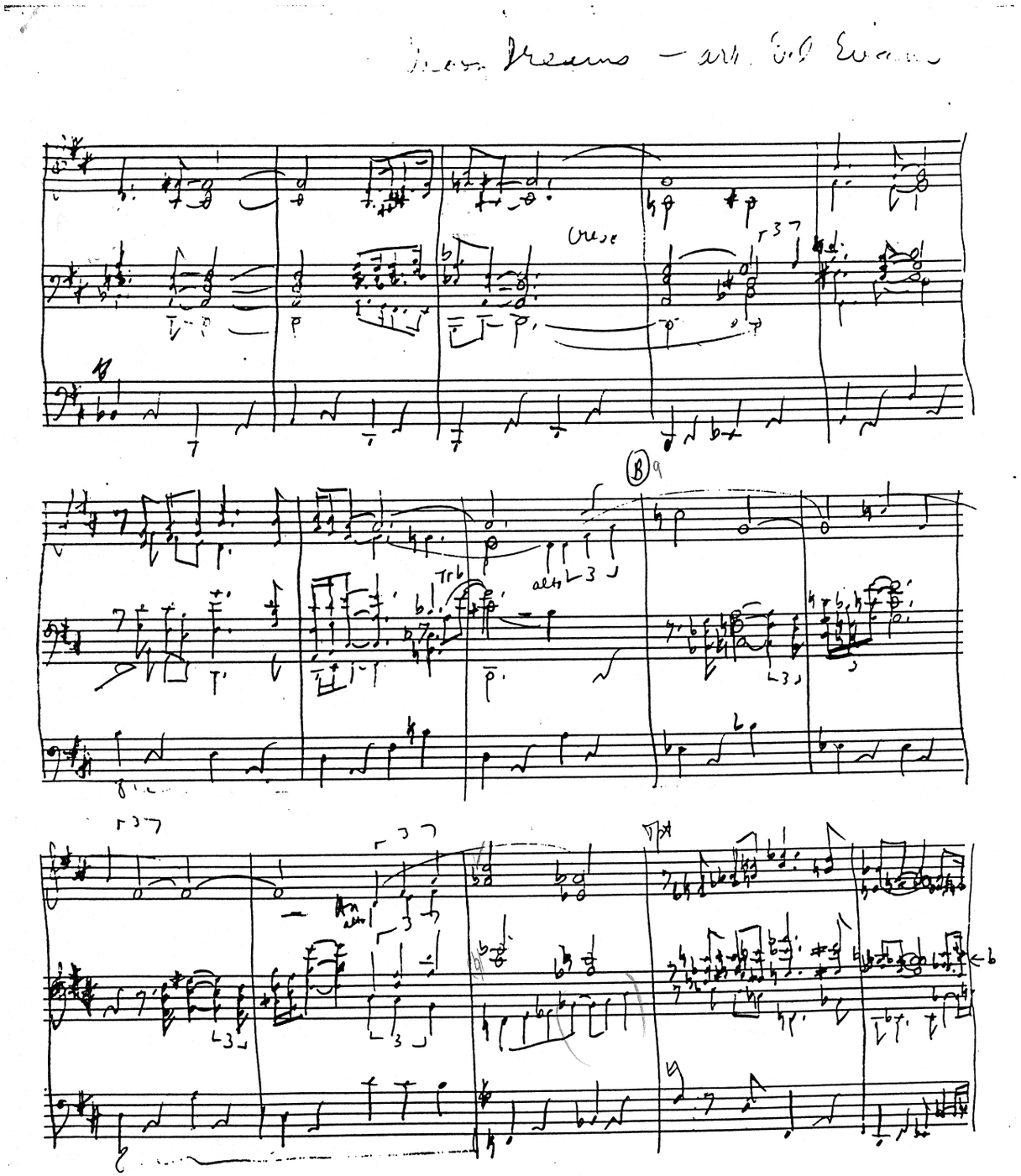
The two main issues with the Nonet book in general are:

1) Instrumental balance, so that the French horn and tuba are not buried
2) These two instruments tend to 'speak' slower than the other horns

It took many hours for the original players to interpret this music so that the arrangers were satisfied. Careful rehearsals and patience are the keys to success here. This arrangement, more than the others in the nonet, book demands total mastery of each part by each player, and strong support from the conductor. Every part has particular challenges, whether it is a rhythm that is tricky, intonation issues with the other horns (given the concert key of D Major), or the ending at Letter E where each musician is on his/her own to maintain the cohesion of the arrangement. Evans's original notational choices helped to make this arrangement even more difficult to play, and it is the goal of this edition to make what he wanted as clear as possible.

To prove the point, Evans wanted the eighth note to be almost straight with a hint of swing because when he wanted the swing feel, he writes this figure as a dotted eighth note-sixteenth note. Please make this distinction without exaggerating the musical figures. This is not an arrangement to rehearse first if you are playing several nonet arrangements for a concert or arrangers' workshop. Instruments should be warm and in tune, musicians focused. Like most of the Evans canon for Miles Davis, mastery of this music results in sheer magic that musicians and audiences won't soon forget. There is a reason why the man is a legend!

Jeffrey Sultanof
- November 2012



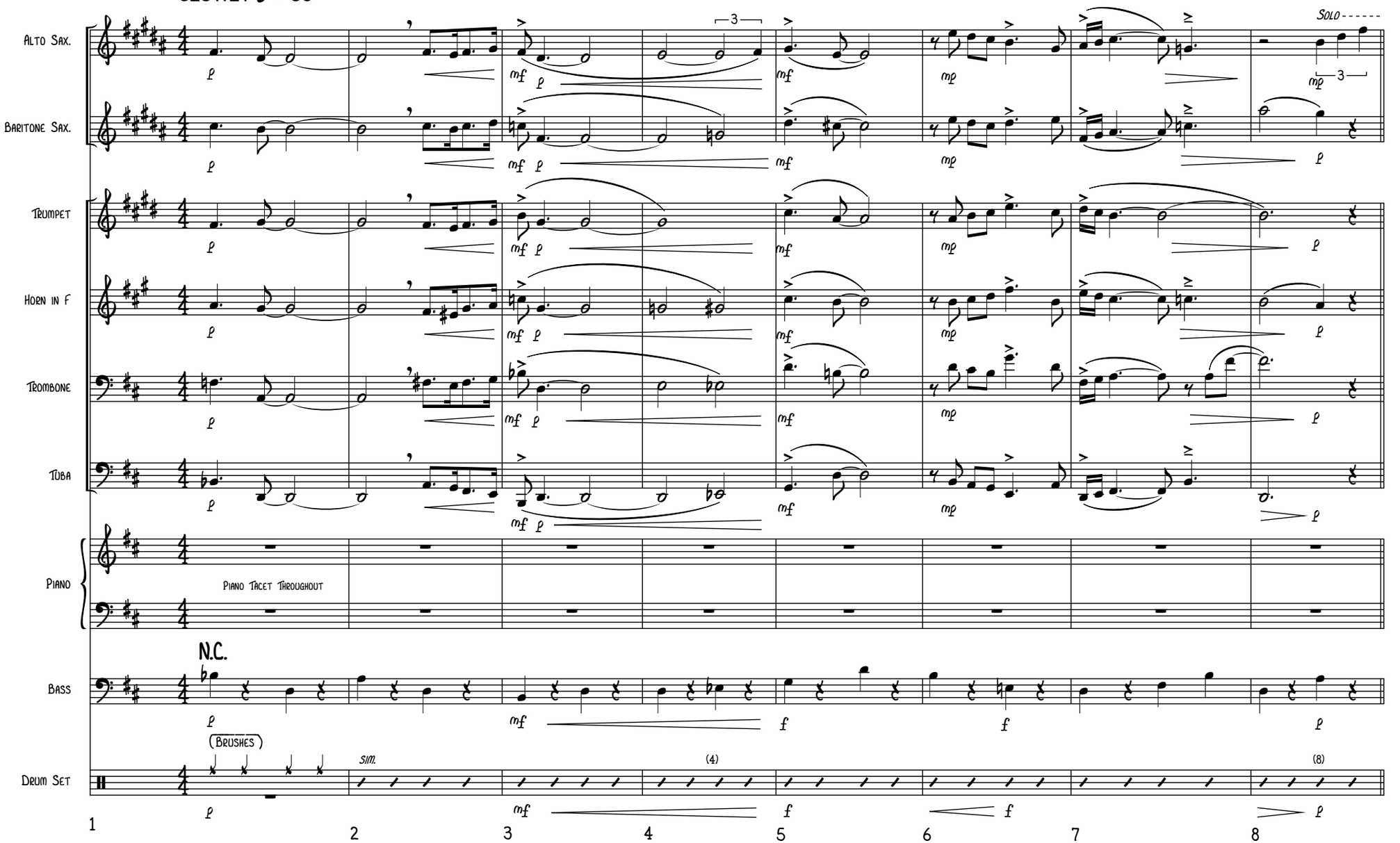
Above is the first page of Gil Evans's score for *Moon Dreams*.

MOON DREAMS

AS RECORDED BY MILES DAVIS ON BIRTH OF THE COOL

SCORE

WORDS BY JOHNNY MERCER, MUSIC BY CHUMMY MACGREGOR
ARRANGED BY GIL EVANS
PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY JEFFREY SULTANOF AND ROB DUBOFF



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MOON DREAMS

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