

*Presents*

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

**A BIRD IN IGOR'S YARD**

RECORDED BY BUDDY DEFRANCO

COMPOSED AND ARRANGED BY GEORGE RUSSELL

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY ANDREW HOMZY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

**FULL SCORE**

JLP-8930

MUSIC BY GEORGE RUSSELL

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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# GEORGE RUSSELL SERIES

## A BIRD IN IGOR'S YARD (1949)

### **Biography:**

George Russell was a hugely influential and innovative figure in the evolution of modern jazz, the music's only major theorist, one of its most profound composers, and a trail blazer whose ideas have transformed and inspired some of the greatest musicians of our time.

Russell was born in Cincinnati in 1923, the adopted son of a registered nurse and a chef on the B&O Railroad. He began playing drums with the Boy Scout Drum and Bugle Corps and eventually received a scholarship to Wilberforce University where he joined the Collegians, whose list of alumni include Coleman Hawkins, Benny Carter, Fletcher Henderson, Ben Webster, Cootie Williams, Ernie Wilkins, and Frank Foster. His most valuable musical education came in 1941, when, in attempting to enlist in the Marines, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis, spending 6 months in the hospital where he was taught the fundamentals of harmony from a fellow patient. From the hospital he sold his first work, *New World*, to Benny Carter. He joined Benny Carter's Band, but was replaced by Max Roach (after Russell heard Roach play he decided to give up drumming). He moved to New York where he was part of a group of musicians who gathered in the basement apartment of Gil Evans. The circle included Miles Davis, Gerry Mulligan, Max Roach, Johnny Carisi, and, on occasion, Charlie Parker. He was commissioned to write a piece for Dizzy Gillespie's orchestra; the result was the seminal *Cubano Be/Cubano Bop* which was the first fusion of Afro-Cuban rhythms with jazz. This work premiered at Carnegie Hall in 1947 and featured Chano Pozo. Two years later Buddy DeFranco recorded Russell's *A Bird in Igor's Yard*, a piece notable for its fusion of elements from Charlie Parker and Igor Stravinsky.

It was a remark made by Miles Davis when George asked him his musical aim which set Russell on the course which was his life. Miles said he "wanted to learn all the changes." Since Miles obviously knew all the changes, Russell surmised that what he meant was that he wanted to learn a new way to relate to chords. This began a quest for Russell. Again hospitalized for 16 months, he began to develop his *Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization*. First published in 1953, the *Lydian Concept* is credited with opening the way into modal music, as demonstrated by Miles in his seminal *Kind of Blue* recording. Using the Lydian Scale as the primary scale of Western music, the *Lydian Chromatic Concept* introduced the idea of chord/scale unity. It was the first theory to explore the vertical relationship between chords and scales, and was the only original theory to come from jazz. Throughout the 1950s and '60s, Russell continued to work on developing the *Concept* and leading bands under his direction.

In the 1950s, a superb sextet including Bill Evans and Art Farmer recorded under his direction, producing *The Jazz Workshop*, an album of astonishing originality. The often dense textures and rhythms anticipated the jazz-rock movement of the 1970s. During this time, he was also working odd jobs as a counterman in a lunch spot and selling toys at Macy's at Christmas; the release of *The Jazz Workshop* put an end to Russell's jobs outside of music. He was one of a group to be commissioned to write for the first annual Brandeis Jazz Festival in 1957; *All About Rosie* was based on an Alabama children's song. *New York, New York*, with poetry by Jon Hendricks and featuring Bill Evans, Max Roach, John Coltrane, Milt Hinton, Bob Brookmeyer, Art Farmer and a who's who of the New York jazz scene is striking in its evocation of New York of the late 1950s. From 1960, Russell began leading his own sextets around the New York area and at festivals; he also toured throughout the Midwest and Europe with his sextet. One of the important albums of this time was *Ezz-Thetic*, which featured Eric Dolphy, Don Ellis, and Steve Swallow.

Disillusioned by his lack of recognition and the meager work opportunities in America, in 1964 Russell traveled to Scandinavia. In Sweden and Norway he found support for both himself and his music. All of his works were recorded by radio and TV, and he was championed by Bosse Broberg, the adventurous director of Swedish Radio, an organization with which Russell maintained a close association and admiration of. While there, he heard and recorded a young Jan Garbarek, Terje Rypdal, and Jon Christensen.

In 1969, at the request of his old friend, Gunther Schuller, he returned to the U.S. to teach at the newly created jazz department at the New England Conservatory where Schuller was President. He continued to develop the *Lydian Concept* and toured with his own groups. He played Carnegie Hall, the Village Vanguard, the Bottom Line, Newport, Wolftrap, The Smithsonian, Sweet Basil, the West Coast, the Southwest, and Europe with his 14 member orchestra. He continued to compose extended works which re-defined jazz composition. His 1985 recording, *The African Game*, one of the first sessions for the revived Blue Note label, received 2 Grammy nominations. Russell taught throughout the world, and was a guest conductor for Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian, Danish, German, and Italian radio.

Russell received the following awards and designations: MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, the National Endowment for the Arts American Jazz Master, elected a Foreign Member of the Royal Swedish Academy, two Guggenheim Fellowships, the Oscar du Disque de Jazz, the Guardian Award, six NEA Music Fellowships, the American Music Award, and numerous others.

George Russell passed away at age 86 on Monday, July 27, 2009 from complications from Alzheimer's disease.

## **Background:**

In 1949, Capitol Records was actively recording modern jazz for a special 60000 series and was calling in some of the top musicians to make recordings. Among the artists chosen were Miles Davis, Dave Lambert, and Lennie Tristano. In April, Buddy DeFranco fronted an all-star big band for a series of recordings that were to be a part of this new series. One of the pieces recorded on April 23, 1949 has achieved legendary status, though it was not released at the time: George Russell's *A Bird in Igor's Yard*, alluding to the names of Charlie Parker and Igor Stravinsky. This was not an easy piece to play, and the band did a remarkable job. According to pianist Gene DiNovi, the band had only a few minutes to rehearse the piece and did one quick run-through before completing the recording. Russell conducted the session and "begged" the producer to allow the band to do another take. Unfortunately, there was no more time available and the session ended. Capitol withheld the recording at the time, perhaps feeling that the recording was "too modern" sounding for the tastes of the pop record buying public. DiNovi contends that all the musicians - including DeFranco - were enthusiastic about the arrangement and pleased with the take, despite the lack of rehearsal time.

Alice Russell remembers: "George was one of a number of musicians who would hang out at Gil Evans's 55th Street basement apartment to listen to records and discuss music: Miles, Max, John Lewis, Mulligan, Carisi, and often, Bird, would listen to Ravel, Debussy, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and others. George remembered that *Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)* was one of the compositions which caused many discussions. At the time, there were the beginnings of a cross pollination between jazz and traditional music. Claude Thornhill, Duke Ellington, and Billy Strayhorn had enlarged the framework of jazz and composers like Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland had taken bold steps in the direction of jazz. It was logical for George to incorporate ideas of Stravinsky, Ravel, etc. into jazz and improvisation; hence, *A Bird in Igor's Yard*. George never mentioned Bird meeting with Stravinsky, so I doubt that the composition had anything to do with a meeting between the two."

In years to come, when Russell finally achieved success having finished his *Lydian Chromatic Concept* and recording *The Jazz Workshop* for RCA, he would mention *A Bird in Igor's Yard* in interviews, which suggested that he was still proud of this piece. What it sounded like remained a mystery until a series of LPs of jazz on the Capitol label was issued by Dutch EMI in 1972. U.S. Capitol issued the series that same year, and finally the infamous recording was let out of the vault to be heard.

## **The Music:**

Unknown to anyone, a set of parts was extracted by Joe Benjamin, bassist and copyist for the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Historian Andrew Homzy discovered this set of parts when he surveyed the Ellington Collection at the Smithsonian Institute. It is fairly obvious that Ellington had no intention of playing the piece, but perhaps it was his way of supplying money to Russell, something he would do for many musicians and not acknowledge publicly (supposedly he gave money to Boyd Raeburn when that bandleader was struggling to keep his band together). It is also possible that Ellington had heard of the work and wanted a copy in his own library. The original score, retained by Russell, became unusable at some point, so Russell asked an assistant to write out a new one, which he supposedly approved. Alice Russell graciously supplied us with the newer score.

Both aforementioned sources had their share of problems. The Russell-approved score is missing music and has errors and omissions. The Ellington-Benjamin parts also have errors. Analyzing both sources, it is clear to us that Benjamin's errors came from the original score; in most cases the same errors are in the parts and the new score, suggesting that Russell did not look carefully enough at the new score when it was prepared, or didn't remember that he himself made errors that were either never found or fixed at the original session (obviously the original set of parts would answer some of these questions). Benjamin's set was missing a piano part, which made sense as Ellington rarely had parts created for himself. The Ellington set is also missing guitar and tuba parts, both of which are clearly audible in the 1949 recording.

The original parts also give us previously unknown information. Bars 13-16, 33-36, and 49-52 were originally conceived as being played with a rhumba feel (according to the drum part), with the rhythm returning to swing at 17, 37, and 53. What is most fascinating is the polymeric use of 4/4 and 3/4 simultaneously at bars 57-60. The solo clarinet and the trumpets stay in 4/4 while the rest of the ensemble goes to 3/4. Russell's original notation has been preserved in this edition. However, we have included dashed barlines for the clarinet and trumpet parts so that it may be interpreted in 3/4 instead, thus making this 4-bar section easier to play. Naturally, we encourage you to try playing the section as Russell wrote it. The tuba part has a two-beat triplet rhythm beginning on beat 4. It is suggested that the conductor cues the entrance of this line and that it be played without ritard.

This piece is not for the fainthearted! It will require extensive rehearsal by even the best and/or most experienced of bands. Proper balance is essential at bar 120 so that the different threads of music are heard.

## **Acknowledgments:**

George Russell, always the forward-thinker, had spurned all efforts to have his music properly published. Sadly, this resulted in his remarkable work and career becoming somewhat obscure in recent years. We thank Alice Russell for her support of our efforts to release this important music.

**Rob DuBoff and Jeffrey Sultanof**

- October 2013



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FAST SWING ♩ = 220

①

The musical score is arranged for a jazz ensemble. It begins with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'FAST SWING' with a quarter note equal to 220 beats per minute. The score is divided into measures 1 through 9. The Solo Clarinet part starts in measure 6 with a melodic line. The Reeds (Alto, Tenor, and Baritone Saxophones) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with triplets. The Trumpets and Trombones provide harmonic support with various rhythmic patterns. The Piano and Bass play a steady accompaniment. The Drum Set provides a consistent rhythmic foundation. The score concludes in measure 9 with a final chord structure of D6 and Db6.

10

RHUMBA SWING

Solo CL.

Rd. 1 (A. Sax.)

Rd. 2 (A. Sax.)

Rd. 3 (T. Sax.)

Rd. 4 (T. Sax.)

Rd. 5 (B. Sax.)

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

PNO.

Bs.

D. S.

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

18

This musical score page contains the following parts and markings:

- Solo CL.**: Melodic line starting at measure 18.
- Rd. 1 (A. Sax)**, **Rd. 2 (A. Sax)**, **Rd. 3 (T. Sax)**, **Rd. 4 (T. Sax)**, **Rd. 5 (B. Sax)**: Saxophone parts with dynamics *mp*, *mf*, *f*, and *mp*. Includes *CRESC.* markings and slurs.
- TPT. 1**, **TPT. 2**, **TPT. 3**, **TPT. 4**: Trumpet parts with dynamics *mp*, *mf*, and *f*.
- TBN. 1**, **TBN. 2**, **TBN. 3**, **TUBA**: Trombone and Tuba parts with dynamics *mf*, *f*, and *mp*.
- GTR.**: Guitar part with a *Gm7* chord marking at the end of the page.
- PNO.**: Piano part with a *Gm7* chord marking and a *(PIZZ)* marking at the end.
- BS.**: Bass part with a *(ARCO)* marking and a *Gm7* chord marking at the end.
- D. S.**: Drum set part.