

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

WHY DON'T YOU DO RIGHT?

AS RECORDED BY PEGGY LEE, ARRANGED BY BILLY MAY

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

FULL SCORE

JLP-9340

BY JOE MCCOY

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

PO BOX 1236

SARATOGA SPRINGS NY 12866 USA

PEGGY LEE SERIES

WHY DON'T YOU DO RIGHT? (1947)

Peggy Lee Biography:

"Her wonderful talent should be studied by all vocalists; her regal presence is pure elegance and charm." – Frank Sinatra, 1994

"Music is my life's breath," proclaims the epitaph of Norma Deloris Egstrom, better known to the entertainment world by her professional name of Peggy Lee. 2020 marks the centennial anniversary of this extraordinary artist and her considerable contributions to the world of jazz and popular music.

Over her seven-decade career, Peggy Lee helped redefine what it meant to be a female singer, and her quietly captivating voice continues to resonate with audiences of all ages. Born in an era where women struggled for equality – a conversation that continues today – and carrying the burden of years of a traumatic childhood, she was a true pioneer and survivor to her core. What she accomplished as a woman, and as an artist, is nothing short of extraordinary. She was coined "the female Frank Sinatra" by Tony Bennett, and she considered it one of the highest compliments. But Lee did something few of her male counterparts ever attempted: she wrote songs. Her compositions and recordings – including *It's a Good Day, I Don't Know Enough about You* and *I Love Being Here with You* – can be heard today in countless television shows and feature films, including *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, *The Good Place*, *The Beach Bum*, *Fear the Walking Dead*, *Feud: Bette and Joan*, and in commercials for Samsung, Applebee's and Tropicana.

Much like her friend Sinatra, she did things 'her way.' She not only wrote many of her own songs, but she was involved in every aspect of her performances, from producing to costume and lighting design. She was a creative powerhouse, directing her life and career on her own terms. She is often cited as an inspiration by strong contemporary female singers including Adele, Madonna, Billie Eilish, Diana Krall ("I love everything about her: her elegance, her wit"), and k.d. lang ("I view her as my finest teacher of vocals"). Jazz and pop music's royalty called her one of their own. "If I'm the Duke, man, Peggy Lee is the queen," decreed Duke Ellington, adding, "I consider her as great a musician as Frank Sinatra, who in that world is king." Sinatra offered his take on the matter: "Peg is just about the best friend a song ever had." Another royal dictum came courtesy of Count Basie ("...she's solid.").

Known for her subtlety, elegance, and alluring tone, Lee saw herself, first and foremost, as a communicator whose primary medium was music. Though she had the ability to belt out a tune, she preferred to deliver a lyric "softly, with feeling." She had a superior understanding of rhythm, a genius for interpretation and a unique ability to focus on the core essentials of any given song. "The eternal struggle of art is to leave out all but the essentials" became her professional motto of choice.

Norma Deloris Egstrom was born on May 26, 1920 in Jamestown, North Dakota, the sixth of seven children. She survived a brutal childhood. Her mother died when she was four years old and her father then married a woman who physically and emotionally abused Norma until she left home at the age of 17. Music was her escape from a grim reality. Norma began her professional career as an adolescent living in Wimbledon, ND, and traveling on weekends to nearby Valley City, where she made her debut on the radio. In 1937 she was invited to audition for WDAY in Fargo, the biggest radio station in North Dakota at the time. She was hired on the spot, but right before she went on the air, the programming director told her that 'Norma Egstrom' had to go and christened her with what would become her new professional name: Peggy Lee.

Nationwide popularity and chart-hitting success first came to her in 1941 after being hired as the singer with the Benny Goodman Orchestra. While working with Goodman, she met Dave Barbour, the band's guitarist and the man who would become her first husband and father to her daughter, Nicki. When Dave was fired from the band for "fraternizing with the girl singer," Lee gave notice and – looking forward to becoming a full-time wife and mother – announced that she was retiring. Peggy and Dave were married in 1943, and though the marriage only lasted eight years, she considered him to be the love of her life and greatest musical collaborator.

Lee's 'retirement' didn't last long either, and she found herself once again behind the microphone. She established her solo career by joining the then-emerging Capitol Records and ranks as the female act with the longest stay at that renowned label, her musical alma mater: 24 years. She also spent five very productive years at Decca Records in the 1950s, and recorded albums with several other major and independent labels starting in the mid-1970s. Throughout, Lee continued to work extensively on television, radio and in concert up until the mid 1990s.

Her vast and varied catalog of songs flourished from such longevity in the music business: she recorded more than 1,100 masters and over 50 original albums. Her total number of radio broadcast performances is over 800, and her television appearances surpass the 200-mark.

Best known for such songs as *Fever*, *Why Don't You Do Right*, *I'm a Woman* and *Is That All There Is?*, she amassed over 100 chart entries beginning with *I Got It Bad* (1941) and culminating, to date, with the posthumous hit *Similau* (2017). Among the myriad music honors bestowed upon Lee are 13 Grammy® Award nominations, a Grammy® win in 1969, and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1995.

One of the foremothers of the singer-songwriter school, Lee ranks among the most successful female singer-songwriters in the annals of American popular music. She wrote over 200 songs – most often lyrics, but sometimes music as well, with a variety of collaborators, including Harold Arlen, Cy Coleman, Duke Ellington, Quincy Jones, Marian McPartland and Victor Young. Some of the artists who have covered Peggy Lee compositions are Tony Bennett, Nat King Cole, Natalie Cole, Bing Crosby, Doris Day, Ella Fitzgerald, Judy Garland, Diana Krall, Queen Latifah, Barry Manilow, Bette Midler, Janelle Monáe, Nina Simone, Regina Spektor and Sarah Vaughan.

Walt Disney took notice of Peggy's songwriting ability, and in 1953 he hired her to write all of the original lyrics for his classic animated film, *Lady and the Tramp*. Walt liked Lee's song demos so much, he asked her to voice four of the characters, and even named one after her.

Lady and the Tramp was not her only work in film. She appeared in several motion pictures, most notably at Warner Bros. in *The Jazz Singer* (1952), costarring Danny Thomas, and *Pete Kelly's Blues* (1955), which brought her an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress and the Audience Award for Most Promising Female Personality of 1955.

A perennial advocate of artists' rights, Peggy Lee was quietly standing for this cause as early as the 1940s. In solidarity with the American Federation Musicians' 1948 record ban, she was among the vocalists under contract who refused to do any recording activity for the entire year. More than just an advocate, Lee was an artist willing to stand up for her craft. Facing an industry ruled by conventional corporate (and, all too often, mostly male-oriented) thinking, Lee fought multiple battles on behalf of not only her artistic vision but also the rights of fellow artists. The most famous of Lee's legal cases was a lengthy court battle (1988-1992) regarding her work on *Lady and the Tramp*. This precedent-setting case pertaining to home video rights redefined how entertainment contracts are written.

In 1986, Peggy Lee became the first female recipient of the Songwriters Guild of America's Aggie and President Awards, the former honoring Lee for her composing skills, the latter for her support of young, emerging songwriters. ASCAP's Pied Piper Award followed in 1990, and her induction into the Songwriters' Hall of Fame came in 1999.

Lee stayed active as a concert performer until 1995, when she gave her final performances at Carnegie Hall and the Hollywood Bowl. In 1998 she suffered a stroke, and on January 21, 2002 she passed away at her home in Bel Air, California. In one of the many obituaries that celebrated her extraordinary musicianship, renowned jazz critic Nat Hentoff wrote a fitting epitaph: "Her main quality was a marvelous sense of subtlety. She never overpowered you. You could hear her voice after it stopped."

And 100 years after she was born, we're still hearing it.

Billy May Biography:

There is perhaps no one person more unsung in shaping the sound of classic popular music than Edward William 'Billy' May, Jr. Indeed, there are many people who are fans of May's music without even realizing it through his collaborations with Frank Sinatra. Even if he had never written a note for the 'Chairman of the Board,' however, May's catalogue of work is not only of the highest quality, but also of stunning diversity.

Born on November 10, 1916 in Pittsburgh, PA, May began playing tuba as a youth on recommendation of a doctor who believed it to be an effective treatment for his childhood asthma. Switching to trumpet, May worked as both an instrumentalist and arranger for several small outlets before joining the Charlie Barnet Orchestra in 1938. May was responsible for crafting the arrangement for Barnet's hit recording of *Cherokee*, which has since gone on to become one of the most frequently covered standards in part because of the Barnet version. After leaving

Barnet, May worked largely as a freelance arranger and trumpeter, notably for the bands of Glenn Miller and Les Brown, for the majority of the 1940s. In the early 1950s, May caught the attention of producers at Capitol Records, who hired him as a staff arranger for their sizeable stable of vocalists. His best-known collaborations were with Frank Sinatra, as May would author the arrangements of some of Sinatra's biggest hits, including 1958's *Come Fly with Me*. In addition to Sinatra, May's arrangements graced the recordings of Ella Fitzgerald, Nat 'King' Cole, Peggy Lee, and Nancy Wilson, among countless others, during this time.

By the 1960s, May became more involved in film and television. Having written his first film score in 1957, May's songs and scores became frequently heard in many different Hollywood settings, ranging from Rat Pack films to a collaboration with humorist Stan Freberg. Throughout this time, his relationship with Sinatra remained fruitful, with May continuing to write arrangements for Sinatra's albums on his newly founded Reprise Records label. The two were so close that May was an honorary pall-bearer at Sinatra's funeral in 1998. Having largely been in retirement since the 1980s, May passed away from a heart attack on January 22, 2004. He leaves behind a list of credits that are second to none in the world of pop music as an arranger, and his signature style, featuring mercurial brass writing and 'swooping' saxophone riffs, continues to serve as a template upon which many of today's top arrangers work.

The Music:

Peggy Lee's original version of *Why Don't You Do Right?* with the Benny Goodman Orchestra played a key role in her emergence as one of popular music's greatest female vocalists. This version, arranged by Billy May, came from her 1947 recording *Rendezvous* with Peggy Lee, and saw Lee accompanied by the orchestra of her then-husband, guitarist Dave Barbour. Although it is generally not overly difficult, there are a couple brief moments that will require a lead trumpet player with a strong upper register.

Notes to the Conductor:

The performance begins with some musical devices that May would use frequently over his career - a sinewy unison saxophone line being egged on by a blaring brass section atop a solid foundation from the rhythm section. Barbour plays a brief solo break before Lee comes in with the melody at measure 7. A harmonically modified twelve-bar blues, Lee sings three verses with the backgrounds mostly handled in a repetitive fashion by the saxes. Some occasional brass punctuation and Barbour guitar fills sneak in to stave off monotony. Lee gets a break at measure 43 while the band embarks on a typically brilliant May shout chorus. The horns don't stray far from the melody, but the slight deviations are enough to catch your listeners off guard. A recap of the introductory sax lick sets up Lee's final verse at measure 55, with an extended tag leading the band into one final charge before the arrangement ends on an appropriately sultry note.

This publication was prepared using the original Billy May pencil score - this is not a transcription.

Rob DuBoff and Dylan Canterbury

- April 2025

WHY DON'T YOU DO RIGHT!

1947

Conductor

1st Alto

2nd Alto

1st Tenor

2nd Tenor

Baritone

Trumpets

Trombones

Guitar

Piano

Bass

Drums

NOV 13 1947

118

(KEEP THE TIME - BUT MARK THE ACCENTS AT 30)

CAPITOL PROPERTY RECORDS, INC.

HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.

1.

Above is the first page of Billy May's pencil score for Why Don't You Do Right, recorded by Peggy Lee in 1947.

SCORE

WHY DON'T YOU DO RIGHT?

RECORDED BY PEGGY LEE

By JOE MCCOY

ARRANGED BY BILLY MAY

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

MEDIUM SWING ♩ = 120

①

Vocal

Woodwind 1: Alto Sax. *mf*

Woodwind 2: Alto Sax. *mf*

Woodwind 3: Tenor Sax. *mf*

Woodwind 4: Tenor Sax. *mf*

Woodwind 5: Baritone Sax. *mf*

Trumpet 1 *fp*

Trumpet 2 *fp*

Trumpet 3 *fp*

Trumpet 4 *fp*

Trombone 1 *fp*

Trombone 2 *fp*

Trombone 3 *fp*

Trombone 4 *fp*

Guitar *mf* *f* *mp*

Piano *mf* *f*

Acoustic Bass *mf* *f*

Drum Set *mf* *f*

1 2 3 4 5 6

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WHY DON'T YOU DO RIGHT
SCORE - PAGE 2

7

Vox. had plen - ty mon - ey nine - teen twen - 'y two, you let oth - er wo - men make a fool of you, why don't you do right, like some oth - er men

Ww. 1 (A. Sax.) *mp*

Ww. 2 (A. Sax.) *mp*

Ww. 3 (T. Sax.) *mp*

Ww. 4 (T. Sax.) *mp*

Ww. 5 (B. Sax.) *mp*

Gtr. Dm^6 Dm^7/C B^b_{13} A^9 Dm^6 Dm^7/C B^b_{13} A^9 Gm^7 A^9

Pno. *mp* Dm^6 Dm^7/C B^b_{13} A^9 Dm^6 Dm^7/C B^b_{13} A^9 Gm^7 A^9

Bs. *mp* Dm^6 Dm^7/C B^b_{13} A^9 Dm^6 Dm^7/C B^b_{13} A^9 Gm^7 A^9

D. S. *mp* *sim.* (4)

7 8 9 10 11 12

WHY DON'T YOU DO RIGHT
SCORE - PAGE 3

Vox. *do?* Get out of here and get me some mon - ey too. *Yo!*

Ww. 1 (A. Sax.) *mf*

Ww. 2 (A. Sax.) *mf*

Ww. 3 (T. Sax.) *mf*

Ww. 4 (T. Sax.) *mf*

Ww. 5 (B. Sax.) *mf*

Tpt. 1 *mf* Lip 3 Lip

Tpt. 2 *mf* Lip 3 Lip

Tpt. 3 *mf* Lip 3 Lip

Tpt. 4 *mf* Lip 3 Lip

Tbn. 1 *mf* Lip 3 Lip

Tbn. 2 *mf* Lip 3 Lip

Tbn. 3 *mf* Lip 3 Lip

Tbn. 4 *mf* Lip 3 Lip

Gtr. *Dm⁶ G_m A⁹ B^b₉ A7⁽⁹⁾ Dm⁶ B^b₁₃^(#11) A⁹*

Pno. *Dm⁶ G_m A⁹ B^b₉ A7⁽⁹⁾ Dm⁶ B^b₁₃^(#11) A⁹*

Bs. *Dm⁶ G_m A⁹ B^b₉ A7⁽⁹⁾ Dm⁶ B^b₁₃^(#11) A⁹*

D. S. (8) (12)