

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

*Presents*

**HAPPINESS IS A THING CALLED JOE**

ARRANGED BY BILLY MAY

PREPARED BY ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

**FULL SCORE**

JLP-9692

WORDS BY E.Y. HARBURG, MUSIC BY HAROLD ARLEN

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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# ELLA FITZGERALD SERIES

## HAPPINESS IS A THING CALLED JOE (1961)

### **Background:**

Truly the First Lady of Song, Ella Fitzgerald was one of the greatest singers in American history. As her official website perfectly states, “Her voice was flexible, wide-ranging, accurate, and ageless. She could sing sultry ballads, sweet jazz, and imitate every instrument in an orchestra.” She enthralled audiences all over the world for decades, worked with everyone from Duke, Dizzy, and Count Basie to Nat King Cole and Sinatra, and left a recorded legacy that is second to none.

Born Ella Jane Fitzgerald on April 25, 1917 in Newport News, Virginia, Ella endured some rough times as a child. Following the split of her parents, she moved with her mother to Yonkers, NY, and sadly lost her mother at age 15. Fighting poverty, Ella eventually used these difficult times as motivation in life, and continued to harbor dreams of being an entertainer. She made her public singing debut at the Apollo Theater in Harlem on November 21, 1934 at age 17. Buoyed by her success, she continued to enter and win singing contests, and soon was singing with Chick Webb’s band. In 1938 she quickly gained acclaim with her version of *A-Tisket, A Tasket*, which was a huge success and made her famous at age 21; for over 50 years she remained a star.

Following Webb’s death in 1939, Ella briefly led the band, and soon struck out on her own as a solo artist, taking on various projects as well as making her film debut. While on tour with Dizzy Gillespie in the mid-1940s, Ella began to respond to the massive changes in the jazz world, as swing was giving way to bebop; she began incorporating scat singing into her repertoire as a reaction to the improvisational nature of bebop. As she recalled years later “I just tried to do [with my voice] what I heard the horns in the band doing.” During this period, she also met bassist Ray Brown, whom she was to marry and adopt a son with. Through Brown, she met jazz impresario and producer Norman Granz, and this relationship led to her greatest stardom and achievements.

Ella joined Granz’s Jazz at the Philharmonic Tour, recorded classic albums with Louis Armstrong, and from 1956-1964 worked on what may be her greatest legacy, the Song Book series, featuring the music of Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, the Gershwins, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern, and Johnny Mercer. It can be argued that along with the seminal work of Frank Sinatra, these records created some of the greatest and most definitive versions of a huge portion of what comprises the Great American Songbook. Ira Gershwin famously remarked, “I never knew how good our songs were until I heard Ella Fitzgerald sing them.” Ella also did what music can uniquely do in tying together many strands of American culture at a time when race relations were a major issue in American society. Critic Frank Rich expressed it so well shortly after Ella’s death, writing about her Song Book series: “Here was a black woman popularizing urban songs often written by immigrant Jews to a national audience of predominantly white Christians.”

Ella toured constantly during these years, and she and Granz did their part to help the burgeoning civil rights movement, fighting inequality and discrimination at every turn, bravely even in the Deep South. During the 1960s Ella continued to tour and record, also appearing in movies and being a regular guest on all of the most popular talk and variety TV shows. Throughout the 1970s, she kept touring all over the world, and became even more well-known through a series of high-profile ad campaigns. Anyone who grew up in the 1970s remembers Ella’s “Is it live or is it Memorex” commercials.



One of the lesser-known aspects of her life at the time was her charitable side. She was known as a very shy person who was protective of her privacy. As a way to help others avoid what she went through as a child, she gave frequent generous donations to all sorts of groups and organizations that helped underprivileged youth, and her official website even suggests that continuing to be able to do this was a major driving force behind the unrelenting touring schedule she continued to maintain. She cared for her sister Frances' family after Frances passed as well.

By the 1980s, she had acquired countless awards and honors, among them 13 Grammys including the Lifetime Achievement Award and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. But the endless touring schedule did begin to take its toll, and Ella began to experience serious diabetes-related health problems. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s she suffered a series of surgeries and hospital stays, and by 1996 she had tired of spending so much time in hospitals. She spent her last days enjoying being outdoors at her Beverly Hills home, sitting outside and simply being with her and Ray Brown's adopted son Ray, Jr. and her granddaughter Alice. Many sources report that during her last days she reportedly said, "I just want to smell the air, listen to the birds, and hear Alice laugh."

She died in her home on June 15, 1996 at the age of 79, and the tributes were instant, huge, and international. Befitting someone of her stature, who was at the pinnacle of the entertaining world for nearly half a century and left behind a legacy that will never diminish in its beauty and importance, her archival material and arrangements reside at the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian.

### **The Music:**

Ella Fitzgerald and Billy May collaborated on just one recording session: 1961's *Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Harold Arlen Songbook*. Featured was this laid back arrangement of the Arlen/Harburg standard Happiness Is a Thing Called Joe. The song was written as a vocal feature for Ethel Waters for the 1943 musical *Cabin in the Sky*.

### **Notes to the Conductor:**

Guitar and vibraphone start off the arrangement before the vocal enters at bar 5. Everyone in the ensemble - including the vocalist - needs to approach this chart with an easy and laid-back feel. There are a couple of 2-bar trumpet and vibraphone fills.

This arrangement has been prepared from Billy May's pencil score and the original parts used during the recording session - this is not a transcription.

### **Acknowledgments:**

Special thanks to the Ella Fitzgerald Estate for granting us permission to publish this arrangement.

**Doug DuBoff and Rob DuBoff**

- December 2017

ELLA FITZGERALD

BILLY MAY, ARR.

3-SAX

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"HAPPINESS IS A THING CALLED JOE"

TENOR (NO VIBR)

Musical notation for measures 1-4, including notes and fingerings (A, B, C, D).

Musical notation for measures 5-8.

Musical notation for measures 9-12.

Musical notation for measures 13-16.

Musical notation for measures 17-20.

Musical notation for measures 21-24.

Musical notation for measures 25-28.

Musical notation for measures 29-32.

Musical notation for measures 33-36.

Musical notation for measures 37-40.

Musical notation for measures 41-44.

Musical notation for measures 45-48.

Musical notation for measures 49-52.

Musical notation for measures 53-56.

Here is the original tenor sax I part for Billy May's arrangement of Happiness Is a Thing Called Joe, recorded by Ella Fitzgerald in 1961.



# HAPPINESS IS A THING CALLED JOE

RECORDED BY ELLA FITZGERALD

## SCORE

WORDS BY E.Y. HARBURG, MUSIC BY HAROLD ARLEN

ARRANGED BY BILLY MAY

PREPARED BY ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

SLOWLY ♩ = 70

The score is for a jazz ensemble and includes the following parts:

- Vocal:** Four measures of rests.
- Woodwind 1: Alto Sax:** Four measures of rests.
- Woodwind 2: Alto Sax:** Four measures of quarter notes (F4, G4, A4, B4) with dynamics *p* and *no vib.*
- Woodwind 3: Tenor Sax:** Four measures of quarter notes (F4, G4, A4, B4) with dynamics *p* and *no vib.*
- Woodwind 4: Tenor Sax:** Four measures of quarter notes (F4, G4, A4, B4) with dynamics *p* and *no vib.*
- Woodwind 5: Baritone Sax:** Four measures of quarter notes (F4, G4, A4, B4) with dynamics *p* and *no vib.*
- Trumpet:** Four measures of rests.
- Trombone:** Four measures of rests.
- Guitar:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns with dynamics *mp*.
- Piano:** Four measures of chords: F<sup>ma</sup>7, G<sup>mi</sup>7, A<sup>mi</sup>7, G<sup>mi</sup>7, F<sup>ma</sup>7, G<sup>mi</sup>7, A<sup>mi</sup>7, C7(♯9). Dynamics *p*.
- Acoustic Bass:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns with dynamics *p*.
- Vibraphone:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns with dynamics *mp*.
- Drum Set:** Four measures of a brush pattern with dynamics *p*.

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Vox. Skies ain't gon-na cloud no mo', the crops ain't gon-na fail. Caught a blue-bird by the toe, a rain-bow by the tail, a cer-tain man with eyes that shine, \_\_\_\_\_ voo-doo'd up this heart of mine. \_\_\_\_\_  
no vib.

Ww. 1 (A. Sx.) *p* *mp*

Ww. 2 (A. Sx.) *p* *mp*

Ww. 3 (T. Sx.) *p* *mp*

Ww. 4 (T. Sx.) *p* *mp*

Ww. 5 (B. Sx.) *p* *mp*

Tpt. *mp*

Tbn. *mp*

Gr. *p* *mp*

Pno. *p* *mp*

Bs. *p* *mp*

Vib. *mp*

D. S. (4) (8)