

Presents

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

YOU'RE THE TOP

AS RECORDED BY LOUIS ARMSTRONG

ARRANGED BY RUSS GARCIA

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

FULL SCORE

JLP-9932

WORDS AND MUSIC BY COLE PORTER

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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LOUIS ARMSTRONG SERIES

YOU'RE THE TOP (1957)

Louis Armstrong Biography:

It is safe to say that no musician has had a greater impact on American music from the 1920s on than Louis Armstrong. Be they instrumentalists or singers, every artist in fields ranging from jazz to blues to even rock and pop owe at least something to Armstrong's brilliance. His sound, phrasing and ability to turn even the most trite of material into transcendental masterpieces make him a truly legendary figure.

Like many legends, Armstrong's beginnings were highly unlikely. Having given himself the "all-American birth date" of July 4, 1900, baptismal records showed that Armstrong was actually born to a teenage mother and vagrant father on August 4, 1901 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Brought up in abject poverty, Armstrong dropped out of grade school to work various jobs to support his family, including singing in a barbershop quartet on street corners for tips. These odd jobs led Armstrong to develop a relationship with a local family of Lithuanian-Jewish immigrants, the Karnofskys, who took him in as a surrogate son and helped him raise the money to purchase his first cornet. The extent of Armstrong's formal musical education came during his time at the New Orleans Home for Colored Waifs, a boarding school for delinquent children that he spent time in and out of throughout his childhood. Upon being released from the Waifs' Home for good in 1914, he entered into a mentor-pupil relationship with the legendary cornetist Joseph "King" Oliver. Initially working as a musician on riverboats on the Mississippi River, Oliver would eventually convince Armstrong to move north to Chicago to join his Creole Jazz Band.

After being persuaded by his second wife, pianist Lil Hardin Armstrong, to break out from behind Oliver's shadow, Armstrong's career took its next major turn after he moved to New York in 1924 to join up with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra. His playing would have a tremendous impact on not just the individual members of Henderson's organization (such as tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins), but the band as a whole, as chief arranger Don Redman found ways to incorporate Armstrong's style and overall feel into his charts. Throughout the mid- to late-1920s, Armstrong led a series of recordings that would eventually become known as the Hot Fives and Hot Sevens. These recordings featured several musicians from New Orleans via Chicago, and are considered by many to be the first truly great jazz recordings. Most importantly, they mark the first real examples of jazz's shift away from an ensemble-oriented sound to being more focused on individual soloists.

With his celebrity expanding rapidly, the 1930s saw Armstrong fronting his own big band for the first time. He began to appear in various other forms of media, including film and radio; his brief stint substituting for crooner Rudy Vallee's popular program made him the first African-American to host a national radio broadcast. It was also during this time period that his singing started to gain equal billing with his trumpet playing, partially out of Armstrong's lifelong love of singing, but also partially due to a series of lip injuries that would force him to take time away from the trumpet altogether.

The 1940s would see Armstrong disband his big band in favor of a return to a smaller, more New Orleans-style combo after a highly successful 1947 concert at New York's Town Hall. This combo, known as the All-Stars, would become Armstrong's favored touring unit for the rest of his life. His manager, Joe Glaser, continued to find ways to expand Armstrong's career in a more pop-oriented direction during this time as well. His collaborations with other singers, most notably Ella Fitzgerald and Bing Crosby, would achieve a high level of popular success.

Although his popularity remained as high as ever, the affection showered on Armstrong by the jazz community would begin to wane in the 1950s. Due to changing cultural attitudes and the rise of the bebop movement, Armstrong's music would begin to be viewed by many as old-fashioned, even outdated. Worse, many young musicians viewed his enthusiastic and exuberant personality as being a throwback to the offensiveness of minstrelsy. Armstrong's more private actions would tell a different story, as he was actively involved in protesting the Little Rock Crisis of 1957 where Arkansas governor Orval Faubus refused to desegregate the public school system there. Armstrong's two final commercial successes would come in the 1960s. First, his 1964 release of the single *Hello, Dolly!* wound up unseating The Beatles from the top of the pop charts. This was a feat that was practically unimaginable for anybody at the time, let alone a 63-year-old jazz musician performing the title song of a Broadway musical. The second success would be 1968's *What a Wonderful World*, which was initially somewhat ignored before experiencing a surprise resurgence after being featured in the 1987 film *Good Morning Vietnam*.

The constant stresses of touring began to take a toll on Armstrong's health in his later years. Having suffered his first heart attack in 1959, he would be advised by his doctors to take breaks to recuperate on multiple occasions. Having none of that, Armstrong maintained a busy performing schedule, causing his heart condition to gradually worsen to the point where he was advised to stop playing the trumpet altogether. He would eventually suffer a heart attack and pass away in his sleep on July 6, 1971. His influence on the world of music as a whole, be it jazz or pop, as an instrumentalist or vocalist, cannot be understated, as his artistry continues to shine through to this day.



Russ Garcia Biography:

Russ Garcia was born in Oakland, CA in 1916. In his late teens he enrolled in San Francisco State University only to find that he was not learning as quickly or as much as he thought he would. He later found out that studying with Hollywood's best teachers would move him quicker down the path that he envisioned. He studied harmony, composition, orchestration, counterpoint, and compositional form. Realizing his intense interest in composing and arranging he decided it would be beneficial to take lessons on just about every instrument that he may some day need to write for. While in his early 20s he had the opportunity to regularly conduct a symphony orchestra in the Hollywood area. This too would give him real world experience in writing and conducting for large ensembles.

In 1939 the composer of the radio show *This is Our America* was sick and it was suggested that Garcia be hired as a substitute. The director of the show, actor and future president of the United States Ronald Reagan, loved Garcia's work and hired him full-time. Reagan's wife at the time, Jane Wyman, later reached out to NBC and recommended Garcia to fill a staff arranger/composer position. This new position led him to come in contact with many of the important musicians and band leaders of the time period. He later was recruited by Universal Studios where he went to work as composer, arranger, and conductor in the 1950s. That relationship lasted 15 years.

Some of Garcia's brightest moments include: Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald's *Porgy and Bess* (1957); Louis Armstrong big band and string sessions in 1957 released in 1960 as *I've Got the World on a String*; Julie London's albums *About the Blues* and *Make Love to Me* (1957); Anita O'Day *Sings the Winners* (1958); Mel Torme *Swingin' on the Moon*, and Stan Getz *Cool Velvet* (1960). He was in high demand as he was one of the few jazz composers that could successfully score for films and conduct classically oriented music.

In 1966 he gave up the Hollywood life and set out on his sailboat with his wife. They settled in New Zealand where he lived out the remainder of his life, passing away in 2011.

The Music:

Louis Armstrong recorded Cole Porter's *You're The Top* in 1957, although it would not see release until 1960 on the album *I've Got the World on a String*. Russ Garcia's arrangement serves as a simple but effective framework for Armstrong's iconic vocal stylings. Although not featuring any particularly challenging rhythms or fingerings, the arrangement is a bit on the rangey side at times.

Notes to the Conductor:

A quick introductory riff sets up Armstrong's entrance with the verse at measure 5. The melody proper comes in at measure 21, with Armstrong offering up a delightfully chipper version of the tune's cheeky lyrics with simple but effective backgrounds egging him on. The melody is repeated twice in total; the backgrounds are played muted the first time and open the second, but are otherwise identical. The introductory riff is used as both an interlude between choruses and as an ending, with Armstrong getting a two measure solo scat break before one final brass blast to wrap things up.

This arrangement is for male vocalist with brass section accompaniment. It is not a transcription - it has been prepared from Russ Garcia's original pencil score and the set of parts used during the recording session.

Acknowledgments:

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Dylan Canterbury and Rob DuBoff

January 2024

11

You're the Top

#14

Sax. I

Sax. II

Louis

Brass

Tpts

Trumpets

Violas

TBS

Bass

RH4

Drums

Piano

The image shows a handwritten musical score on aged paper. At the top, the title 'You're the Top' is written in cursive, with a circled '11' to its left and a boxed '#14' to its right. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The top two staves are for Saxophones I and II. Below them is a staff for a soloist, circled in blue and labeled 'Louis'. The next section consists of three staves for Brass, with a bracket on the left labeled 'Brass' and 'Tpts'. Below that are three staves for Trumpets, with a bracket on the left labeled 'Trumpets'. The next section has three staves for Violas, with a bracket on the left labeled 'Violas' and 'TBS'. Below that is a staff for Bass, with a circled 'RH4' written above it. The bottom two staves are for Drums and Piano. The music is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are some handwritten annotations and corrections throughout the score.

Here is the first page of Russ Garcia's pencil score for You're the Top, recorded by Louis Armstrong in 1957.

YOU'RE THE TOP

At words Po-et-ic I'm So Pa-thet-ic ~~THE~~ THAT I

Al-ways Found It Best - In-stead Of Get-ting 'Em Off My

Chest - To Let 'Em Rest Un-ex-pressed. I Hate ~~PARADING~~ MY PARADING

See-e-nad-ing As I'll Prob-a-bly Miss A Bae, But

If This Dit-ty Is Not so Pret-ty At Least ~~IT'LL~~ IT'LL Tell You How

Great You Are - You're The Top You're The

Co-los-se-um You're The Top You're The

^{LOUVRE} ~~LOUVRE~~ Mu-se-um You're A Mel-o-dy From A

HOLLYWOOD MUSIC & ARTISTS NO. 27483

31 Sym-phi-ny By Strauss, You're A ~~Bendel Bonnet~~ A ^{BENDEL BONNET}

34 Shake-speare Son-net, You're Micky Mouse You're The

38 ~~THE~~ Nile You're The ~~TOWER~~ ^{TOWER} Of Pi-sa You're The

42 Smile On The ~~MONA~~ ^{MONA} Lis-a I'm A

46 Worth-less Check A To-tal Wreck, - A Flop But ~~IF~~ IF

49 Baby I'm - The Bot-tom You're The Top!

52-54 ³ You're The Top You're Ma-

24 hat-ma Ghan-di You're The Top You're Na-

28 PO-leon-Bean-dy You're The Pur-ple Light Of A

31 Sum-mer night In Spain-You're The ~~National Gallery~~ ^{NATIONAL GALLERY}

HOLLYWOOD MUSIC & ARTISTS NO. 27483

This is the part that Louis Armstrong used for the recording session in 1957.

YOU'RE THE TOP

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SCORE

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MEDIUM SWING ♩ = 140

The score is for a jazz ensemble. It includes parts for Vocal, Trumpet 1, 2, and 3, Trombone 1, 2, 3, and 4, Guitar, Piano, Acoustic Bass, and Drum Set. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'MEDIUM SWING' with a quarter note equal to 140 beats per minute. The music is in 4/4 time. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure contains the vocal line and the instrumental accompaniment. The second measure contains the instrumental accompaniment. The third measure contains the instrumental accompaniment. The fourth measure contains the instrumental accompaniment. The vocal line is marked 'At' at the end of the first measure. The instrumental parts are marked with dynamics such as *mf* and *mp*. The guitar and piano parts include chord symbols: $E^{b9/9}$, $Fm7$, E^{b6}/G , $Fm7$, $E^{b9/9}$, and $E^{13}(^{#11})$. The drum set part is marked 'Brushes' in a red box.

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