

Detailed Notes for Just in Time

There many new aspects to Anne and my latest duo offering, amidst a few old friends. We start this odyssey with a tune I first learned during my stint with The Titan Hot Seven. Founder Louis Brown's book for that band had quite a few gems, including **Red Hot Mama** from 1924. Of course, I couldn't let my late friend get the best of me, so we found the verse and another set of lyrics as well! Composer Fred Rose created many wonderfully syncopated early jazz hits, and was rewarded with the likes of the Original Memphis Five, Cliff Edwards, Coon-Sanders Nighthawks and Sophie Tucker recording this and his other tunes. Ms. Tucker earned the title "the last of the red hot mamas" from her recording of this tune in 1924.

Our next tune marks Anne's vocal debut on recording so the tune title has a double meaning. Jules Styne's terrific swinger, **Just in Time** comes to us from the show Bells are Ringing of 1956. Sydney Chaplin (Charlie's son) and Judy Holliday sang it in the show, with poor Sydney being replaced by Dean Martin for the film. The songwriting team of Comden and Greene wrote the lyrics, which almost sing themselves. I join in (trying to sound more sober than Dean) on the reprise of the vocal refrain.

Blue Autumn is a gorgeous piece from 1980 written by clarinetist Mick Lewis, the founder of the Climax Jazz Band. Mick's an ex-pat from the UK and I am sure was influenced in his youth by Acker Bilk, if not in playing style, certainly when composing a sonorous ballad. More classical in nature than jazzy, the tune could easily fit into the German tradition of *Lieder*. Thus, our arrangement showcases what you might have heard had Franz Schubert and Acker Bilk met in a bar and collaborated. More importantly, it features the golden tone of Anne's flute and creates a greater audience for Mick's marvelous piece.

When you think of the blues, certain instruments come to mind: an old guitar, a sax, a beat-up piano in the corner...but the flute?? Not so much. That's why it took flautist Moe Koffman to write one, a swinger called the **Swingin' Shepherd Blues**. It became his biggest hit and is a lot of fun to play. It was on this piece that things started to click for Anne as she was learning improvising. This and many other tracks on the CD show how far she has come!!

The Granddad of all Tin Pan Alley rags and the first one to popularize the technique of setting a three-note melody against a duple "boom-chick" rhythm is the venerable (and venerated) **Dill Pickles** by Charles Johnson. Written in 1906 (not 1908 as our CD jacket implies; sorry for what I hope is our only gaffe) it was the second rag to sell a million copies; the first was Joplin's **Maple Leaf Rag**. I have a feeling more people played Johnson's rag than did Joplin's; it is much easier. Anne and I had some fun trading motifs back and forth, with an absurd moment where she takes the bass line away from me on the flute!! Daft that we are...

The Depression era gave us such amazing songs! Times were rough and tunesmiths knew it was their job—and would prove extremely profitable—to create melodies to lift the spirits of the downtrodden! The year 1933 was a bumper crop for such optimistic ditties, with **It's Only a Paper Moon** heading the parade. The celebrated Harold Arlen wrote the melody, and its simplicity made it one of his biggest hits. Two equally heralded lyricists, Billy Rose and E. Y. Harburg, penned the

happy, hopeful lyrics. Everyone recorded it, from Paul Whiteman to Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole, the Mills Brothers and Benny Goodman. We don't always perform songs that are, for lack of a better word, as ubiquitous as is this one. It was a fun, comfortable tune for Anne to explore singing and became the first song she performed in public, so it will part of her repertoire forever!!

We learned of the brooding and powerful tango **Oblivion** from our friend, Stanley Stern, from Los Osos, CA. Argentinian musician Ástor Pantaleón Piazzolla was a tango composer, *bandoneon* (a kind of concertina) player and arranger. He revolutionized the traditional tango into a new style termed *nuevo tango*, incorporating elements from jazz and classical music. His music has been featured in concert and film throughout the world. While there are many recordings of **Oblivion** performed on the *bandoneon* and the concertina I had yet to find one featuring the flute. Once we played the piece, it really stuck with us. We hope it will with you, too!

After the somber tone of the previous piece, I begin my solo, **Viper's Drag** the way Fats Waller recorded it in 1934 with a mock serious, sinister, strutting minor theme. Since I was not limited to the 3-minute length of Fats' original rendition, I extended the 1st section to create more tension before the release into the quicker, stride section. I have some fun improvising on that prior to visiting the famous "riff" chorus and return once again to the lurching, minor theme to close. In the 1930's, the term "viper" referred to anyone who was fond in indulging in marijuana. Perhaps the piece is programmatic, with the first theme depicting someone before taking a hit and the second theme suggesting someone "riding high." Of course, the situation for each section may be reversed as well!!

Our next tune was a surprise for me. Our friend, Dr. Craig Wright, is a real student of the music of the 1st three decades of the 20th century, and it was he who provided the sheet for **I Got Love**. Rather than collaborating with his usual lyricist, Andy Razaf, Fats wrote this tune, and the better-known **A Cottage in the Rain**, with Spencer Williams. At the time, Fats and his wife, Anita, were visiting Williams in the UK at his home in Sunbury-on-Thames (Spencer had moved over to France to write for Josephine Baker's new show, *Revue Negre*, in 1926 and returned to France with Fats in tow in 1931; by 1938 Williams was happily ensconced in his home in England). The song is a lovely bit of fluff with a very simple melody from Waller and naively joyous words from Williams. Anne and I enjoy performing these kind of happy, carefree tunes (replete with some Wallerian phrases in the bridge, such as "she's bella, she's buxom," and "she's worthy, she's *wealthy*—incidentally, Anne is at least two of these). If a tune is "worthy," so much better if it's rare: we understand fully such a philosophy won't make us "wealthy," but, hey, we got love!!

Won't You Play a Simple Melody takes us to the Irving Berlin songbook—a very nice place to be! Even in 1914, tensions between generations were growing concerning new popular music styles; the older generation still desired the genteel (some would say maudlin) tunes of the Victorian Era, while the later generation was hot on ragtime and anything syncopated (including, though it wasn't being referred to by the name yet, jazz!). This song came into our repertoire by a circuitous route. We were performing in Switzerland with some CA friends and our friend Martin Jaeger and he included **Simple Melody** for his students to sing during a concert. I'd

not thought of the tune in decades, but hearing them perform it brought back to me how much fun it is. It's now one of Anne's and my favorite tunes to perform. It initially appeared in Berlin's first full score, a "syncopated musical" entitled "Watch Your Step." His was the earliest musical to offer popular, contemporary rhythms, breaking out of the more serious "light operetta" style then dominating Broadway. It was the longest running show for which he wrote music up to that time, made stars of the dancing team Vernon and Irene Castle, and the success of "Watch Your Step" enabled Berlin to break from the publishing company Waterson, Berlin & Snyder Co., for which he had been providing all the profits, to start Irving Berlin, Inc.

As a complete musical contrast, yet answering in the affirmative to the question postulated in the previous selection, we offer the beautiful ***What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?***. No embellishments here; Anne caresses the melody while I provide a quiet, flowing accompaniment. When it comes to matters of the heart, simpler is always better.

We continue with a tune I've always associated with the West Coast Traditional Jazz sound, perhaps because I first heard groups like the South Frisco Jazz Band perform it. It's a great number and about the oddest thing you could imagine on which to include a flute, but Anne got hot and it works! ***San Francisco Bay Blues*** was composed by Jesse Fuller, a one-man-band musician who busked on the streets of San Francisco in the 50's. He played a few clubs and dives and was finally recorded by the Good Time Jazz label in 1958. We are in good company covering this most famous of Fuller's tunes: it has been recorded and performed by countless other musicians, including Janis Joplin and Eric Clapton!

The repertoire of Ivory&Gold® always includes rare, contemporary compositions written in an older style. We are honored to present a haunting waltz by ragtime composer and critic Jack Rummel. Shortly after finishing his composition, he included it in a performance and informed the audience that he had yet to name the piece but wished to present it to them. After the concert, an elderly woman approached Jack. She epitomized the hard-working farmwife who one could only guess had raised 10 or 11 children and kept the family together through feast and famine. She said, "Excuse me, Mr. Rummel, but I believe I might have a name for that lovely waltz you played." With a wry smile, Jack replied, "What would that be, ma'am?" She looked him in the eye and intoned: "***When the Work is Done, I'll Dance.***" Jack was very moved by this title and must have had this woman in mind when he made the dedication: "A Waltz for the Women of the West" underneath the title. It has quickly become an audience favorite and is certainly one of ours!

Good Gravy Rag is a really hot ragtime romp from 1913. The melodies are sweeping, the chord sequences exhilarating and the D section features a thunderous climax! This folk rag certainly lives up to its subtitle: "A Musical Relish." Composer Harry Belding featured it regularly in his vaudeville act.

Midnight, the Stars and You is a great 1934 ballad (when ballads still had that special little lilt, eschewing lugubriousness) written by two Brits and an American, and became well known in the 30's in England and Europe, primarily for the iconic recording made by Ray Noble and his Orchestra, featuring singer Al Bowlly. Only two other recordings of the tune were made that year, one each by Roy Fox and Hal Kemp, and the song pretty much disappeared. THEN, in 1980, it was

featured in the 1980 horror film *The Shining* and ensuing generations would forever associate this innocent tune with the sinister closing credits. I'd frankly forgotten it for decades and then we heard it during a UK tour when a young lady I was accompanying included it in her program. I instantly fell in love (with the tune, of course) and Anne and I started including it in our shows to great acclaim.

In 1910, ***Some of These Days*** rocketed vaudevillian performer Sophie Tucker to super-stardom. She would use it as her theme song for the rest of her career. Her best-selling record was a 1927 version of the by-then antique song backed by Ted Lewis's Band. Every hot band plays this timeless tune, every hot singer belts it out. Some audience members are a bit shocked when my petite wife takes the vocal on so successfully. I just hang on and play as hot as I can to keep up! It doesn't help that she prefers the key of Db for this number!!

In the past, I've felt inundated by our final selection. Seems like everyone and his dog was doing this one and in so many ways, from hobbling it with a lackluster Armstrong imitation to hamstringing it with a lung-busting display of over-emotion. Our old friend Tom Hook brought me back to the beauty of this song, and so, although I vowed never to do it, I'm actually proud that we finish our recording with ***What a Wonderful World***. Louis Armstrong recorded it in 1967, the year it was written and got a good shot-in-the-arm for his career (the 2nd best after his huge megahit with ***Hello Dolly***). The popularity of the tune mushroomed after its inclusion in Robin William's 1988 film, *Good Morning, Vietnam*. Anne and I chose to take the tune in a quiet, reverent direction, as befitting our sincere awe at how amazing this world is and how lucky we feel to have the opportunity to share our lives with each other and our music with you.

Jeff Barnhart
Mystic, CT, October 1, 2014