**Standard Delivery** Notes About the Music

Up a Lazy River: One of the oldest pieces in our book dating from around 1993 and written to showcase all the musicians in the band. This arrangement of the Hoagy Carmichael chestnut does feature at least 2 bars from everybody in the band starting with yours truly opening on piano. After stating the song Lee Thornberg takes the first trumpet solo followed by tenor player Dean Roubicek this time on clarinet. Ken Tussing gets a piece on trombone, Mark Rowland on alto, Danny Bryan on trumpet and Dave Victorino on his baritone sax. The ensemble plays a bit and leaves room for a bass break by Billy Brockmann. The ensemble continues with some of Frank Wilson’s drums fills. After the last time through Bob Schuster plays a coda solo with his guitar.

Hey, Good Lookin’: The story goes that after Tony Bennett recorded Hank Williams’ “Cold, Cold Heart” he had a chance to meet the great country singer/songwriter who greeted him with, “Why’d you ruin my song, son?” I wonder what Hank Williams would think of this arrangement complete with breakneck tempo and scat singing. Dean Roubicek does a call and response with the band followed by Jeff Kaye’s ever melodic trumpet and Dave Victorino’s obble-gobble (obligato) baritone in the last bridge.

How About You?: This is an idea I stole from Bobby Darin. I re-wrote the lyrics for the second time through. In it I pay tribute to the city of my birth and my adopted home as well as my favorite pop group. I also give a nod to four of the loveliest ladies on the planet. Mark Rowland plays the tenor solo and Jeff Kaye is featured on trumpet.

Come Rain or Come Shine: When I booked the studio time for this session our regular trombone player, Ken Tussing was out of town on a gig. Fortunately superb trombonist and videographer, (he shot our “Bright Red Lipstick” video) Paul Nowell, was available and plays a beautiful solo here. Merv Griffin used to request us to play this chart at his Coconut Club in Beverly Hills.

If I Had You: I’ve loved this song ever since I heard Hank Jones play it as a piano solo on a live radio broadcast. It’s the oldest song in the collection having been penned in 1928. Jeff Kaye plays another beautifully melodic solo.

L.O.V.E.: This one features Ken Tussing on the t-bone doing a call and response with the ensemble. I love Nat Cole (who doesn’t) and wanted to include at least one of his famous numbers in this collection. I’ve been doing the song with small groups for years and enjoyed realizing it for a larger band.

What a Wonderful World: One of Louis Armstrong’s signature songs gets a gentle ballad treatment here with John Stephen’s flute obble-gobble and Mark Rowland’s clarinet. Corey Gemme utilizes his beautiful tone and love for Pops on a gorgeous trumpet solo. My late wife, Arlette, loved this arrangement.

On a Slow Boat to China: I always thought this to be a swinging song and I arranged it with nautical sounds (Dave Victorino’s foghorn baritone sax) and Chinese effects. Mark Rowland wails on his soprano sax starting with a popular Chinese melody (Green Island Serenade) and taking off from there.

Why Not?: A few years ago I was talking with my erstwhile teacher and great composer/arranger Neal Hefti and I told him I was doing “Why Not:” with the Ensemble. He surprised me by saying that was always the favorite song he wrote for Basie. Surprising when you think of all the great (and more popular) numbers he wrote for the Basie band. We take it at the original 1951 tempo. I open with my best Basie impersonation, Lee Thornberg plays a beautifully melodic solo reminiscent of Joe Neumann while Dean Roubicek takes off with solid “Lockjaw” intensity. Frank Wilson always has a ball playing this number.

I Only Have Eyes For You: This 1934 Harry Warren/Al Dubin song is usually thought of for the doo-wop version by the Flamingos (which I detest!). We give it a more appropriate swinging version with an uncharacteristically laid back tenor solo from Dean Roubicek. Welcome to the lounge.

Knock Me a Kiss: We did this Louis Jordan song at our very first engagement in 1992. It’s number 5 in the book! Features solos by Lee Thornberg on muted trumpet, Dave Victorino on baritone, Dean Roubicek on tenor, Danny Bryan on open trumpet and Bob Shuster on guitar.

You Don’t Know Me: This love-never-found torch song was written by country singer Eddie Arnold along with Cindy Williams and made very famous by Ray Charles. It’s a great song with a great story that relates to almost all of us and I enjoy getting into the character.

Beyond the Sea: This was originally a French song “La Mer” and was, of course, made popular by Bobby Darin. The Darin version had short drum solos played by great drummer Don Lamond. (So now you know). In tribute to Darin’s version this arrangement also features drum breaks which Frank Wilson handles magnificently.

On the Sunny Side of the Street: Here’s another favorite of mine; a song with enough swing and humor to allow me to stretch the concept a bit. My good friend and outstanding musician Ken Tussing plays a terrific solo on t-bone, while another longtime friend, Bob Schuster, jumps in on the guitar.

Misty: There’s a reason Errol Garner’s and Johnny Burke’s “Misty” is played at every wedding reception and every night club performance every night of every week. It’s one of the most demonstrably heartfelt statements of romantic love ever penned. We decided to do something different so the thematic yet free-form intro starts out with Ken Tussing on something called a Flugelbone. Mark Rowland and Dave Victorino are on flutes; Dean Roubicek is on clarinet and Lee Thornberg and Danny Bryan are on Flugelhorns, Bob Schuster is on acoustic guitar and Billy Brockmann is handling his bow. When we get to the body of the song they all switch to their regular instruments and I get to play my only other piano solo. This lovely song never gets old.

All of You: Here’s a Cole Porter song we do at a brisk tempo. Dean Roubicek wails again on this. It’s a message I want to deliver to our fans and to all people who appreciate and love to listen to and/or dance to this kind of musical entertainment. We love All of You.

Eric Ekstrand 2015