As Recorded by Gordon Goodwin’s Big Phat Band

On Green Dolphin Street

Inspired by and Dedicated to Oscar Peterson

Music by BRONISLAU KAPER
Lyrics by NED WASHINGTON
Arranged by GORDON GOODWIN

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor
Solo C Instrument
Solo E♭ Alto Saxophone
Solo B♭ Tenor Saxophone
Solo B♭ Trumpet
Solo Trombone
Solo Piano
1st E♭ Alto Saxophone (Soprano Sax)
2nd E♭ Alto Saxophone (Flute)
1st B♭ Tenor Saxophone
2nd B♭ Tenor Saxophone
E♭ Baritone Saxophone
1st B♭ Trumpet
2nd B♭ Trumpet
3rd B♭ Trumpet
4th B♭ Trumpet
1st Trombone
2nd Trombone
3rd Trombone
Bass Trombone
Guitar Chords
Guitar
Piano
Bass
Drums
Auxiliary Percussion
(Triangle, Vibes, Congas, Xylophone)
NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

“On Green Dolphin Street” has been a jazz standard for so long that many people don’t realize that it was originally written by Bronislaw Kaper for a film of the same name, starring Lana Turner. Kaper was a prodigious film composer, who did nearly 150 films, but perhaps his greatest gift to us was this great song, which has been recorded by a multitude of jazz artists.

There was one recording that recently caught my attention, by the legendary pianist Oscar Peterson. This performance was not one that a lot of people got to hear, since it was taken not from a record, but from a short-lived television show Oscar hosted in Canada. In each show, OP would play a few tunes with his trio (consisting of Ray Brown on bass and Ed Thigpen on drums). The solo that Oscar played that day is the inspiration behind this arrangement. I transcribed it and wrote the arrangement for the Big Phat Band so that it would interact with the solo. My desire was to create a collaboration of sorts with that great genius—a dialogue between the soloist and the band playing behind him. You can hear the Big Phat Band’s version of “On Green Dolphin Street” (featuring me on piano and Bob Summers on trumpet) on Telarc International.

When it comes to the solo part to this arrangement, I learned the hard way that what is easy for Oscar Peterson is not all that easy for the rest of us! I did my level best on our recording, but ended up deciding to use OP’s solo as a launching pad, meaning I played some of OP’s licks, but not all of them, and our recording became a hybrid of OP, GG, and the BPB (sorry for all the acronyms).

When it came to the chart you hold in your hands, I decided there was no reason to limit the solo part to pianists. So I have prepared solo charts for various instruments. The Oscar licks are notated on these parts, with some adjustments for range and (relative) playability. I would urge your soloist to use this written part as a starting place to find their own voice for this chart. This means that maybe you don’t have to play all those written licks—maybe you’d prefer to improvise your own solo throughout. In that case, the various Oscar-derived phrases that the band plays will act as background parts. But I would also urge you to not give up too quickly on learning these licks. If you can put in the requisite time to get OP’s licks under your fingers, then you will have the best of both worlds and will make the most of this chart, bringing the excitement and passion of Oscar Peterson to your audience.

When I was preparing to record this piece, I looked upon it as if I was learning a concerto, like a classical piece I had to play. It was a task that required all my discipline as a musician combined with my point of view as an improviser, and of course, my skill set as an arranger. Maybe the combination of all these factors is why I am very proud of this chart and our recording of it.

In any event, if you are soloing on this tune, be unafraid and keep Oscar close to your heart as you go. I promise you will grow as a musician from the experience.

If you are a member of the band that is backing up the soloist, you have your work cut out for you as well. There are numerous OP-like phrases in the arrangement—licks that require accuracy, tightness, and teamwork. Above all, keep things swinging! And I’d recommend you spend some time deciding on the proper tempo for your band. Even though the Big Phat Band version is pretty fast (around 262 bpm), this chart should work fine at a slower tempo and I would much rather hear a band playing with a good sense of groove and togetherness at a slower tempo, than a band racing sloppily through a chart at a fast tempo.

Oscar Peterson has been a hero of mine since the first time I heard him. Back when I was on the road conducting and playing piano for singer Johnny Mathis, Oscar came to one of our gigs. I can still remember the terror I felt at having to play the piano in front of my idol, and OP had that effect on much more accomplished pianists than myself! But it is my hope that you enjoy the challenge of this arrangement, and that it inspires you to go back and check out the work of one of the all-time great artists in musical history, the extraordinary Oscar Peterson.

—Gordon Goodwin

Gordon Goodwin

Gordon Goodwin started composed at the age of three. No masterpieces at that time, but he kept at it and wrote his first big band chart at age 13. It was good enough to convince him that he could possibly keep doing this. Flash cut 20 years later and Gordon is working in Hollywood, writing for television and film, playing sessions on keyboards and woodwinds, and working with artists like Ray Charles, Christina Aguilera, Johnny Mathis, Toni Braxton, John Williams, Natalie Cole, David Foster, Sarah Vaughan, Mel Torme, Brian McKnight and Quincy Jones, to name a few. Goodwin’s cinematic scoring and orchestration craft can be heard on such films as The Sorcerer’s Apprentice, Escape To Witch Mountain, Get Smart, Glory Road, National Treasure, The Incredibles, Remember the Titans, Armageddon, The Majestic, Con Air, Gone In 60 Seconds, Enemy Of The State, Star Trek Nemesis and even the classic cult film Attack Of The Killer Tomatoes.

In 2000, Goodwin formed The Big Phat Band, an eighteen piece jazz ensemble, which quickly gained a reputation as one of the most exciting large jazz ensembles on the planet. To date, the BPB has released five records, Swingin’ For The Fences (2000), XDL (2003), The Phat Pack (2006), Act Your Age (2008) and That’s How We Roll (2011). The albums have featured state-of-the-art guest artists like Arturo Sandoval, Eddie Daniels, Take 6, Brian McKnight, Johnny Mathis, Michael Brecker, Dianne Reeves, David Sanborn, Chick Corea, Dave Grusin, Lee Ritenour, Patti Austin, Art Tatum, Dave Koz, Gerald Albright and Marcus Miller.

Goodwin’s work has garnered him three Emmy Awards and eleven Grammy® nominations, with a win for his work on the Pixar film The Incredibles. His charts are played all over the world, and along with his method books and CDs, have been a robust source of inspiration and learning for thousands of young musicians.
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