

## *Educational Outreach*

The U.S. Army Field Band is strongly committed to education and the arts, supporting the National Standards for Arts Education through an extensive outreach program that ranges from preschool to post-graduate. Each year, the Musical Ambassadors of the Army present more than 650 educational activities throughout the country, reaching over 100,000 students annually.

Educational programs include presentations for elementary students, instrumental and vocal clinics, chamber music recitals, and college master classes. On evening concerts, outstanding students from local schools are often invited to perform with the Musical Ambassadors.

The United States Army Field Band has produced a series of instructional videos, educational reference recordings on compact disc, and online resources. These are available for distribution to music educators nationwide. Visit the Education tab of our webpage for information on these and all our educational programs.

Inquiries concerning the Field Band's outreach programs should be addressed to:

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## *The Legacy of* **BENNY CARTER**

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### *About This Recording*

The Jazz Ambassadors of The United States Army Field Band presents the fourth in a series of recordings honoring the lives and music of individuals who have made significant contributions to jazz.

Designed primarily as educational resources, these recordings are thoroughly researched to present standard performance practices and to reflect the original intent of the composers. The biographical information, program notes, and historical photographs are included to provide music educators and their students with valuable insight into the compositions and arrangements. Disc Two of this set is an Enhanced CD and contains seven arrangements as PDFs to print out and play.

As a multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger, and film scorer, Benny Carter affected the world of jazz for decades. Universally respected by his peers but unknown to many Americans, Carter and his music continue to influence jazz today, nearly eighty years since his first recording session. The Jazz Ambassadors is proud to present a small portion of Carter's musical legacy to the American public.

This album was recorded in November 2003 and March 2004.

# *A King Is Born*

*Duke Ellington once told me that years ago when musicians had an argument about a musical point they would look for Benny Carter. “Benny would be,” as Duke recalled, “standing on the corner and would always settle the matter.”*

—Norman Granz<sup>1</sup>

Bennett Lester Carter was born in New York City on August 8, 1907. Carter grew up in a rough neighborhood known as San Juan Hill, but managed to avoid most of the trouble associated with that part of the city. His fascination with music began with piano lessons he received from his mother and continued to grow through watching his cousin, trumpeter Theodore “Cuban” Bennett. Bennett was an admired trumpet player in New York, inspiring such players as Dicky Wells, Roy Eldridge, and Rex Stewart. At the age of thirteen, with money earned from after-school jobs, Carter bought a cornet from a pawnshop. After discovering he could not master it over one weekend, he returned the cornet for a C ‘melody’ saxophone.

In his later teens, Carter developed an all-consuming interest in jazz, influenced by the many neighborhood friends and acquaintances who were current or up-and-coming jazz musicians. The great Bubber Miley lived in San Juan Hill as well, and the young Carter used to carry Miley’s trumpet to the subway for him. When Carter turned sixteen his family moved to Harlem, allowing Carter to immerse himself even more in the Harlem jazz scene. Carter found his earliest and biggest inspiration in the light sound and fleet fingers of saxophone player Frankie Trumbauer, who Carter considered to be his greatest influence as a reed player.



Portrait in London, 1936

www.bennycarter.com

Photo by Ed Berger



# *Credits*

**Executive Producer:** CW4 Kevin Laird  
**Producer:** SFC Kevin Watt  
**Recording/Mix Engineers:** MSG Chris Dodrill, SFC Kevin Watt  
**Mastering Engineer:** Mr. Bill Wolf (Wolf Mastering)  
**Liner Notes:** SSG Andrew Layton  
**Editorial Staff:** MSG Janet Hjelmgren, SFC Sarah Anderson, SFC Mark Regensburger, SSG Jennifer Gabrysh, SSG Natalie Klima, SSG Erica Russo  
**Graphic Design & Layout:** MSG Cathy Miller  
**Photos:** Mr. Ed Berger, SFC Jeff Adams, [www.bennycarter.com](http://www.bennycarter.com)

Recorded 2003–2004 at Devers Hall, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland • Phil Woods recorded at Red Rock Studios, Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania

## **Special Thanks:**

Bee Cee Music • Diplomat Music • Mr. Ed Berger  
Mrs. Hilma Carter • Phil Woods • Kevin Mahogany • James Riggs • Vaughn Roberts • The U.S. Army Strings:  
SGM Manny Bobenrieth, leader; *Violins:* MSG Leslye Gartrell, SFC Daniel Adams, SFC Janette Wilkinson,  
SFC Laura Knutson (concertmaster), SSG Krista Smith, SSG Marlisa Woody, SSG Erin Sammon, SSG Emily Randle; *Cellos:*  
MSG Charlotte Roberts, SFC John Gockel, SSG Sam Swift

## *Jazz Ambassadors Personnel*

Jazz Ambassadors Director	Chief Warrant Officer Kevin Laird
Alto Saxophones	Master Sergeant Darryl Brenzel Staff Sergeant Andrew Layton
Tenor Saxophones	Sergeant Major Pat Dillon Staff Sergeant Pat Shook
Baritone Saxophone	Sergeant Major Eugene Thorne
Trumpets	Sergeant First Class Michael Johnston Sergeant First Class Kevin Watt Sergeant First Class Jack Wengrosky Staff Sergeant Paul Armstrong Staff Sergeant Paul Stephens
Trombones	Master Sergeant Mike Buckley Sergeant First Class Jeff Adams Sergeant First Class Christopher Buckholz Staff Sergeant Major Bailey
Piano	Sergeant First Class Tim Young
Guitar	Master Sergeant Steve Cospier
Bass	Sergeant First Class Jeff Lopez
Drums & Percussion	Sergeant First Class Todd Harrison
Vocalist	Sergeant First Class Marva Lewis
Harp	Staff Sergeant Melissa Dunne

Carter's rise to the top of the jazz world came quickly. Through diligent practicing, he won professional employment in Harlem by the time he was seventeen. Legendary pianist Willie "The Lion" Smith encouraged the young Carter to switch horns from the C 'melody' to the more widely used alto saxophone. As an alto player, Carter would eventually perform with McKinney's Cotton Pickers, Chick Webb, and the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra. After a short time performing with Henderson and, for a brief period, none other than Duke Ellington, Carter established himself as a great jazz musician. In a 2002 interview, Carter stated, "In all honesty, I think I just played what I felt was right for me. And I think I would have done the same thing, even if I'd been born later, when Charlie Parker was influencing everybody. The truth is, I never gave it much thought. I just played what I had to play."<sup>2</sup>

## *The Arranging Years*

*Benny Carter had a way of voicing the chords through the saxophone section, that no other musician had. I bought as many of Benny Carter's records that I could. Later, when I really started to write arrangements, I wrote with a very strong Benny Carter influence.*

—Stan Kenton<sup>3</sup>

Jazz arranging as a professional craft began in the 1920s, and it seemed only natural for Carter to include this among his skills. He taught himself to arrange by studying stock charts by prominent arrangers, including Paul Whiteman's arranger, Bill Challis. By laying out all of the parts for the arrangement on the floor, Carter studied the interrelationships between the various instruments. It took him almost a year to create his first arrangement. Carter then started auditioning arrangements for the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, eventually replacing Don Redman, and soon became one of the top arrangers of the day.

Carter was one of the first to score winds or reeds in juxtaposition with brass instruments. He foreshadowed the swing era in having only the saxophones play with brass accompaniment, brass with only saxophone accompaniment, or saxophones with only rhythm section accompaniment. Among his other innovations, Carter also introduced flutes to jazz and reinvented the concept of saxophone orchestration. His block-chord voicing for the section often sounded like an ordinary sax solo harmonized in three or four parts, and soon became characteristic of his style. Jazz historian and composer Gunther Schuller has noted Carter's emphasis on clarity of melody and structural balance, as demonstrated in so many of his compositions.<sup>4</sup>

## The Soloist

*Everyone should listen to Benny Carter.  
He's a whole musical education.*

—Miles Davis<sup>5</sup>

During the 1920s, jazz music's first great soloists appeared on the scene. Trumpeter Louis Armstrong won the most frequent and consistent raves, but major saxophonists soon found the spotlight, including Coleman Hawkins, Johnny Hodges, and Benny Carter. Carter and Hodges would become the two most idolized saxophone players of the pre-Charlie Parker era. The ever-changing nature of jazz, as it transformed into swing, big band, small group bebop, hard bop, and free music, led to frequent imitation of Carter's unmistakable style. His big sound, amazing technique, and gorgeous vibrato were emulated by many players of



*Benny's spot at a recording session*

Photo by Ed Berger

7. **Souvenir (8:07)**..... Benny Carter, arr. MSG Eric Richards†  
*(Bee Cee Music • Print parts from Disc 2)*  
*SFC Tim Young, piano*
8. **Only Trust Your Heart (3:23)** ..... Sammy Cahn and Benny Carter  
arr. SGM Eugene Thorne\* *(Bee Cee Music)*  
*SFC Marva Lewis, vocal; SFC Jeff Adams, trombone*
9. **Come On Back (3:52)** ..... Benny Carter, arr. SFC Jeff Lopez\*  
*(Bee Cee Music • Print parts from Disc 2)*  
*MSG Steve Cospser, guitar; SFC Kevin Watt, trumpet*
10. **Blue Star (6:20)** ..... Benny Carter, arr. SGM Eugene Thorne\*  
*(Bee Cee Music • Print parts from Disc 2)*  
*SSG Andrew Layton, alto saxophone*
11. **I'm in the Mood for Swing (3:06)**.... Benny Carter, arr. Dave Wolpe† *(Warner Brothers)*  
This arrangement commissioned by The United States Army Field Band  
*MSG Darryl Brenzel, alto saxophone; SFC Tim Young, piano; SFC Kevin Watt, trumpet*
12. **All That Jazz (3:30)** ..... Al Stillman and Benny Carter, arr. MSG Darryl Brenzel\*  
*(Diplomat • Print parts from Disc 2)*  
*SFC Marva Lewis, vocal; SFC Christopher Buckbolz, trombone*

SGM—Sergeant Major

MSG—Master Sergeant

SFC—Sergeant First Class

SSG—Staff Sergeant

\* Staff arranger for The United States Army Field Band

† Former staff arranger for The United States Army Field Band

## Disc Two

1. **A Walkin' Thing** (5:59) ..... Benny Carter, arr. MSG Vince Norman\*  
*(Bee Cee Music • Print parts from disc 2)*  
*SSG Pat Shook, tenor saxophone; MSG Steve Cosper, guitar*  
*SFC Jeff Adams, trombone; SFC Tim Young, piano*
2. **Summer Serenade** (4:36) ..... Benny Carter, arr. John Clayton  
*(Bee Cee Music • Print parts from Disc 2)*  
This arrangement commissioned by The United States Army Field Band  
*SFC Kevin Watt, flugelborn*
3. **When Lights are Low** (5:06) .... Benny Carter, arr. MSG Darryl Brenzel\* *(Hal Leonard)*  
*SSG Pat Shook, tenor saxophone; SFC Kevin Watt, trumpet*
4. **Key Largo** (8:06) ..... Benny Carter, arr. Michael Abene *(Bee Cee Music)*  
This arrangement commissioned by The United States Army Field Band  
*SFC Kevin Watt, trumpet; SFC Christopher Buckholz, trombone*
5. **Easy Money** (4:00) ..... Benny Carter, arr. Mike Sweeney *(Hal Leonard)*  
*SFC Michael Johnston, trumpet; SFC Christopher Buckholz, trombone*  
*SFC Tim Young, piano*
6. **How Can You Lose?** (8:47) ..... Benny Carter, arr. Chuck Owen *(Walrus Music)*  
This arrangement commissioned by The United States Army Field Band  
*SGM Eugene Thorne, baritone saxophone*  
*SFC Michael Johnston, trumpet; SFC Jeff Adams, trombone*

the day and by others nearly twenty years later when stylization had become the norm. Julian “Cannonball” Adderly and Phil Woods both considered Carter a huge influence on their playing. Carter’s recordings during this time helped to solidify his stature as one of the seminal alto saxophone players of his era.

Carter shared his lightning-fast technique on the saxophone with an interest in the clarinet. Early recordings reveal a full yet edgy sound, matched with the rhythmic integrity and balance of his jazz writing.

With the decision to return to the trumpet, Carter stood out as one of the most versatile players the music world has ever seen. He worked alongside the highly regarded trumpeter Doc Cheatham in McKinney’s Cotton Pickers Orchestra and received plenty of help in developing his skills. Within a short period of time, Carter’s trumpet solos rivaled those he played on saxophone for lyricism and melodic shape, and earned him the respect of his peers for this ability to seamlessly switch between instruments.

## *The Big Band Years*

*I think that Benny Carter played [trumpet] about as well as any trumpet player that you can name.*

—Doc Cheatham<sup>6</sup>

After finding success with the Fletcher Henderson and Chick Webb orchestras, then taking the reins of the Wilberforce Collegians and McKinney’s Cotton Pickers, Carter formed his first big band in 1932. His bands were often noted for their crisp, clean, swinging style, yet Carter’s big bands never earned lasting popular support. While his groups contained such swing-era legends as Doc Cheatham, Russell Procope, Teddy Wilson, Chu Berry, and J. C. Higginbotham, some critics felt that Carter’s lack of gimmicks and showmanship

inhibited wide appeal for his bands. Others have noted that Carter's sounds may have become lost in a sea of imitators.

His renewed exploration of trumpet playing seemed to be an opportunity for Carter to make a name for himself as a trumpeter-frontman.

However, he found himself overshadowed by larger-than-life frontmen like Louis Armstrong. Without the earning potential of more popular bands, Carter's group saw frequent turnover as the musicians left to secure consistent income elsewhere, which affected the development of a distinctive sound in the long run.

Following years of leading his own bands, working as a freelance artist, and arranging for other bands, in 1935 Carter received an offer to join the Willie Lewis Orchestra in Paris. He jumped at the chance.

## *The European Years*

*He [Benny] is all that every jazz musician the world over wants to be.*

—Wynton Marsalis<sup>7</sup>

Carter saw this invitation to Europe as a way to explore new audiences and playing opportunities for an indefinite amount of time, as well as a needed respite from difficulties in his



*At the Savoy, 1939*

www.bennycarter.com

8. **The Lady's in Love with You** (2:15) .....Burton Lane and Frank Loesser (*Unpublished*)  
arr. Benny Carter, trans. MSG Vince Norman\*  
*SFC Marva Lewis, vocalist*
  9. **Prohibido** (3:20) .....Benny Carter, trans. MSG Eric Richards† (*Bee Cee Music*)  
*MSG Steve Cospser, guitar; SGM Pat Dillon, tenor saxophone*
  10. **Doozy** (4:58) .....Benny Carter, trans. SGM Eugene Thorne\*  
*(Bee Cee Music • Print parts from Disc 2)*  
*SFG Pat Shook, tenor saxophone; MSG Darryl Brenzel, alto saxophone*  
*SGM Pat Dillon, tenor saxophone; SGM Eugene Thorne, baritone saxophone*  
*SFG Andrew Layton, alto saxophone*
  11. **Blue Mountain** (2:43) .....A. Newman, arr. Benny Carter, trans. Jim Perry (*Warner Brothers*)  
*SFG Andrew Layton, alto saxophone*
- Peaceful Warrior Suite** ..... Benny Carter (*Unpublished*)
12. **The Blessing** (4:52)  
*SFC Michael Johnston, trumpet; Phil Woods, alto saxophone*
  13. **Peaceful Warrior** (4:30)  
*Kevin Mabogany, vocalist*
  14. **Song for Coretta** (5:02)  
*MSG Steve Cospser, guitar; SFC Tim Young, piano*
  15. **The Journey** (4:15)  
*SFC Marva Lewis, vocalist; Phil Woods, alto saxophone*
  16. **Brothers Under the Skin** (3:30)  
*Kevin Mabogany, vocalist; SFC Marva Lewis vocalist; Phil Woods, alto saxophone*

# *The Legacy of Benny Carter*

## Disc One

1. **Jump Call** (3:57) ..... Benny Carter (*Bee Cee Music*)  
*SSG Paul Armstrong, trumpet; SSG Andrew Layton, alto saxophone*  
*SGM Pat Dillon, tenor saxophone; SFC Jeff Lopez, bass*
2. **Symphony in Riffs** (3:08) ..... Benny Carter & Irving Mills  
trans. Brent Wallarab (*Bee Cee Music*)  
*SFC Tim Young, piano; SFC Christopher Buckbolz, trombone*  
*SFC Kevin Watt, trumpet; SSG Pat Shook, tenor saxophone; SFC Jeff Adams, trombone*
3. **Back Bay Boogie** (3:58) ..... Benny Carter (*Bee Cee Music*)  
*SGM Eugene Thorne, baritone saxophone; SFC Tim Young, piano*  
*SFC Michael Johnston, trumpet; SSG Pat Shook, tenor saxophone*
- Selections from *Kansas City Suite* ..... Benny Carter (*Sierra Music*)
4. **The Wiggle Walk** (4:16)  
*SFC Christopher Buckbolz, trombone; SSG Pat Shook, tenor saxophone*  
*SFC Kevin Watt, trumpet; SFC Tim Young, piano*
5. **Meetin' Time** (3:11)  
*SFC Michael Johnston, trumpet; SGM Pat Dillon, tenor saxophone*
6. **Sunset Glow** (2:39)  
*SFC Christopher Buckbolz, trombone*
7. **Jackson County Jubilee** (2:32)  
*MSG Darryl Brenzel, alto saxophone; SFC Michael Johnston, trumpet*

personal life. With a few interruptions, he spent nearly a year with the Willie Lewis Orchestra.

At the suggestion of influential music critic Leonard Feather, Carter received an offer to serve as an arranger for the British Broadcasting Company dance orchestra in London. Although British non-competition laws limited his stays to three months at a time, Carter quickly settled in as an arranger and occasional performer, enjoying the more relaxed racial atmosphere of London. Through his work with the orchestra, Carter helped to spread the popularity of American swing music through Great Britain and beyond.

Until mid-1938, he traveled throughout northern Europe, playing and arranging for many popular bands. A limited engagement in a Dutch seaside resort allowed Carter to lead the first international interracial band, a ten-piece ensemble that also appeared on the recordings he made with the Dutch subsidiary of Decca.<sup>8</sup> Carter teamed with Coleman Hawkins for two recording sessions while in Europe, once as a guest of Hawkins' All-Star Jam Band and once with Hawkins appearing as a guest of Carter's own orchestra.

In spite of the widespread success he found in Europe, as war loomed across the continent Carter felt the urge to return to his homeland in April 1938. By May, he had already planned his return to the American big band scene.

## *The Swing Era*

*Benny Carter is a multi-talented musician. He played all of the reeds and trumpet too. He was always the best trumpet player in his band.*

—Dizzy Gillespie<sup>9</sup>

When Carter returned from Europe, he saw that big band swing had swept the United States. He soon formed another big band that spent much of 1939 and 1940 at Harlem's famed Savoy Ballroom as one of its house bands. The band achieved some short-lived

success, supplementing time at the Savoy with touring, but as with Carter's other efforts as a bandleader, fell short of a lasting reputation. Carter's contributions to the art of the big band remain immortalized in his arrangements for Fletcher Henderson and Benny Goodman, the acknowledged leaders in this music and dance craze. Glenn Miller, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, and Tommy Dorsey also credit Carter's arrangements as some of the finest in their repertoire.



Benny Carter visiting with troops in 1944. Carter and his orchestra made many appearances at Army bases during WWII and made regular broadcasts over the Armed Forces Radio

www.bennyjazz.com

By 1941, Carter saw the need to make some changes in his lineup. Many of the offers he received were for smaller combos rather than for a larger group, and World War II took some of his experienced players. He reformed the group as a sextet, bringing in trumpeter Little Benny Harris (later replaced by Dizzy Gillespie) and guitarist John Collins. Carter's band served as a model for a new wave of jazz modernists including Gillespie and Kenny Clarke. Performing at clubs on or near 52nd Street in New York, Carter allowed his younger musicians the opportunity to innovate and contribute within the sextet, helping to ferment the style later known as bebop. Before this movement took hold, Carter left for California in 1942. Not only would he create another big band there, but he would also find, at long last, a permanent home.



Photo by Ed Berger

Benny and Diz with Paquito D'Rivera and Hank Jones, Smithsonian, 1990

- <sup>13</sup> Quincy Jones, *The Autobiography of Quincy Jones* (New York: Random House, 2001), 212.
- <sup>14</sup> President Bill Clinton, "Remarks by the President on Awarding the National Medal of Arts and the National Humanities Medal," Washington, D.C.: December 20, 2000.
- <sup>15</sup> Gillespie, as quoted by Joe Goldberg in liner notes to *Benny Carter and the Jazz Giants*, Pablo FCD-60-029, 1998.
- <sup>16</sup> Jay Weiser, "Farewell to a Jazz Cosmopolitan," Salon.com, July 29, 2003 (cited August 7, 2004).



Photo by Ed Berger

Phil Woods with the Jazz Ambassadors in concert

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Norman Granz, as quoted by Leonard Feather in liner notes to *Benny Carter: The King*, Pablo OJCCD-883-2, 1976.
- <sup>2</sup> Don Heckman, “Life is Carter’s Main Instrument Now,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 2002: F22.
- <sup>3</sup> Christopher A. Pirie with Dr. Siegfried Mueller, *Artistry in Kenton: The Biography of Stan Kenton and His Music, vol. 1* (self-published, 1969), 1.
- <sup>4</sup> Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 381.
- <sup>5</sup> Edward Berger, *Artist Transcriptions, Benny Carter Plays Standards* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1996), 5.
- <sup>6</sup> Morroe Berger, Edward Berger, and James Patrick, *Benny Carter: A Life in American Music, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, vol. 1* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 108.
- <sup>7</sup> Berger 1: 497.
- <sup>8</sup> Morroe Berger, Edward Berger, and James Patrick, *Benny Carter: A Life in American Music, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, vol. 2* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 112.
- <sup>9</sup> Dizzy Gillespie with Al Fraser, *To Be Or Not To Bop, Memoirs of Dizzy Gillespie with Al Fraser* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 153.
- <sup>10</sup> Art and Laurie Pepper, *Straight Life, The Story of Art Pepper* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), 48.
- <sup>11</sup> Berger 1: 263-64.
- <sup>12</sup> Quincy Jones as quoted in Harrison Engle’s 1991 film *Symphony in Riffs*.

## California

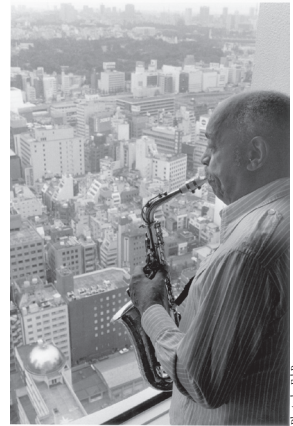
*I learned a lot from following Benny, listening to his solos.*

—Art Pepper<sup>10</sup>

During the mid-1940s Carter’s new California-based big band included many of the musicians who would become major influences in the future world of jazz. Miles Davis, J. J. Johnson, Max Roach, Dexter Gordon, and Art Pepper all played in Carter’s big band at one time or another. These groups showcased an immense amount of musicianship and, of course, legendary solos. With the decline in overall popularity of big bands, however, Carter’s practical side saw that it was time to disband.

While in California, Carter became interested in writing scores for film studios. After being in Los Angeles only two months, he received a call to work on the film *Stormy Weather*. Carter wrote arrangements, played on the soundtrack, and even soloed on one number. Even though he received no screen credit for his work, this was the beginning of a very successful career in film scoring. The many films for which Carter composed include *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, *An American in Paris*, *The Guns of Navarone*, and *A Man Called Adam*.

One of Carter’s most notable achievements in film lay in breaking down the color barrier for black artists in the film industry. At the time, black musicians simply were not offered the opportunity to make the



Benny in Tokyo

Photo by Ed Berger

contacts leading to more desirable jobs. The white musician's Local set the standards by which jobs were made available. As the black Local attempted to desegregate the unions, they approached Carter to lead the negotiations, as that rare individual who found equal respect among musicians of both races.<sup>11</sup> According to Quincy Jones, "Benny opened the eyes of a lot of producers and studios so that they could understand that you could go to blacks for other things outside of blues and barbecue."<sup>12</sup>

Jones also points to Carter's influence beyond union negotiations. "Benny Carter was the pioneer when it came to opening doors for black composers in Hollywood. When I first started scoring films there was only one black person involved, my hero Benny Carter."<sup>13</sup> Carter would prove to be a strong influence for young musicians like Marl Young, opening doors for musicians of all races to contribute to this growing young industry.

## *The Albums and Beyond*

*Benny Carter, your entire life has been a great riff to the human spirit.*

—President Bill Clinton<sup>14</sup>

Although consumed with film scoring and traveling, Carter kept recording his own albums. During the 1950s and 1960s, Carter recorded some of his most well-known records, including the hugely successful *Further Definitions* with Coleman Hawkins, Phil Woods, and Jo Jones. Carter's album *Jazz Giant* placed him alongside such players as Frank Rosolino, Ben Webster, and Shelly Manne, and was considered by many to be his best album of the 1950s. Other recordings during this period include *Swingin' the Twenties*, *Sax a la Carter*, and collaborations with the great pianist Oscar Peterson. These albums cemented Carter's legacy as a player, and again showed off his talents as a composer. Songs such as "Symphony in Riffs," "When Lights are Low," "Doozy," "Blue Star," "Key Largo," "Only

## *Come On Back*

Carter originally recorded "Come On Back" on *Additions to Further Definitions*. Sergeant First Class Jeff Lopez' arrangement keeps the same bright spirit of the original recording while adding some great interplay between the brass and saxophones throughout. Trumpet and guitar solos are featured here as well.

## *Blue Star*

Sergeant Major Eugene Thorne's arrangement of "Blue Star" is a feature for the lead alto saxophone. This version of one of Carter's most well known ballads has many twists and turns, including a re-harmonization of the chord changes. Once the alto sax begins improvising, the listener will hear the re-harmonized changes in one "A" section, the original changes in the next "A" section, an extended bridge section with added measures, and an extended final "A" section before the full band takes over from the soloist.

## *I'm in the Mood for Swing*

Commissioned from the pen of former Jazz Ambassador Dave Wolpe, "I'm in the Mood for Swing" is a great medium swing chart for younger jazz bands. Altered slightly to fit the time constraints, this chart showcases the saxophone section and features solos for the sax, piano, and trumpet.

## *All That Jazz*

Master Sergeant Darryl Brenzel's arrangement of "All That Jazz" is just plain fun. This great medium swing chart features a raucous trombone solo and a bluesy vocal solo.



Photo by Ed Berger

Abene's arrangements never fail to create a mood. A variety of muted brass, woodwinds, and subdued rhythm section meld with an exotic Latin setting. The melody is first stated by the soprano saxophone and then is transported throughout the band. Small-ensemble playing dominates with trumpet and trombone as featured soloists.

### *Easy Money*

Few commercially available arrangements of Carter's compositions exist, but "Easy Money" remains an exception. Mike Sweeney's arrangement closely resembles Carter's 1961 version for Count Basie. This is an excellent chart for younger bands, and its Basie-like ending appeals to many. The Jazz Ambassadors repeated the shout section at the end of the chart, beginning with the trumpet section in Harmon mutes, replicating the original Carter arrangement.

### *How Can You Lose?*

Chuck Owen arranged "How Can You Lose?" another tune from Carter's successful album *Jazz Giant*, for the Jazz Ambassadors. His version features a variety of styles including Dixieland, a pedal point under the melody, and a blues march interlude with an extremely difficult soli section.

### *Souvenir*

Master Sergeant (retired) Eric Richards envisioned "Souvenir" as a ballad feature for the piano. The melody's harmonization is taken from pianist Bill Charlap, and Richards' writing displays the more sensitive side of the big band accompanying the solo piano.

### *Only Trust Your Heart*

Sergeant Major Gene Thorne's arrangement of "Only Trust Your Heart" is a vocal *bossa nova* feature with delicate writing in the introduction and ending.

"Trust Your Heart," "Blues in My Heart," "Cow Cow Boogie," and "Lonely Woman" represent only a small portion of the outpouring of tunes Carter composed throughout his life.

After years of writing for the movies, Carter began composing for television. Starting in the late 1950s, Carter wrote for a number of different television shows including *M Squad*, *The Bob Hope Chrysler Theater*, *Ironsides*, and *The Name of the Game*. Even though he remained occupied writing for Hollywood, Carter performed public concerts and recorded albums during the later decades of his life, achieving a public face as the elder statesman of jazz. In 1970, Carter became a jazz educator, visiting universities throughout the United States. He gave classes, concerts, and lectures at Yale, Duke University, the State University of New York at Buffalo, and Princeton University, where he received an honorary degree.

Carter never lost the drive to compose, arrange, perform, and record new music. Some of his most beautiful music was written during his later years, including "Summer Serenade," *Echoes of San Juan Hill Suite*, and *Peaceful Warrior Suite*, in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Although going into semi-retirement in the 1990s, Carter recorded a few albums, some with his old friend Phil Woods, and gave a few more public concerts. In fact, Carter did not really stop doing what he loved most until announcing his retirement at the age of 95.

His retirement did not last long, ending soon after with his death in 2003.



Benny Carter during break in rehearsal with the American Jazz Orchestra, Cooper Union, NYC, 1987

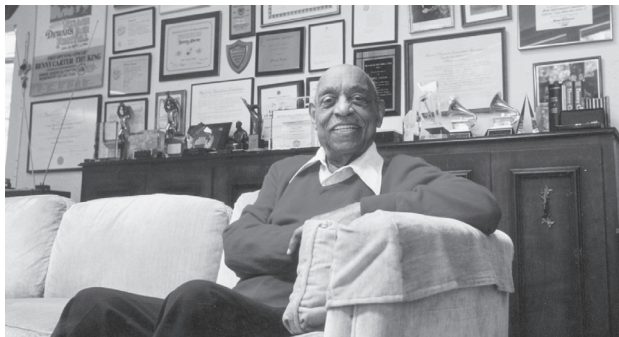
Photo by Ed Berger

# Long Live the King

*When I grow up, I want to be just like Benny Carter.*

—Dizzy Gillespie<sup>15</sup>

During the 1930s, friends and other musicians referred to him as “The King” and no one could think of a more fitting title. Jazz had its Duke, its Count, its Queen, and even a King of Swing. Carter, however, was simply The King. The media had no part in the nickname; his colleagues wanted to show their respect for such a great and versatile musician. There was no other way to treat a man who recorded over 200 albums; played the piano, saxophone, trumpet, clarinet, and trombone; and wrote hundreds of compositions in limitless genres. The world lost a very special man when Carter passed away, but his musical legacy remains an inspiration for all time.



Carter in his studio

Photo by Ed Berger

## Disc Two

### *A Walkin' Thing*

Master Sergeant Vince Norman's arrangement allows soloists plenty of room to be creative. Originally recorded on Carter's album *Jazz Giant* in 1957, “A Walkin' Thing” also features a harmonized version of Carter's own alto sax solo from that session.

### *Summer Serenade*

The Jazz Ambassadors commissioned this arrangement from John Clayton. One of Carter's *bossa novas*, Clayton's arrangement really brings out the subtleties of the entire big band. The performance includes explosive dynamics, small group features, varying styles from *bossa nova* to swing, a sax section soli, and a featured trumpet solo.

### *When Lights are Low*

Master Sergeant Darryl Brenzel arranged Carter's most famous composition for the Jazz Ambassadors. Vastly different from Carter's original 1936 arrangement, this version is an up-tempo, burning whirlwind. The melody is played in half time over the fast swing, with the first half of the chart building to a climax right before the tenor sax solo. After a half-time solo by the trumpet, the original tempo returns, alternating the melody between the horn sections in the band. The arrangement concludes with a surprise tempo change in the last two measures.

### *Key Largo*

Mike Abene's arrangement was commissioned by the Jazz Ambassadors. As an arranger for groups like the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, GRP Big Band, and Maynard Ferguson,



Photo by SFC/Jeff Adams

Phil Woods and Benny Carter

beautiful eight-measure solo by legendary saxophonist and longtime Carter friend Phil Woods.

The second movement is called “Peaceful Warrior.” This male vocal feature was originally written for the great Joe Williams, a contemporary of Benny’s and one of his favorite vocalists; this recording features Kevin Mahogany. “Song for Coretta,”

the third movement, was written for Dr. King’s wife. A bouncy waltz, it showcases strings in addition to the big band, with solos from the guitar and piano. Fourth movement, “The Journey,” features a female vocal originally performed by Marlena Shaw and sung here by Sergeant First Class Marva Lewis. This piece varies from a Latin groove to a hard, driving swing that again features Phil Woods.

The final movement is called “Brothers Under the Skin.” A vocal duet between Sergeant First Class Lewis and Kevin Mahogany, this bright swinging tune truly shows the joy that was included in all of Benny Carter’s compositions. The fun shared by the vocalists is evident in their interplay with each other at the end of the piece. Phil Woods reprises his role as Benny Carter here with one final solo.



Photo by SFC/Jeff Adams

Kevin Mahogany and SFC Marva Lewis, recording session

## *Program Notes*

*It's better to be a legend than a myth.*

—Benny Carter<sup>16</sup>

### Disc One

#### *Jump Call*

Carter first recorded this arrangement in 1946, and one recording even features a young Miles Davis playing the trumpet solo. This tune is an up-tempo jump-style chart, and features many soloists throughout the band.

#### *Symphony in Riffs*

“Symphony in Riffs” would become one of Carter’s bigger hits during his early days. It would eventually be recorded by a number of prominent big band leaders including Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, and Gene Krupa. Note the smaller instrumentation (four saxes, three trumpets, three trombones) and the sophisticated writing during the saxophone soli, very advanced for 1933. This tune would lend its title to the filmography of Carter’s life.

#### *Back Bay Boogie*

This arrangement was first recorded by Carter in 1941, and is an up-tempo boogie-woogie blues. Again featuring many soloists throughout, the tune is based on a riff that Carter used to play at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Boston, hence the title.

## *Selections from Kansas City Suite*

In 1960, Count Basie recorded a collection of ten Carter pieces titled *Kansas City Suite*. “The Wiggle Walk” is a medium-tempo bluesy tune in a minor key, with a bridge that features excellent writing for the saxophones. Also significant is the four-note Basie-style melody played by the piano. The arrangement “Meetin’ Time” includes a muted trombone section playing the melody line, a short saxophone solo, and a featured muted trumpet solo. The slow tempo belies the tight swing feel of this arrangement.

“Sunset Glow” is a ballad featuring lead trombone, originally played by the great Henry Coker. The trombone’s difficult high-note melody is followed by an equally challenging saxophone solo before giving the chart back to the trombone to finish it out. “Jackson County Jubilee,” the fastest movement in *Kansas City Suite*, again gives the trombones the melody in the upper register. An alto sax solo replaces the original tenor solo here. This chart demonstrates well the classic Count Basie loud-soft dynamics.

## *The Lady’s in Love with You*

Carter arranged this song for a project he did with the classic vocalist Sarah Vaughan. Originally appearing on an album entitled *The Explosive Side of Sarah Vaughan*, this vocal feature is a hard swinger throughout.



Photo by Ed Berger

## *Prohibido*

This saxophone section feature was written for *Additions to Further Definitions*, the sequel to Carter’s *Further Definitions* album. This tune is a medium tempo *bossa nova* with a relaxed, pretty melody stated by the saxophones. The guitar takes the melody for the bridge section before allowing the saxophone section to carry the tune through the end.

## *Doozy*

Another selection from *Additions to Further Definitions*, this is an updated version of the same tune heard on the *Further Definitions* recording. Instead of using only the twelve-measure blues form, Carter added an eight-measure bridge section to create a new 32-measure form.

## *Blue Mountain*

Carter performed this song on the soundtrack to the movie *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*. A slow ballad feature for the lead alto saxophone, this tune is also known by the title “Love is Cynthia.”

## *Peaceful Warrior Suite*

Benny Carter’s *Peaceful Warrior Suite* was written in 1996 in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Since the entire suite remains unpublished, the Jazz Ambassadors are greatly indebted to biographer Edward Berger for searching through box after box in Carter’s garage to find the music for the band to record.

Written in five movements, *Peaceful Warrior Suite* begins with a ballad entitled “The Blessing.” This movement features a string section stating the melody that gives way to a different interpretation of the melody by a trumpet solo. The gem of the selection is a