

<u>READY WHEN YOU ARE C.B. - NOTES</u>

Background:

Duke Pearson was an important pianist, composer, arranger and producer during the 1960s and 1970s. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1932 and played trumpet as well as piano with many local groups. After attending Clark College, he toured with Tab Smith and Little Willie John before he moved to New York City in January of 1959. Donald Byrd heard him, and Byrd was the leader of Pearson's first recording session. Soon Pearson was playing with the Benny Golson-Art Farmer Jazztet.

Pearson became the musical director for Nancy Wilson, as well as continuing to tour and record with Donald Byrd. In 1963, Blue Note Records producer and musical director Ike Quebec passed away, and Pearson became Blue Note's A&R director, as well as make his own albums. Grant Green, Stanley Turrentine, Johnny Coles, Blue Mitchell, Hank Mobley, Bobby Hutcherson, Lee Morgan and Lou Donaldson all benefited from his arranging and producing skills. Albums that Pearson recorded under his own name ranged in instrumentation from trios to quintets, sextets and octets to choral ensembles.

Pearson and Byrd co-led a big band in 1967, and eventually Pearson took over sole leadership. Even though the Pearson band shared some of the same musicians with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis band, Pearson's ensemble had its own identity and worked quite a few gigs in New York for over three years and two albums for Blue Note. The band not only featured Pearson's music; other composers such as Frank Foster contributed to the book as well.

Pearson's association with Blue Note ended when co-founder Alfred Lion died in 1971. He moved to Atlanta to teach at Clark College, toured with Carmen McRae and Joe Williams, and reformed his big band. He was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and died in Atlanta, Georgia in 1980.

For many years, the huge body of work he created was nearly forgotten until Jazzlines Publications and Pearson's son Anthony formed a partnership to make Pearson's many titles available for purchase. This arrangement is part of a continuing project to present Pearson's compositions and arrangements for big band and smaller ensembles, uncut and corrected. Once again, Pearson's creative and challenging music can be played, heard, studied and appreciated.

The Music:

Here is a relatively easy arrangement from the 'Introducing the Duke Pearson Big Band' record from 1967. This was arranged as a tribute to Count Basie and features piano throughout. This also features solos for bass trombone and baritone saxophone. The recorded version features just piano but when the band performed live they used an augmented version of the chart that featured trombone and baritone solos. Part of Duke Pearson's piano solo (that we feel is integral) has been transcribed and is presented here as-played.

Jeffrey Sultanof -February 2010



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