

# JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

*Presents*

## FOCUS

IN 7 MOVEMENTS

COMPOSED AND ARRANGED BY EDDIE SAUTER

EDITED BY ROB DUBOFF, JEFFREY SULTANOF, ALEX CHILOWICZ, AND ANDREW HOMZY

## FULL SCORE

JLP-8900

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# EDDIE SAUTER SERIES

## FOCUS (1961)

### Background:

High on the list of the most influential albums recorded by a jazz artist is the Stan Getz/Eddie Sauter 1961 collaboration known as *Focus*. It is widely considered a masterpiece for its setting: a large ensemble featuring a soloist. Found on many jazz historians' and writers' top-ten lists of album releases, this recording has never been out of print. It was a high point for Stan Getz, one of the great tenor saxophonists, as well as for Eddie Sauter, one of the great composers of the twentieth century. Getz was very proud of this album, and was always happy to discuss it when interviewed.

Eddie Sauter was an arranger for the Benny Goodman Orchestra. Getz, being a member of the Goodman ensemble from 1945-46, was first exposed to Sauter's music at that time. After he left Goodman, Sauter, with fellow arranger Bill Finegan, established the Sauter-Finegan Orchestra, of which Getz was an admirer. From 1957-59 Sauter was in Baden-Baden, Germany directing the SWF band. He later reunited with Bill Finegan to compose music for commercials and to co-direct two Sauter-Finegan albums for United Artists Records. Getz had been in Baden-Baden in 1960 to record a large scale work with Russell Garcia as the arranger and conductor (*Cool Velvet*). Upon his return he met with Verve producer Creed Taylor to discuss another large project. This time he wanted to do something different. Instead of a recording session of string arrangements of standards with him as the soloist he wanted to avoid the norm and further challenge himself and the composer. From Getz's prior exposure to his music, he immediately thought of Sauter as the composer for this project. Getz met with Sauter at his home and discussed the project in detail. They decided that Sauter would be free to compose whatever he wanted but would intentionally leave melodic 'holes' in the music. These musical gaps would be improvisationally filled by Getz.

Sauter was a 25-year veteran arranger in the music industry as well as a student and composer of 'serious' music. He had composed and arranged for Charlie Barnet, Red Norvo, Mildred Bailey, Benny Goodman, Woody Herman, Ray McKinley, and Artie Shaw. Sauter was a long-time admirer of Béla Bartók, and in fact some of the music of *Focus* is reminiscent of Bartók's string quartets and *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*. Sauter met Bartók in 1940 (or '41) and asked the composer for advice: "Study Palestrina!" was his reply. This project was a natural fit for him; a chance to step outside the box and push the boundaries of what was considered jazz. In addition, *Focus* would come to represent one of the rare times that Sauter composed a large-scale work. This was his earliest major project to include strings.

Reading music was not one of Stan Getz's strengths. The idea of him as a soloist asked to improvise 'on top' of string orchestra pieces was very attractive to him. Despite common perception, parts were indeed prepared for him (ensemble cues with some written melodies). But, it is likely that he did not use these parts, instead opting to have the strings recorded first and a tape prepared for him with which he practiced. He then later overdubbed his part once he had sufficient time to practice soloing with the music.

Getz performed *Focus* live on one occasion, at a concert at Hunter College in 1963. He also played parts of it on the Edie Adams TV show (this footage may now be found on YouTube) and on a TV show broadcast by the CBC. The CBC footage featured Getz soloing over the pre-recorded tracks that were used for the album release. Getz told saxophonist Mel Martin during a 1986 interview that Leonard Bernstein requested a performance of *Focus* for his own 50th birthday party. There seems to be little evidence that this performance took place, but it speaks to the impact this work had on the music community. Getz was occasionally asked to give concert performances of *Focus* in later years but always denied such requests.

It is clear from the first few minutes of listening that this composition is something special. Getz considered this recording his masterpiece. Despite the historical popularity of the recording and homage to the concept, this type of work has not been attempted since. Perhaps this speaks more to the willingness of Verve Records to take a considerable gamble on the session, a chance that modern record labels are less likely to make. It is possible that the high level of virtuosity that both Getz, as a soloist, and Sauter, as a composer, attained is not widely found today, thus prohibiting such endeavors from coming to fruition. *Focus*, the work and recording, will remain a brilliant moment in time.

### The Music:

Photocopies of scores for the seven compositions that make up *Focus* have been in circulation for over thirty years. Various authorized and unauthorized performances have been given of the work over the years, some using the original parts, some using parts newly prepared. Examination of all the extant parts reveals that they were hastily put together. Various changes and corrections were made at the recording sessions (many pencil markings on the parts reflect this). In a few instances one instrumental part had a structural, articulation, technique, or note change that did not appear on other parts. In addition, there were also several copying errors in the parts that were not caught by the musicians and corrected. And surprisingly, there were a few instances of unplayable notes written for the violins and harp.

Few if any of these changes were made to the scores; hence, anyone who has used them as primary source material was in for quite a surprise when comparing them against the recording. To be fair, these errors and inconsistencies in the parts were not the fault of the composer. It has become clear that the copyists hired were not familiar enough with the preparation of contemporary concert music for strings. Sadly, it is likely that the copyists treated this as a routine copy job for a record date. Sauter always did his job well, whether it was writing for his own Sauter-Finegan Orchestra, stock arrangements, or orchestrations for Broadway. But, like any other composer, there are mistakes or omissions in his scores, and many of them were copied verbatim into the parts. Many of the errors were corrected at the recording sessions, but some were not. Regrettably, numerous copyist errors were not caught and, as a result, wrong notes were recorded.

Our mission was to publish an authoritative edition of *Focus*, thereby properly honoring the composer and music and thus enabling and encouraging future performance and study of the work. Early in the editorial process Greg Sauter made us aware that a William Paterson University student named Alex Chilowicz had prepared edited scores of *Focus* for his own performance of the music (these newly edited scores/parts were later performed by Joe Lovano). As we began to discover the complexity of the project it became apparent that additional resources would be crucial. During the summer of 2011, professor Lewis Porter of Rutgers University contacted us to help facilitate a relationship between us and his graduate student, Alex Chilowicz. A second set of newly edited and engraved scores was provided to us by composer/educator/musicologist Andrew Homzy. His edited scores and parts were performed by Ernie Krivda. As we delved into the available sources it became clear that we would have to start from scratch just to satisfy ourselves that every note, accidental, rhythm, technique, dynamic, and articulation was as accurate as possible. Given that the composer and original conductor are no longer alive to assist us, we based our editorial decisions on the sources, original recordings, and knowledge of the writing style of the composer. We leave it to a future historian to fully document what appears in the original sources via an errata listing.

The original order of the pieces was as follows:

1. *Night Rider*
2. *Once Upon a Time*
3. *Her*
4. *Pan*
5. *I Remember When*
6. *I'm Late, I'm Late*
7. *A Summer Afternoon*

It was possibly during the lengthy editing process that the movement order was altered to the way it appeared on the final album.

In his 1980 *Jazz Oral History Project* interview with Bill Kirchner, Eddie Sauter specified this ideal string combination: 16 violins, 8 violas, 8 cellos, and 4 basses. We do not know the exact combination of strings used for the *Focus* recording date but from the relatively thin sound of the individual tracks we must assume that it was comprised of considerably fewer players. For this publication we have included parts for: 8 first violin, 8 second violin, 5 viola, 5 cello, and 3 bass.

The string parts are often very demanding, especially with regard to quick changes between arco and pizzicato techniques. The rhythms must be very carefully observed and rehearsed thoroughly so that the sections play uniformly. Also, in many instances Sauter has divided strings solely on technique. In other words, violin I may have what appears to be a unison line, but half the players will be arco and other half pizz. The technique instructions have all been correctly indicated in the parts. While we have included slurs and harp pedaling, we have resisted the temptation to include bowings, having come to the conclusion that this is best left to the players themselves.

There has been a question concerning Roy Haynes's role in the section titled *I'm Late, I'm Late* (#1). Gary Burton testifies that Getz told him that after hearing that movement in rehearsal he phoned Haynes and asked him to come to the studio and add a drum part to that section. However, a drum sketch is present in Sauter's original score that tends to refute this. It is possible that Getz may have been referring to the choice of musician rather than the creation of this percussion part. Creed Taylor, the producer of this recording session, has stated in an interview with Marc Myers ([jazzwax.com](http://jazzwax.com)) that Getz recorded this movement twice. Neither Getz nor Taylor could decide which take to release as both were superb. Consequently they chose to release both takes, spliced together, one after another. We have chosen to include this repeated material as a *D.S. al fine*. It is at the discretion of the conductor as to whether to follow this form or simply end the movement the way it was originally written (playing once through).

Movement 2 (*Her*), features a celeste part that was originally written for the percussionist. Naturally, this should be played by a keyboard player. Should a celeste not be available, this part may be played on a piano very softly. Please avoid the use of a synthesizer. If the violinists are concerned about the wear on their bows for the col legno battuto section at measure 19, we suggest that they bring inferior quality bows to use for that section and substitute them back out at measure 35.

In movement 3 (*Pan*) Sauter had written all the repeated 16th notes as quarter notes like:  We have fully notated these repeated notes for ease of reading.

The movement titled *Night Rider (#5)* had a percussion part included that simply featured someone tapping their thighs to rhythms provided. This part was not used on the recording and has been omitted in this publication. Where the harpist sees the symbol ' it is suggested that the note(s) be plucked and then immediately damped. Sauter had used staccato marks to signify damped notes.

Several of the movements were written with key signatures. We have removed these key signatures except that in movement 2 as the music in that section is more tonal than the others. Due to the sheer number of accidentals and fleeting and ever-shifting tonalities, key signatures are not recommended. Sauter had employed a key signature of 6 flats in movements 6 and 7, which for strings players should be avoided.

Many chord symbols were supplied for the soloist by Eddie Sauter; however, most were not. We have added chord symbols where appropriate. By studying the harmony it is clear to see that this work does not allow for the typical chordal analysis utilizing conventional jazz logic. This is not the typical jazz soloist with strings piece. In many measures the tonal center shifts, and even when a key center may be aurally detected it is often fleeting, or there is contradictory harmonic material underneath. The soloist must leave behind any notion that this work can be performed by reading chord symbols. In order to achieve the kind of success that Stan Getz obtained one must ignore their academic side and rely on instincts and creativity. Clearly, it is suggested that the cues be followed, but to give too much weight to the chord symbols or cue line will undermine the performance.

It is important to recognize that this is a 'classical' piece with jazz overtones. While the soloist may feel free to swing their eighths throughout, the ensemble should resist the temptation to match that feel. Eddie Sauter has said that this piece was deliberately written with a missing piece and the soloist, through improvisation, would spontaneously supply that piece. We feel that the imaginative nature of the work lends itself to a variety of soloist instruments, not just exclusively a tenor saxophonist. As such, solo parts have been supplied for C, B-flat, and E-flat instruments.

### **Acknowledgments:**

There are several people who we would like to thank for supplying feedback, answering questions, making phone calls, and supporting this project:

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Lewis Porter  
Chris Sheridan  
Noel Silverman

We are proud to call them our friends and colleagues. All have made considerable contributions to the scholarship of jazz history.

We express our gratitude to Andrew Homzy, one of the finest editors of jazz ensemble music, who happily shared with us the scores he prepared for a performance of *Focus*.

Alex Chilowicz's dedication to this particular work is laudable and we salute him for dealing with such a complex project. In his classes and lectures, Jeffrey Sultanof has often discussed the importance of clear, detailed, consistent editing of ensemble music in the jazz realm (something hitherto unknown until only about 20 years ago), in addition to the training and preparation necessary to become an editor of such music. With no previous experience in proofreading or editing, Alex did a magnificent job in the preparation of his scores.

We thank Greg Sauter for his interest in working with us to present his father's music and Noel Silverman for facilitating our partnership. It is our hope that through an ongoing relationship with Greg we'll see to it that more of his dad's music is published and made available for study and performance.

Despite our obsession with getting this music right, we fully realized that this was not going to be an easy project. We devoted many hours of time to studying the scores and parts, listening, questioning, changing minds, changing them back, and deciding on the layout of the scores and parts for ease of reading. Our discussions often ran for hours, and it was an exhilarating, special

time for us to be able to discuss the most minute musical details for the sake of finally letting Eddie Sauter's voice be clearly heard as a composer.

Thank you for purchasing this publication and supporting our efforts.

**Jeffrey Sultanof and Rob DuBoff**

- November 2011

## FOREWARD BY GREG SAUTER

As I look back through the mists of time to the year 1961, my memory is that my father was in a most buoyant mood that spring. He had been working steadily and nothing made him happier than having work to do. Idleness definitely did not agree with him.

Enter Stan Getz. He had recently returned from Europe and had come up with the idea that my father should write an album for him. This was not simple happenstance. As the now oft-told story goes, Stan and the Sauter-Finegan Orchestra had shared the bill on some engagement in Los Angeles in 1954 and, during the proceedings, the idea was hatched that Stan would substitute for the singer on several of the band's vocal arrangements. When the moment arrived, the guys in the band remember being stunned speechless; they were completely overwhelmed by what they had just heard. Apparently, the experience stuck with Stan as well and it culminated in his request that my father write him an extended work. As my father recounted that moment, there were no instructions from Stan, other than "do what you feel is right."

When my father started the actual composition process, I can remember being summoned from time to time to listen to a little tune or other idea he had come up with. My typical reaction was "go with it." I might also have asked something like, "What are you going to do with this?" Somehow, talking about these initial musical thoughts helped him get his bearings and gave him a sense of direction.

I remember also that, in discussing composition, he would always say "You should always try to have three things going at once," meaning three principal lines. This doesn't mean that they should all have a constant presence; they can start and stop, and recede and reemerge. In *Focus* I hear Stan Getz's part as a third line, filling the "hole" that my father deliberately left for him. That part, in my judgment, is integral to the pieces in the suite and they would be incomplete without it.

My father always did a lot of listening and study of score reductions. I would frequently find him poring over something by Bartók, Prokofiev or Stravinsky, for example. It is most likely that he learned the idiosyncracies of string writing from these sources. In fact, in *I'm Late, I'm Late*, you can hear echoes of the second movement from Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*.

When it came time for the recording dates, Bill Finegan was on the scene as some of the pieces were being run down, these "run downs" constituting the full extent of any rehearsing that was done. He always enjoyed recalling one of Stan's remarks as they were sitting in the engineer's booth listening: "Now, what the hell am I going to do with that?" He knew that this meant that Stan knew he was being challenged.

As I think back on all the events surrounding the creation of *Focus*, my hope is that its listeners can sense the fun and exhilaration that were in the air at the time. These elements are at the core of a memory that I will always cherish.

- **Greg Sauter**

# Notes to the Conductor and Performers

by Alex Chilowicz

The original score of *Focus* gives information about Eddie Sauter's composition and Stan Getz's approach that will hopefully be of interest and assistance to the performers. At the same time, some of the crucial elements of a truly unified performance are not on the written page.

Eddie Sauter conceived of *Focus*, in his words, as "seven different fairytales...as if Hans Christian Andersen were a musician." Each of the movements does, indeed, have a very unique character, and, therefore, each movement should be addressed as an individual piece. The whimsical nature of *Focus* is omnipresent: from the titular and musical allusions in *I'm Late, I'm Late* referencing a song from Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*; to the images of Greek mythology presented by *Pan*; to a movement simply entitled *Once Upon a Time*.

It is important to remember that Sauter crafted *Focus* with a soloist in mind throughout all seven movements. Even in the more harmonically and melodically dense passages, the music provides gaps for the performer to discover - although the only written-out melody of the seven movements occurs on *I Remember When*. For the string players, the composer leaves out any expectations of swinging from the ensemble parts. All of the composed material is to be performed with a "straight" time-feel. Jeff Sultanof and Rob DuBoff have accurately captured the articulations from the recording, so the musical information for the ensemble is clearly notated.

Stan Getz spent a considerable amount of time listening to the string tracks prior to recording his immortal solo work on *Focus*; his solos are evidence of his attention to detail. Rather than blowing over the strings as though simply "playing changes," Getz interacts with several different aspects of the composed material. Very often, Getz will respond to the lead violin, as can be heard on *Her*. At other times, the saxophonist joins the celli on background figures in order to blend with the texture of the string section rather than sticking out. Sauter's writing is never obscured or neglected by the attentive soloist.

Any soloist taking on this work would be advised to follow Getz's cue in studying the dialogue. For the soloist interested in capturing the sensitivity displayed by Getz, noting where he plays and where he lays out is crucial. Also, since the orchestra is playing with a "straight" time feel, it is up to the soloist to create a sense of swing throughout *Focus*. Once again, Getz's interpretation is a fine example of how to accomplish the impressive feat of playing swinging jazz with a classical string accompaniment.

The more familiar one becomes with Eddie Sauter's *Focus*, the clearer it becomes that the writing is not simply an example of jazz with strings, nor is it a purely classical work with a jazz soloist playing over it. With dedication, *Focus* can stand as one of the truly rare instances where elements of jazz and classical music converge to create a sound that defies categorization.

**- Alex Chilowicz**

*Alex Chilowicz is a saxophonist who spent time working on this score as part of his Focus performance at William Paterson University, where he is an alumnus. He is currently a masters candidate at Rutgers University-Newark's Jazz Research Program.*

# A Selection of Quotes about *Focus*

“The value of *Focus* is that it was the first piece to give strings the truly rhythmic impetus that lies at the heart of jazz.”

- *Chris Sheridan (author and journalist)*

“Of all the varied manifestations of the third-stream idea in jazz, it is *Focus* that now strikes me as the most persuasive and idiomatic—perhaps, paradoxically enough, because it had so little to do with that musical movement. Eddie Sauter was simply writing a piece of music for Stan Getz, a masterpiece sui generis that stands outside all received notions about how jazz and classical music might be fused. If anything, *Focus* is more like one of the compositions in which Duke Ellington left it to his great soloists to supply the melodic material that he superimposed atop his kaleidoscopically rich orchestral accompaniments. It was a stroke of genius (and a triumph of modesty) for Sauter to recognize that Getz was capable of improvising more than enough such material to fuel a full-length multi-movement suite. Rarely has the essentially collaborative nature of jazz been illustrated so dramatically, or so fruitfully.”

- *Terry Teachout (author of Pops: A Life of Louis Armstrong)*

“Ultimately, it is the soloist’s imagination - ears and knowledge of the score - which will lead to an exciting interpretation of Sauter’s music. Getz’s realization is fabulous - so is that of like-minded musicians such as Krivda and Lovano. How would Coltrane or Dexter Gordon - or their disciples - approach it? This question is precisely why jazz composition interests me so much. The score is more laden with possibilities than any recording. The recording will never change, but a new performance will uncover more of the composer’s gift. Having said that, publishing *Focus* is an important milestone in American music. What a gift.”

- *Andrew Homzy (composer, editor, educator, and musicologist)*

“Kudos to the Jazz Lines Foundation for releasing the music from *Focus*, the iconic Stan Getz/Eddie Sauter collaboration. The set of original compositions and Stan’s wonderfully interactive improvisations have been a milestone for all saxophone/string collaborations and represent Stan’s goal of playing in a ‘classical’ mode. His playing, while representing the essence of pure jazz, mines the many moods presented to him by Eddie Sauter and has become a treasure for all to enjoy.”

- *Mel Martin (composer, educator, and musician)*