

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

*Presents*

**ARAB DANCE**

RECORDED BY CLAUDE THORNHILL

ARRANGED BY GIL EVANS

EDITED BY JEFFREY SULTANOF AND ROB DUBOFF

**FULL SCORE**

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

JLP-8095

MUSIC BY PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY AND GIL EVANS

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# **ARAB DANCE (1941)**

## **Background:**

Claude Thornhill and Gil Evans met when MCA, the agency representing Evans' big band, sold it to former Hal Kemp singer/drummer Skinnay Ennis (the unusual spelling of Ennis' name was the result of a typographical error on a record label). Thornhill came with Ennis as his musical director/arranger, and the band was soon signed as the studio orchestra for the Bob Hope radio show. Evans later said that he respected Thornhill tremendously, and was delighted when Thornhill invited him to join his own big band. Thornhill developed an unusual, warm sound with seven reeds (five doubling on clarinet, two on bass clarinet), three trumpets, two trombones and two French Horns. Evans took the essence of this sound and added some ideas of his own. The band impressed everyone who heard it, and it was moderately successful.

After World War II ended, Thornhill and Evans reunited when the pianist re-formed his orchestra. This ensemble's first post-war record date included a rare 12" pop single, and the extra playing time the larger disc afforded still wasn't enough to record the entire arrangement of *Arab Dance*. While the recording served as a welcoming-back to one of the era's unique big bands, it also reminded listeners that the band would continue and build on its previous identification. This was the band that would be described by Thelonious Monk as "one of the best bands I've heard in years."

## **The Music:**

*Arab Dance* was copyrighted in 1941 (although Stephanie Stein Crease says that the arrangement was written in 1942, perhaps in error). It is credited to both Thornhill and Evans, although the manuscript is clearly in Evans' hand. It is now hard to ascertain who contributed what to this setting. The two musicians may have discussed it and then Evans went off on his own to write, or Thornhill may have had nothing to do with it and simply cut himself in on composer royalties (the melody comes from the *Arabian Dance* section of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet, and was in the public domain when the setting was written). What is clear is that Evans is the main voice of the arrangement, from the instrumental voicings to the inclusion of Duke Ellington's *Koko* at the end, clearly an homage to a composer Evans admired very much. One presumes that Ellington heard this arrangement and approved; when Thornhill died, Ellington was deeply affected, calling him "this beautiful man."

There are minor differences between this arrangement and the arrangement recorded in 1946, particularly the brass figures from bar 211. It was decided to present the arrangement exactly as written in 1941 or 1942, as it is one of the few examples of Evans from this early period. Also please note that due to time constraints, bars 19-43 were cut for the recording.

For this publication, the French horn parts alternately may be played by a 4th trumpet and 3rd trombone as follows:

French horn 1 = Trumpet 4  
French horn 2 = Trombone 3

## **Notes to the Conductor:**

The Thornhill ensemble was based on the premise of a rich ensemble sound backing the warm piano stylings of the leader, although the band played a swing number impressively as well (Evans' *Buster's Last Stand* is a good idea of how this band could swing out). Thornhill was a great stickler for precision, intonation and a wide variety of dynamic levels. The band's very soft passages could scare audiences to death, particularly when they built to loud but smooth fortissimos. Even though this arrangement is pure swing from beginning to end, these same values must be kept in mind to fully realize the challenges of this setting of a re-composition of a classical piece.

Except when playing 'classic' big band music from this era, many saxophonists do not get much opportunity to work on their clarinet chops in an ensemble setting. Where once the big band musician mastered both the clarinet and sax, today a saxophonist's time is more often spent playing the flute. The Thornhill book needs strong clarinet players to make the music sound properly, so a sectional rehearsal or two is recommended not only to get the clarinets to phrase together and play in tune, but to also get a smooth blend once the ensemble changes to clarinets and saxes (particularly when clarinet 2 switches to soprano sax, one of the rare instances of this saxophone used in an ensemble during this period).

Speaking of the soprano sax part, this can certainly be covered by the clarinet (and in fact, it sounds like the part was played that way on the 1946 recording).

*Jeffrey Sultanof*  
- November 2009



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## SCORE

♩ = 144

**(A)**

REED 1: CLARINET *ff*

REED 2: CLARINET *ff* SUBTONE *p* (4)

REED 3: CLARINET *ff* SUBTONE *p* (4)

REED 4: CLARINET *ff* SUBTONE *mp*

REED 5: CLARINET *ff* SUBTONE *mp*

REED 6: BASS CLARINET *ff* *p* (4) (6)

REED 7: BASS CLARINET *ff* *p*

TRUMPET 1 *ff* (TO CUP MUTE)

TRUMPET 2 *ff* (TO CUP MUTE)

TRUMPET 3 *ff* (TO CUP MUTE)

HORN IN F 1 *ff*

HORN IN F 2 *ff*

TROMBONE 1 *ff*

TROMBONE 2 *ff*

GUITAR *ff* *p* *mp*

PIANO *ff* *ped.* \*

BASS *ff* *p* (4) (6)

DRUM SET *ff* (LIGHT BRUSHES) *mp* (4) (6)

2 3 4 5 6 7 8

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The top section contains seven Reed (Rd.) parts, numbered 1 through 7, with parts 6 and 7 designated as Bass Clarinet (Bs. Cl.). Each Reed part begins with a melodic line in measure 9, marked *mf* and accented. Measures 10 and 11 contain rests for all Reed parts, indicated by a double bar line with a slash. Measure 12 features a four-measure rest for each part, marked with a circled 4. Measure 13 resumes the melodic lines for all Reed parts. The Horns (HN. 1 and 2) and Trombone (TBN. 1) parts play sustained notes with accents and triplets in measures 9-11. The Guitar (GTR.) part plays a rhythmic accompaniment in measure 9, with rests in measures 10-11 and a four-measure rest in measure 12. The Piano (PNO.) part provides harmonic support with sustained chords in measures 9-11 and rests in measures 12-13. The Bass part plays a steady bass line with accents in measures 9-11 and rests in measures 12-13. The Drums (D.S.) part plays a consistent rhythmic pattern in measures 9-11 and rests in measures 12-13. Performance instructions include *mf* dynamics, accents, and specific markings like 'SOLO' for the Horns and 'QUASI HOEN' for the Trombone. Measure numbers 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 are printed at the bottom of the page.

The musical score is arranged in a standard jazz ensemble format. It includes the following parts:

- Reeds (Rd. 1-7):** Clarinet (CL) and Bass Clarinet (Bs. CL) parts. Reeds 1-5 play a melodic line with slurs and accents. Reeds 6 and 7 play a rhythmic pattern. Reeds 4, 5, 6, and 7 have measure rests in measures 15, 16, and 17.
- Trumpets (Tpt. 1-3):** Play a melodic line with slurs and accents. Trumpet 3 has a triplet in measure 16.
- Guitar (Gtr.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern with slurs and accents. Measure rests in measures 15, 16, and 17.
- Piano (PNO):** Plays a sustained harmonic accompaniment.
- Bass (BASS):** Plays a rhythmic pattern with slurs and accents. Measure rests in measures 15, 16, and 17.
- Drums (D. S.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern with slurs and accents. Measure rests in measures 15, 16, and 17.

Measure numbers 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 are indicated at the bottom of the page.