

ly 11
 'Where and when was the first performance of this piece?' 'Which families of instruments were written for in the score?'

The song was composed in mid-December 1936 by Irving Berlin. It was first performed by George Olsen and his Orchestra for the Rodgers and Hart musical *Letty* later that month.

Within this piece, there are 3 different families of instruments. These are the trumpets and trombones, which are members of the brass family. There are alto, tenor and baritone saxophones which are part of the woodwind family.

There is a piano present, and also drums and other percussion which is part of the percussion family. The guitar and bass featured are members of the string family.



Brass Family



Woodwind Family

V.I.



Percussion



String Family

ly 12
 'Why did the composer write this piece of music in this way?'

The song was written as a last minute addition to Rodgers and Hart musical, *Letty*. Irving Berlin originally wrote it for his first daughter. There are no specifications as to why the music was written in its particular 15/8 or waltz, but Berlin was an innovator composer of many jazz pieces similar to this one. Irving Berlin was originally from Russia, but fled to New York where his musical talents and interests really began to bloom. He was heavily influenced by American Ragtime.

ly 13
 'How did the instruments function within the selected works?'

The instruments all compliment each other to create a cohesive sound. The instruments that play the melody are the alto saxophones. Taking the lead and joining the path for the remaining instruments. The saxophones are the melody in this particular rendition as there are no present vocals. Of course, the percussion, specifically the drums, are the rhythm of the piece, keeping all the other instruments in time with each other. There are 4 solos within this piece, but all these instruments are accompanied by percussion, unless it is a percussion solo, emphasizing the importance of the rhythmic function within the piece. Most if not all of the solos were ad lib, which means improvised. The whole piece is played within a variety of minor scales.

ly 14
 'What do you like about this piece?'

This piece is very lively and fun. The recurring melody is catchy and dynamic. It has a steady beat and we especially like the harmony between the various instruments.

The harmony between the instruments (1-25 to 1-35) is something that stands out. Combining the lower brass instruments with the higher ones to play an interesting tune is an excellent way to link the main melody back into the song.

The saxophone solo (1:40 to 2:10) is a nice contrast to the continued track playing in the background by the rest of the orchestra. The single saxophone player is playing a variation of the main tune, while the others continue with the backing beat of the song. When they reach the main tune, the saxophone joins in, still playing a slightly different melody. Towards the end (2:50), the orchestra seems to play a small canon, repeating the tune a group of the instruments is playing. They slow down at the end, finishing by holding a long note.

ly 15
 'Have there been other versions of this music performed or combined with other media and how do they differ?'

There have been an abundance of other versions of this music that have been written, recorded and performed throughout the years. Several of these versions are adaptations of the piece as a piece of famous music acts and such as jazz. Another notable one is *Letty*, which is a play that was written for the Broadway musical *Letty*. It was written in 1936 and is a play about the life of a woman who is a singer in a nightclub. Many other versions have been performed in front of live audiences as well as recorded.

ly 16
 'What is the piece and how is it?'

This piece is very well known due to the popularity of the piece and the music it belongs to. It is a classic, many covers and versions of it have been created. It is a classic piece of music that has been played in many different settings. It was written in 1936 and is a classic piece of music. There are many more versions of this piece by Irving Berlin, such as *Letty*.



Blue Skies

Irving Berlin

By Vicki N. and Rhea I.

By RI

Where and when was the first performance of this piece? Which families of instruments were written for in the score?

The song was composed in mid-December 1926 by Irving Berlin. It was first performed by George Olsen and his Orchestra for the Rodgers and Hart musical Betsy later that month.

Within this piece, there are 3 different families of instruments. There are the trumpets and trombones, which are member of the brass family. There are alto, tenor and baritone saxophones which are part of the woodwind family. There is a piano present and also drums and other percussion which is part of the percussion family. The guitar and bass featured are members of the string family.

Brass Family



String Family



Woodwind Family



P.P.



Percussion

By VN

How did the instruments function within the selected work?

The instruments all complement each other to create a cohesive sound. The instruments that play the melody are the alto saxophones, taking the lead and paving the path for the remaining instruments. The saxophones are the melody in this particular rendition as there are no present vocals. Of course, the percussion, specifically the drums, are the rhythm of the piece, keeping all the other instruments in time with each other. There are 4 solos within this piece, but all these instruments are accompanied by percussion, unless it is a percussion solo, emphasizing the importance of the rhythmic function within the piece. Most if not all of the solos were ad lib, which means improvised. The whole piece is played within a variety of minor scales.

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By VN

Why did the composer write this piece of music in this way?

The song was written as a last minute addition to Rodgers and Hart musical, Betsy. Irving Berlin originally wrote it for his first daughter. There are no specifications as to why the music was written in its particular style or way, but Berlin was a renown composer of many jazz pieces similar to this one. Irving Berlin was originally from Russia, but fled to New York where his musical talents and interests really began to bloom. He was heavily influenced by American Ragtime.

By VN

Have there been other versions of this made as films or recordings or combined with other media and how do they differ?

There have been an abundance of other versions of this music that have been written or recorded and performed throughout the years. Some of the more popular adaptations of this piece are those of famous musicians and composers, Josephine Baker, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, and many more. There are also the featured the music, as well as an orchestra to carry the song. Many other variations have been performed in front of a live audience as well as recorded.

By RI

Why is this piece well received?

This piece is very well known due to the popularity of it in connection with the musical, Betsy. After its debut, many covers and versions of it were produced, by artists like Frank Sinatra and Josephine Baker. In 1978, it was number one on the US Billboard Music Charts. There was also a movie named after it featuring many other pieces by Irving Berlin, such as White Christmas.



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By R.I

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Brass Family



Trumpet

Trombone

Woodwind Family



Alto Saxophone

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

V.N

Percussion



Piano

Drums

String Family



Guitar

Bass

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