



Director: Heather Lyn MacDonald
Composer: Pete Whitman
Documentary, USA 2006, 80 minutes

"I'm going to dance, dance, dance 'til I can't dance no more!" (Bertye Lou Wood, age 96)

The best part of performing is having a good band. When I get out there, I light up like a Christmas tree, let's get it on! Play the music! (Fay Ray, age 87)

MUSIC NOTES

Music is central to the subjects of *Been Rich All My Life*, and to the film itself -- ranging over eight decades of jazz styles, from Dixieland sounds of the 20's, the big bands and swing combos of the 30's and 40's, the bebop influence of the 50's, to the contemporary jazz playing as the ladies travel the streets of New York. Composer Pete Whitman has created an original score that artfully captures the changing moods and evolving styles. While he recorded some public domain tunes to evoke the period prior to 1920, he notably composed, arranged and recorded his own compositions using as models the great bandleaders of Harlem's golden age -- such as Jimmy Lunceford, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington. He was able to recreate the sounds of the big bands with their large horn sections by masterfully layering tracks of the his three wind musicians, each playing 3-5 parts. They recorded using more distant mics in a "live" room with natural reverberation, to create a sound more like that of older recordings. Whitman himself played clarinet, and alto, soprano, tenor and baritone saxophones.

Whitman found inspiration for some of the smaller combo arrangements in John Kirby (when the story takes the dancers to South America in the 1930s), or Sidney Bechet (Louisiana in the 1920s). For the flavors of the 1950s, inspiration came from Count Basie, Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt. Duke Ellington's Eastern travels provided a musical model for the dancers going abroad in the 1950s. Whitman's original music score also includes a variety of his unique contemporary compositions. Pianist Benny Weinbeck, who also acted as the Music Production Supervisor, composed or improvised a number of the piano selections used in the film score.

Dave Graf, trombone; **Phil Hey**, drums & percussion; **Dave Jensen**, trumpet; **Gordy Johnson**, bass; **Dave Karr**, clarinet, tenor & baritone saxophone; **Kent Saunders**, guitar; **Benny Weinbeck**, piano; **Pete Whitman** (Composer & Arranger), alto sax, tenor sax, soprano sax, baritone sax, clarinet.
Music recorded at Fur Seal Studios, Minneapolis, MN.

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Been Rich All My Life official website: www.tootsrackin.com/braml.htm

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