



1550. Begin The Beguine

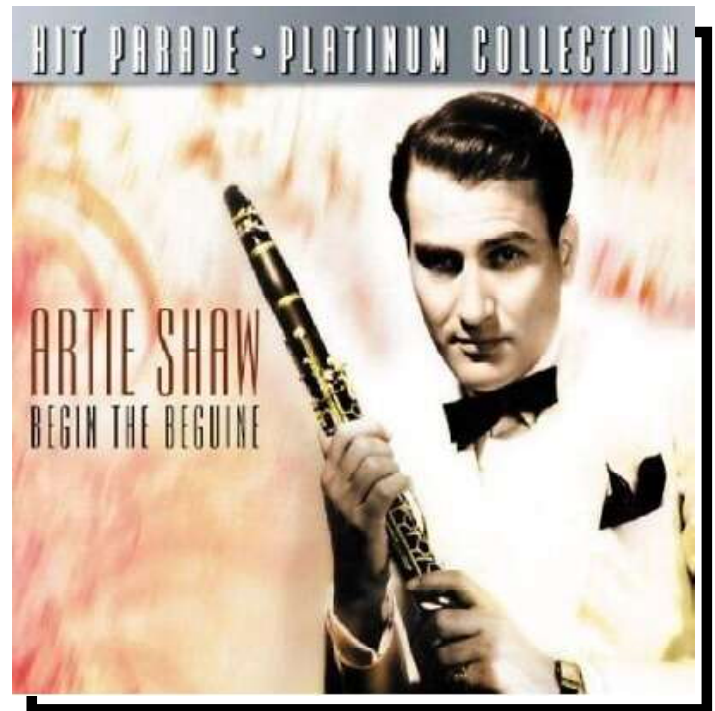
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The song *Begin the Beguine* was composed and written by American Broadway musical composer Cole Porter for the 1935 Broadway musical *Jubilee*. It became an evergreen and a jazz standard. The pun of the almost identically written and pronounced "begin" and "beguine" refers to the beguine, a Caribbean dance related to rumba, which originated in the 19th century in the Lesser Antilles, which was then part of France, and came to Paris from there, where Cole Porter met him during one of his stays in Europe. In keeping with the great melodic arcs of the *Beguine*, the song is 108 bars in song form A-A'-B-A"-C-C', with each part being 16 bars long (except C' which is 20 bars and has an 8-bar coda).

The first commercial recording is by the Xavier Cugat Orchestra (with vocals by Don Reid); it was recorded on September 15, 1935 and published by Victor in October 1935. Other early recordings are by Joe Haymes (1935) and Pierre Allier (1938). The title owes its fame mainly to the recording of Artie Shaw and his orchestra (at Bluebird) recorded on July 24, 1938 and released in August 1938, which topped the *Billboard* charts for a total of 6 weeks. By 1944 the single had sold a million copies. In his wake, many other prominent orchestras also included their own versions in their repertoire, such as Harry James, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, the Casa Loma Orchestra, Bob Crosby and Ray Conniff, but also singers such as Frank Sinatra (1938) and many others



ARTIE SHAW ORCHESTRA 1938



Artie Shaw (*1910†2004) was an American jazz clarinetist, arranger, composer, band leader and author. He originally began his career as a saxophonist in the local high school band and began his professional career in the early 1930s in many different orchestras. Together with a string quartet, he appeared in the summer of 1935 with a performance at the New York Imperial Theater, which attracted a great deal of attention due to the unusual use of string instruments in swing and enabled him to found a dance orchestra with brass, strings, a rhythm section and just one saxophonist to prepare. However, this first Shaw formation was short-lived.

At the end of 1936 he founded a new big band that was to be one of the most successful orchestras of the swing era. This consisted of five brass players, four saxophonists and four musicians in the rhythm section. Recordings were made for RCA Victor and sublabel Bluebird Records. At the end of the year he had the first of a total of 54 hits in his career with the song *There's Frost on the Moon*. The strings were remarkable. Eventually, his biggest hit was *Begin the Beguine* (1938), which brought him national fame. Throughout his life Shaw was considered the intellectual among the big band leaders and also tried his hand at writing. In 2004 he received the Lifetime Achievement Grammy Award and was awarded the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship. He died in 2004 at the age of 94.

BigBand-Swing, T=130

The musical score is arranged in a system with six staves. From top to bottom, they are: Bells, Adv. Brass, Adv. Saxophone, Guitar, Bass, and Drums. The Bells and Adv. Brass staves have chord symbols: C(-Adv.) and D(+Adv.) for the first two bars, and A(-Adv.) and B(+Adv.) for the last two bars. The Adv. Saxophone staff has a melodic line with many triplets. The Guitar staff has a steady accompaniment. The Bass staff has a walking bass line. The Drums staff has a hi-hat pattern with isolated accent strokes on the snare. On the right side, two vertical arrows labeled 'Main 1' and 'Main 2' indicate the structure of the phrase.

Programming instruction

This "big band swing with a speed of 130" was actually built in 1938! Transcribed from the original recording by the legendary ARTIE SHAW and his orchestra. And above all: The title is called "Begin The Beguine" - but not a trace of Beguine - in the 30s and 40s of USA music history everything was changed into the SWING! In the drums area, only the hi-hat game with open/closed is announced, the snare only plays isolated accent strokes - but no continuous 2-4 follow-up. Even in the original, the bass only plays the combination of double root + double fifth - the "half" walking phrase in the second and fourth bar is my encore. The need for 4-bar programming arises from the way the accompanying brass group and saxophones play, namely the harmony progression C5-C6-Cj7-C6!