

Albany

SASHA  
MATSON



*Cooperstown*

JAZZ OPERA IN NINE INNINGS

# SASHA MATSON

## Synopsis and Libretto

Libretto by Mark Miller and Sasha Matson  
Directed by Stephanie Vlahos  
Conducted by Sasha Matson  
Produced by John Atkinson

### CAST

Daniel Montenegro ... Angel Corazon  
Carin Gilfry ..... Jan Green  
Rod Gilfry ..... Dutch Schulhaus  
Daniel Favela ..... Marvin Wilder  
Julie Adams ..... Lilly Young

### BAND

Gernot Bernroder ..... Drums  
Russ Johnson ..... Trumpets  
Rich Mollin ..... Bass  
Jason Rigby ..... Saxophones  
Sean Wayland ..... Piano, Hammond C3,  
Fender Rhodes



**JAZZ OPERA IN NINE INNINGS**  
**REVISED VERSION**

## SYNOPSIS

### FIRST INNING

#### Stadium. Night game in progress.

There's trouble on the field as young star pitcher ANGEL CORAZON repeatedly waves off catcher MARVIN WILDER's signs. Marvin loses his temper, calls time out, and marches to the pitcher's mound to confront Angel. DOUGLAS "DUTCH" SCHULHAUS, manager of the Bluebloods, trots to the mound to intervene. Tempers flare. Marvin's jealousy of Angel's success is deep and corrosive.

### SECOND INNING

#### "First Base" Sports Bar. Evening.

Sports agent JAN GREEN enters with chic young LILLY YOUNG, come to meet Angel and Marvin, Lilly's blind date. Marvin's posturing fails to impress Lilly, but Angel and Lilly enjoy an immediate rapport. Jan, disappointed in her hope of rekindling Angel's ardor, ends the evening early.

### THIRD INNING

#### Stadium. Workout.

Angel warms up in the bullpen while Jan and Dutch sing of his talents and bright future. Jan shares with the audience a secret only she knows: Angel's flawed heart, which if revealed would render him unemployable. The ensemble issues a rousing call for the game to begin.

### FOURTH INNING

#### Stadium bullpen. Afternoon.

Lilly watches the Blueblood's practice as she and Jan ponder the life of a player's woman. Angel greets them both fondly from the field, but Jan leaves after lamenting her thwarted love life. Alone with Angel, Lilly expresses doubts. Together they sing a duet—his positive but macho, hers questioning and mixed. Angel implores Lilly to make a life with him.

### FIFTH INNING

#### "First Base" Sports Bar. Evening.

Jan is drinking alone when Marvin joins her. Does she want to win Angel? More than anything, she admits. Marvin outlines in sinister terms a plan to sabotage the unlikely lovers. Jan hesitates, then agrees, and exits. Marvin vows to exact his jealous vengeance upon the two lovers.

### SIXTH INNING

#### Stadium. Night game in progress.

Dutch sets the scene at an important late-season game. Angel is sweaty and weary, laboring hard as he pitches. Angel calls time for a conference on the mound. He and Marvin argue again. Angel agrees to throw the pitches that Marvin calls. He does, and disaster ensues: the other team lights up the scoreboard as Angel's magic deserts him and the game is lost. Marvin rejoices in the ease with which he can control the Fates. Alone on the field after the players have gone, Dutch vows to defend Angel from harm, and to protect the game of baseball.

### SEVENTH INNING

#### "First Base" Sports Bar. Evening.

Marvin is alone, sipping a Martini. Jan arrives with Lilly, who is disappointed to find Angel is not there. Marvin tells her he had other plans. Jan excuses herself. Marvin plies Lilly with drinks while planting seeds of doubt in her mind regarding Angel's fidelity and his suitability as a mate. Marvin and Lilly dance. Lilly, tipsy, rests her head on Marvin's shoulder as he guides her out the door.

### EIGHTH INNING

#### Stadium bullpen. Twilight.

Angel is in the bullpen, preparing for the final Pennant race game when Lilly appears above, stricken. He asks her why she didn't answer her phone last night. Lilly leaves in tears. Dutch telephones the bullpen, telling Angel he is putting him in as a closer, with the Pennant riding on his performance. Marvin dons his gear as Jan enters and confronts him. She rejects him and everything he stands for, regretting her role in helping him sabotage Angel's love affair.

### NINTH INNING

#### Stadium infield. Night (game continues).

The Bluebloods need one more out to win the Pennant, but Angel is falling apart. Dutch goes to the mound to buck him up. Angel and Marvin meet on the mound, where Marvin asserts that Lilly is in love with him now—that he has lost her. Angel, stunned, does not notice Lilly return to her seat in the stands. He hurls his final pitch, and strikes the final batter out, but his graceful follow-through becomes a slow collapse—his flawed heart has failed him again. Angel has been brought to his knees. Lilly arrives to cradle Angel in her arms, his major-league career finished. Dutch and Jan kneel beside.

# LIBRETTO

## 2 FIRST INNING

New York City's Metropolitan Stadium.  
Night game in progress.

### DUTCH

Trouble in the battery!  
Kid's waving him off.  
Wilder needs flattery,  
He's got to be boss!

### MARVIN

(to Dutch)  
He's off the reservation!  
Completely lost.

### ANGEL

I throw what I want!  
To hell with the cost!

### DUTCH

You can throw,  
But you don't know  
The book.

### ANGEL

I know plenty,  
I can deal with these jerks!

### MARVIN

Just what we need—  
More primo donnas at work!

### DUTCH

There's one guy who knows,

There's one guy you owe,  
And that guy, Angel,  
Is me!

(indicating Marvin)

Do what he says!  
Sliders and curves,  
Tighten the screws,  
By degree.

Now batting fourth—  
Leading the League,  
A fearsome monster,  
Going for ten in a row.

Now comes the wind-up...  
Now comes the pitch...  
Now comes the switch...

### ANGEL

Control, power, and speed,  
All the tools that I need.  
Upper pocket, inside!

### MARVIN

This guy's a ball chaser,  
With no place to hide.  
Low down corner, outside!

*Marvin has to reach hard for Angel's pitch, falling on the ball.*

### ALL

Strike!

### DUTCH

What ever happened  
To this game,  
They played in the sun?  
No rules, no shame,

Dealers out to game the game.  
What ever happened?

### MARVIN

I call for a curve,  
He shakes me a no!  
Waves off a screwball,  
Won't throw a slow!

### ANGEL

You play by the book,  
You end up with the hook!

### DUTCH

You're throwing a pattern!  
When they figure it out,  
They'll light you right up  
Like the Fourth of July!

*Dutch confronts the Umpire—chin-to-chin!*

### DUTCH

Hey ump!  
How 'bout lettin' me manage  
Every once in a while?

You clueless sawed off runt!  
Your little hat's too tight!  
Go piss on the plate!  
It needs a light dustin'!

*The Umpire makes the famous vertical 'You're out of here' hand signal.*

### MARVIN

You're on your own now, kid!

### ANGEL

Watch and learn!

### MARVIN

I'm watchin'  
I'm waitin'  
When's my lesson?

### DUTCH

The old brush-back—  
A little chin music.  
Looks like Corazon  
Wants to call the tune.

## 4 SECOND INNING

"First Base" Sports Bar, Evening.

### LILLY

Where are the boys?  
Are we early?

### JAN

Don't worry Lilly,  
You're top of the order tonight.

### LILLY

Like moths to a flame,  
We dance at the window panes.  
Of glowing male egos.

### JAN / LILLY

Diamond princes we will wed,  
A Major League wedding bed.  
Sit with the player's wives,  
And tell each other stories.

### LILLY

Happy ones.

**JAN**

Sad ones.

**LILLY**

About being bored.

**JAN**

Being ignored.

**JAN / LILLY**

Because there's a game on.

**JAN**

Can you imagine?

Now playing for the women:

Jan the Super Agent!

**LILLY**

And her good friend,

Lilly the Uptown Girl!

*ANGEL and MARVIN enter from the far side.*

**MARVIN**

What kind of music

Are they playing?

Are they drunk?

**ANGEL**

They know where

I'm coming from.

**MARVIN**

There's Jan

With my blind date.

It's good to be a little late;

Make them wait.

**ANGEL**

You're always playing a game!

**MARVIN**

My beautiful Svengali—

You bring me a gift?

**JAN**

Lilly, this is Marvin Wilder,

Smartest catcher in the Show.

And the star of my roster,

Angel Corazon.

**MARVIN**

A year ago I topped that list....

**LILLY**

What's this?

**MARVIN**

A performance-enhancing substance.

**JAN**

Cheers, lover!

**ANGEL**

I am most pleased

To make your acquaintance.

**LILLY**

Jan's told me so

Much about you.

**ANGEL**

She's my agent, remember?

*(to Jan)*

Are you working on commission tonight?

**LILLY**

Jan tells me you're new,

From the Dominican Republic.

**ANGEL**

I was raised in San Cristóbal

On the wrong side of the tracks

Except there weren't any

By the seaside.

**LILLY**

I was raised on the Upper East Side.

Boarded in prep schools

Where I learned how to ride

And how to look cool.

**LILLY**

When I was a young girl

We cruised to Santo Domingo.

My father drank in the bar

While my mother played bingo.

**ANGEL**

When I was a small boy

We went down to the docks

The ships came, lights all ablaze

Filled with beautiful people

**ANGEL**

I can still hear

The songs they used to sing,

In the old cafés.

On the water.

**JAN**

I wonder which maid

He has on his

Made-up mind?

**ANGEL**

You've broken many hearts,

Would you like to break mine?

**LILLY**

That must be one

Of your very best lines.

**ANGEL**

Come see me play!

**LILLY**

Name the day.

**MARVIN**

Is it time to eat?

**JAN**

It's getting late.

**MARVIN**

Change of plans?

**ANGEL**

Do you have to leave so soon?

**LILLY**

Goodbye, Marvin—

Nice to meet you.

Good night...Angel.

**LILLY**

He's gorgeous—

Oh Jan, what a find!

**JAN**

He's gorgeous—

Oh innocent friend of mine!

*Lilly and Jan exit.*

**ANGEL / MARVIN**

She's beautiful!

**ANGEL**

Elegant, schooled, and kind—

**MARVIN**

—Expensive, spoiled, and blind.

*Marvin snaps his fingers to get the Bartender's attention, and points to their two empty Martini glasses.*

**6 THIRD INNING**

Afternoon Workout Metropolitan Stadium.

**ANGEL**

I play for the poor man,  
The lunch bucket fan.

For the people who struggle for bread.  
The cabbies and shoeblacks, the public school teachers  
Up there in the bleachers.

Up there in the cheap seats!  
I can hear their heartbeat!  
It's for them that I throw—  
'Cause the rich don't need any heroes...

**MARVIN**

I'd like to be the one  
Who makes the news every night.  
Max out the speed gun,  
See my name up in lights.

Lead the league  
In strikeouts pitching—  
Even that wouldn't stop  
Dutch from bitching.

**ANGEL/DUTCH**

Every game is an affirmation  
Of all we believe.  
Honesty and hard work,  
Fair play by the rules.  
The kind of things these days,  
They don't learn in school.

**MARVIN**

There's the game in their heads,  
There's the game that we play.  
They cheer for the Mets,  
The Mets want their pay.

They read about the Yankees—  
They get out their hankies.  
The Cubs are so nice—  
Not one has his vice.

"It's not if you win,  
It's how you play the game!"  
Have you ever heard anything so lame?

**DUTCH**

Ten years catching in the Minors,  
His old man a drunk—  
Gave his mom shiners  
When he fell in a funk.

**MARVIN**

Wife left me for a guy  
Who sold Buicks.  
The divorce came through  
In just under two weeks.  
—We had nothing to divide.

Angel gets called up to The Show.  
At twenty years old,  
What does he know?  
What do they see in him,  
They don't see in me?

**ANGEL**

No time to ponder, or to doubt.  
Don't need the priest, or the shrink.  
When the crowd proclaims you royalty,  
Who cares what the critics think?

My arm commands respect,  
It will not be denied.  
I demand obedience, loyalty—  
King until I die!

**JAN**

Angel could be my perfect prize.  
Only I know his secret:  
A flawed heart could fail  
At the slightest heartache.  
Angel's heart could break,  
At the slightest ache.

**ANGEL**

My future's ahead of me.

**MARVIN**

Where the hell else would it be?

**JAN**

The future ends at thirty-three.

**ANGEL**

I'd play this game for free!

**MARVIN**

You're paid nine-million-three—

**ANGEL**

I don't play for pay—

**MARVIN**

That's what they all say—

**ANGEL**

I'll build a convent—  
I'll build a school!  
I'll play baseball forever!

**MARVIN**

This kid is not too clever.

**ANGEL**

I'll build a university!

**JAN**

That'll get you great publicity.

**ANGEL**

I will Marv—I will!

**MARVIN**

O.K. with me—  
You're paying the bill.

**DUTCH**

A hot dog at the park  
Beats a ribeye at Lugar's!

**MARVIN**

People who say that  
Don't know Bud from Beluga!

**DUTCH**

With Angel, we'll take the pennant!

**MARVIN**

You're the reason we never win it!

**ANGEL**

Este es nuestro año!

**ANGEL/DUTCH**

This is our year!

**DUTCH**

That's what I want to hear!  
Let's play ball!

**DUTCH/MARVIN**

Let's play ball!

**DUTCH/MARVIN/ANGEL**

Let's play ball!

**ALL**

Let's play ball!

Play ball!

**8 FOURTH INNING**

Metropolitan Stadium. Afternoon, end of a practice.

**JAN**

There you are,  
Ready for your balcony scene.

**LILLY**

See how well they move,  
How graceful they seem.

**JAN**

Look closer! They're men of sweat and stubble,  
Who live for the double-play.  
Head Uptown tonight with me,  
We'll find someone worth all the trouble.

**LILLY**

Look at Angel running!

**JAN**

Look at yourself slumming!

**LILLY/JAN**

Think of our lives,  
Lived somewhere else.  
To find a world,  
That doesn't ring false.

**JAN**

Your heart will break on the first road trip,  
The truth will hurt when he lets it slip,  
That you are living the player's life.  
And the part you play, is player's wife!

*Angel steps onto the field, dressed casually. He sings to himself.*

**ANGEL**

A golden field at twilight,  
Sweet fragrance of grass,  
Purple promise of night.  
Summer's fulfillment of springtime.

Two beautiful women,  
Come to watch me play.  
May I have your autographs?

**JAN**

We're going out later;  
Thought we'd say hello.

**ANGEL**

We've almost finished—  
A few more routines.

**LILLY**

It is rather warm up here.

**JAN**

It's hot,  
And getting hotter!

**ANGEL**

I'll take you both dancing,  
Any place you'd like to go!

**JAN**

I'm a free agent Corazon,  
Not your draft-pick.  
Farewell you two—  
The night belongs to the young,  
And foolish.

*Jan walks to the exit stage left, pauses and looks at the two lovers, now gazing at each other.*

**JAN**

Look at her!  
The light in her eyes.  
That flame was mine  
Not so long ago...

Look at them!  
Listen to their laughter.  
She's found happiness  
For keeps, for ever after.

**ANGEL**

I was hoping I might find you here today.

**LILLY**

I find it hard to stay away.

**ANGEL**

You love the game?

**LILLY**

I'm more interested in the players,  
Than in keeping score.

**ANGEL**

What would you like to know?

**LILLY**

To know where my wandering heart is,  
And what it's searching for.

**ANGEL**

It lives in a world,  
High and luxurious.

Where the sounds and colors  
Are soft and mysterious.

Looking down from  
Skyboxes far above.

**LILLY**

I'm not above you,  
Angel Corazon.

**ANGEL**

You want something beyond  
The life you're living now.  
What is the thing you want?  
The thing you do not have?

**LILLY**

I have all I need!

**ANGEL**

I don't believe it.

**LILLY**

That is the truth  
As I see it.

**ANGEL**

To see the truth  
Is not to lie.

**LILLY**

Don't you believe me?

**ANGEL**

I will take you  
To the simple places,  
The true places,  
Beyond all others you have known.

And you in turn,  
Will give to me,  
A life, a love,  
A home.

**LILLY**

Where is that world,  
Beyond all time and care?

**ANGEL**

Wherever life leads.

**LILLY/ANGEL**

Here—and everywhere!

**ANGEL**

Why must I feel  
So very far apart.

Every thing is new,  
Right here, right now,  
From the start.

**ANGEL**

Lilly, take this diamond,  
For your finger,  
Embedded in emerald,  
Green as your eye.

**LILLY**

This cannot work,  
Brave Angel Heart.

I've forgotten what I knew,  
What I meant to say  
From the start.

Come down to me!  
Take the field with me,  
Play by my side!

*Lilly hesitates, then descends the steps to the field.  
Angel offers his hand.*

**LILLY**

Give me the touch of your hand!

**LILLY/ANGEL**

And the scent of your hair!

**10 FIFTH INNING**

From Metropolitan Stadium to the "First Base".

*Jan is drinking alone. Marvin enters, sees her and stops.*

**MARVIN**

*(to Bartender)*  
A double Martini—  
For the Super Agent,  
*(to Jan)*  
Evening, my weary  
Fading beauty.

**JAN**

Be polite;  
Treat me nice.

**MARVIN**

Don't play the fool.  
You've been working overtime.  
I'm not your tool!

You're smart as a cat,  
Lilly's stuck on Angel  
Like pine tar on a bat.

**JAN**

That was not my intention.  
This Angel needs a guardian.  
I could be good for him!

A fragile heart easily broken,  
A secret I've never spoken.

**MARVIN**

You want to win  
Your cardboard Angel?

**JAN**

I will not lose  
My final chance.  
What chance for love  
Is left to me?

I will not leave  
My perfect love,  
Benched and sidelined,  
Carried off the field.

Pleasure time is  
Measured time,  
Part of the package,  
From deal to deal.

Yards are gained,  
Years are lost.  
A yellow flag's  
Upon the play.

Run 'round the base,  
Like a crazy clock.  
With no arms  
For me to hold.

Hey bartender,  
Hit me once again.  
Roll your laughing dice.  
Last call for love.

**MARVIN**

Don't play fair!

**JAN**

What kind of scheme?

**MARVIN**

Work your magic,  
Weave your user's dream.  
I'll get what I want,  
And we'll all live...

**JAN**

Lilly?

**MARVIN**

What do they have in common?

**JAN**

Youth, beauty, trusting hearts.

**MARVIN**

Together they're less  
Than the sum of their parts!

**JAN**

You want me to?

**MARVIN**

Put the ball in play.  
Bring Lilly to the "First Base",  
I'll do the rest.

**JAN**

Angel loves Lilly.

**MARVIN**

He often acts rashly.



**JAN**

When he's shamed.

**MARVIN**

When he's blamed.

**JAN**

For what?

A lie?

We've all taken our pleasure  
Where and when we've found it.  
The end will justify the means.  
Draw the curtain, no one will see.

**MARVIN**

I'm not speaking of truth,  
I play to win.

**MARVIN / JAN**

We know what we want,  
So let it begin.

**MARVIN**

'Capisce?'

**JAN**

Yes, and then?

**MARVIN**

One game at a time.

**JAN**

I've had enough to drink,  
And quite enough of you.  
Give my love to Dutch.

*Jan exits.*

**MARVIN**

Keep in touch!

People are so easy,  
They know not what they do.  
An Angel sent from nowhere,  
His winning streak is through.

*He lifts his Martini glass in the air to toast himself.*

It will be cold and clear as this,  
Served straight up, with a twist.

**12 SIXTH INNING**

From the First Base to Metropolitan Stadium.  
Night game in progress.

*Angel signals for a time out and motions Marvin  
to the mound.*

**MARVIN**

What's the problem?  
Send 'em packin'!

**ANGEL**

I throw what you call,  
And look what happens!

**MARVIN**

Fastball's got to smoke,  
Curve's got to choke 'em.

**ANGEL**

I put it where you want,  
They hit it hard.  
It's over the wall  
And out of the yard!

**MARVIN**

Show me heat—no hesitation,  
Out on the mound, no reservations.

**ANGEL**

I'll throw the pitches  
I want to throw.  
Whatever you tell me,  
I can always say "No!"

**MARVIN**

I've caught Hall of Famers.  
You're a pretty-boy flamer.  
You don't know the score,  
On the field...  
...Or in bed.

**DUTCH**

Once it was a game of camaraderie.  
Now they live for fame and celebrity.

*Angel peers at Marvin who signals. Angel shakes his  
head "No"—again, and again.  
He throws—the "Batter" swings—*

**DUTCH**

A hit! Going... going... Gone!  
*(walking to the mound to join Marvin and Angel)*  
What the hell was that?  
I haven't seen ball that bad  
Since I managed in Florida!

**MARVIN**

I call low and inside,  
He throws high and wide!

**ANGEL**

I don't need your calls!

**DUTCH**

I didn't come out here  
Just to pat you on the ass.

**ANGEL**

You want my power.  
My gift from the gods!  
I'm the golden calf you need,  
To beat the odds.

**DUTCH**

Loneliness goes with the turf,  
On the mound, or alone on the bench.  
Take it in stride.  
Turn off the pride.  
There's another game—tomorrow.

*Dutch pats Angel on the back—removing him from  
the game.*

**MARVIN**

The gold is in the averages.  
It's the weak ones  
The game savages.

I do my best,  
Angel has to do the rest.

**DUTCH**

Don't give me that baloney, Wilder!  
What's going on with you two?  
Envy? Jealousy?  
I'm watching you,  
And I don't like what I see!

**MARVIN**

How sweet it is—  
I signal from the plate.  
Angel trusts me,  
And I control his fate.

**DUTCH**

We live in a meadow of green,  
Filled with lives of men unseen,  
The men upon the walls  
In the Hall of Fame.

By the strength of my right arm,  
I will defend from any harm,  
The men who love the game  
They were born to play.

Full moon over second base,  
A hanging pitch in space,  
Bring me a touch of grace,  
From Cooperstown.

**14 SEVENTH INNING**

"First Base" Sports Bar. Evening.

*Marvin, Lilly and Jan enter simultaneously.*

**JAN**

Stylish dresser...

**LILLY**

The dimmer the light, the better.

**JAN**

Ruggedly handsome, don't you think?

**LILLY**

So they say—he gets a lot of ink.

**JAN**

He's got style—and savoir faire.

**LILLY**

Marvin broke your heart—

**JAN**

He merely took the dare.

**LILLY**

I thought Angel would be here.

**JAN**

The Angel I know  
Makes up rules as he goes.

**MARVIN**

Rich, young and handsome—  
At the top of his game!  
Let him enjoy  
His fifteen minutes of fame.

**LILLY**

What are you implying?

**MARVIN**

Be careful what you wish for.

**LILLY**

Just friends!  
That is where it ends!

**LILLY**

I'm sure he's very happy  
With his new-found fame  
Dazzling some low-rent dame.

**MARVIN**

I'm your consolation prize.

**LILLY**

You see the question marks in my eyes?

**LILLY/JAN**

I am weary of men  
Who only live for winning.  
I remember what I knew,  
At the start, at the beginning.

**MARVIN**

My gaming ends  
With the ninth inning.

**JAN**

Still no Angel I see?  
That's old business to me.

*(quickly checks her cell phone, then flips it closed)*

Another client,  
Young and compliant,  
Waits for me Uptown.  
This one won't let me down!

*Jan gives Lilly a quick air-kiss on both cheeks,  
the same to Marvin, and breezes off-stage with a wave  
back to them. As Marvin waits for drinks he sings to  
the audience.*

**MARVIN**

Trust, freely given,  
Is the coin of the lover's realm.  
Steal it away,  
And hearts will break.

Forgiveness, if it comes at all,  
Is always a little late—  
—In the give and take.

When push comes to shove,  
I never make mistakes.  
Dreams that lovers dream,  
Are easy to placate.

Like reporters,  
You can buy 'em with a steak!  
—In the give and take.

Love is the loser's game,  
The stats are bent and fake.  
Lovers place their foolish bets,  
Hoping to beat the Fates.

Cupid is nodding off,  
But I am wide awake—  
—In the give and take.

*Marvin receives two Martinis from the Bartender and  
carries them back to Lilly.*

**MARVIN**

Ever try an Appletini?

**LILLY**

Am I allowed?

That's my limit.  
*(throws her head back and shakes it, as if trying to clear  
her mind)*  
I think I'm getting tight.

**MARVIN**

I know a place we could go—

**LILLY**

I should say good-night.

**MARVIN**

—it's on your way home.

**LILLY**

Are you hustling me,  
Mister All-Star Catcher in the Rye?

**MARVIN**

Call it ‘courting’ please—  
A charge I won’t deny.

*Lilly rests her head on Marvin’s shoulder. He drapes his coat around her and guides her toward the door.*

**LILLY**

I can feel  
A touch of fall.  
Fingers of frost cover  
The tumbling leaves.

We reap what we sow,  
Drink the bitter with the sweet.  
Harvest as best we can—  
The bold, the brave, the meek.

**MARVIN**

October is the cruelest month.

**16 EIGHTH INNING**

Metropolitan Stadium bullpen, twilight.

**DUTCH**

One hundred-sixty games done.  
One more victory,  
The Pennant’s won.

Bottom of the eighth,  
Blues lead by a run.  
Three outs away from  
Our Series in the sun.

Nine strikes—it’s over!  
I’ve got to have a closer!

*Dutch exits. Lilly appears at the rail above Angel.*

**ANGEL**

I called—you didn’t answer.  
I called later—still, no answer.

**LILLY**

What can I tell you?

**ANGEL**

The truth!

**LILLY**

We’re in love—  
That’s the truth.

**ANGEL**

At half-past three—  
“Away from the phone  
Or on another line,”  
—All night long?

**LILLY**

You stood me up!

**ANGEL**

No one tells a Corazon  
What to do!  
A man must have  
A woman he can trust.

**LILLY**

You did.

**ANGEL**

“Una mujer que le trae  
Paz a su corazon.”

**LILLY**

I could.

‘A woman who brings  
Peace to his heart.’

**ANGEL**

How can you prove that, now?

**LILLY**

You’ll have to take it  
On faith.

**ANGEL**

Who are you  
To talk of faith?  
Go back to your world  
Of white-gloved doormen!

**LILLY**

Parquet floors are better than dirt!  
Loving you is a world of hurt.  
My life depends on love,  
Yours ends with the ball and glove.

*Lilly rushes away in tears.*

**ANGEL**

For years, kept to myself—  
My secret—Mi Corazon.  
I always play each game,  
Like it was my last.

Love weighs on my chest,  
I’m pitching on two days rest,  
We’re in the Pennant now,  
Not at the beginning.

“No pain, no gain.”  
For lovers that is true.  
Set love aside—  
Now is the time for winning.

**DUTCH**

Angel!  
Time to plow the field!  
Light ‘em up  
Shut ‘em down,  
And wrap the Show!  
Nine strikes it’s over—  
I’ve got to have a closer!

*Angel picks up his glove and walks to the mound.  
Lilly appears in the stands.*

**LILLY**

Never in my life,  
Have I lost my way.  
Lost what I held close,  
And found my heart astray.

Never in my life,  
Have I seen the stars so clear.  
Love is a nebula spinning  
Around an invisible core.

Angel, I can still feel  
The touch of your hand.  
Press my ear to your chest,  
To hear its beating sound.

*Lilly exits. Dutch exits.*

**MARVIN**

I was not raised,  
Between Lexington and Park.  
I do not hail from a  
Colorful cruise destination.

In my shotgun world  
They slave all their lives  
To honor their  
Small obligations.

They're fools—suckers—  
Set up—knocked down.  
Laid out—wrapped up.  
The grave their final vacation!

*Jan enters the dugout area, furiously confronting Marvin.*

#### JAN

This dugout's a snake pit!  
You're the cause of it!  
What the hell was I thinking?

Twice burned,  
You would think I would learn—  
I've got to cut out the drinking!

What could I have gained,  
That would counter the pain  
Jealous desires inflicted?

When love is a vice  
Not worth the price  
Only pain is predicted!

Behind your catcher's mask  
On a rock you bask,  
Curled reptilian evil!

I know you, Marvin—  
I know what—and who—  
You are!

#### 18 NINTH INNING

Metropolitan Stadium—the afternoon continues.

*Angel stands on the mound, holding a baseball. Marvin  
squats at the plate. Dutch leans on the dugout rail.*

#### ANGEL

What can we believe in?  
Why should we forgive?  
Who plays the fool,  
When we hope against all odds?

At home we trust  
The rain will come,  
Fish will bite,  
Tourists will throw us their silver.

The rains came—  
Dollars pouring down on me.  
Doors opened,  
Crowded with smiling faces,  
Beautiful and false.

*Lilly appears in the stands.*

#### LILLY

Why me?  
Why must I love this man?

#### ANGEL

My heart is bleeding  
Into my game.  
I've been a fool!

#### LILLY/ANGEL

Who's behind?  
Who's ahead?

#### LILLY

Is life nothing but a game,  
Played for pleasure—

#### LILLY/ANGEL

Played for profit?  
Games!  
Games!  
Games!

#### DUTCH

Let's go Bluebloods— let's go!

#### DUTCH/ANGEL

Let's go Bluebloods— let's go!

#### DUTCH/ANGEL/JAN

Let's go Bluebloods— let's go!

#### ALL

Let's go Bluebloods— let's go!

#### DUET (Sung to Angel)

#### JAN

Double play!  
Score it six-five-four!  
Keep it going, Angel  
Just one more!

#### DUET (Sung to each other)

#### ANGEL

He's a power hitter—  
Sucker for a slider.  
Why call for  
A low inside?

#### QUINTET (ALL)

#### LILLY

Send me away—  
Treat me like a whore!  
Treat me like a fool,  
Just once more!

#### MARVIN

He's a right-hander.  
He knows you'll throw outside

I called for a splitter.

#### DUTCH

On with the show!  
You're not paid  
To stand around—  
Let's see some pitching—  
Let's see some catching!

#### LILLY

Angel lives for the game,  
More than he lives his life!  
Why must I lose,  
For Angel to win?

#### JAN

Marvin is stalling—  
Crazy, power hungry—  
Everyone must lose—  
So Wilder can win!

#### ANGEL

If you keep the ball  
From hitting the backstop,  
You've done all  
I need you to do!

#### MARVIN

When I call a deuce  
How 'bout you produce  
A curve ball,  
Instead of excuses?

#### LILLY

Love in the balance—

#### JAN

Careers on the line—

**LILLY/JAN**

We're taking our chances—  
One point at a time!

**DUTCH**

Let's go Bluebloods, let's go!

**MARVIN**

Everyone ready?

**ANGEL**

Do it now!

**LILLY**

Only a game—  
It's only a game!

**JAN**

Down to the wire—  
Right to the end!

**DUTCH**

Positions—  
Deliver!

**MARVIN**

We live for this!

**MARVIN/ANGEL**

We live for this!

**DUTCH**

Let's play ball!

**DUTCH/MARVIN**

Let's play ball!

**DUTCH/MARVIN/ANGEL**

Let's play ball!  
*(Quintet ends)*

**JAN**

No!— Marvin wouldn't dare!

**DUTCH**

I'm sending that sonofabitch catcher down!

**MARVIN**

*(to himself, as he walks to the mound)*

Time to serve it up—  
This knuckleball can't miss.

The catcher becomes the pitcher—  
Straight up with a twist!

**ANGEL**

On this hill I am alone.  
My stats and life are my own,  
No one else matters.

**MARVIN**

Then you won't mind  
I was with the woman you treasured,  
The trophy you pleased!

**ANGEL**

It was you last night—  
It was you!

*Angel begins to rub his chest, as if reacting to pain.*

Lilly?

It can't be true!

*Marvin flips the ball to Angel, who in his shock drops it.*

**MARVIN**

*(spoken)*  
...Welcome to The Show!

**ANGEL**

A golden autumn eve,  
Sun racing past,  
A sky so blue.

We yearned for love,  
Yet life is cruel,  
It plays us all for fools.

I climbed this hill of sand,  
This summit of perfection.  
The price is Lilly's love,  
A price I cannot pay.

What prize matters most?  
Peace of mind,  
A love for life?  
Or a place among the ghosts,  
Of Cooperstown?

**LILLY**

Never in my life,  
Have I seen the stars so clear.  
Love is a nebula,  
Spinning around an invisible core.

Give me the touch of your hand—  
And the scent of your hair!

*Angel hurls his final pitch. In slow motion the ball flies to the plate and the fearsome batter swings—and misses. Angel's graceful follow-through becomes a slow collapse—he sinks to his knees...The Bluebloods win the Pennant!*

**ANGEL**

*(hands on his chest)*  
Lilly!  
Mi corazon!

*Lilly runs onto the field and cradles Angel in her arms. She is joined by Dutch and Jan.*

**DUTCH**

It breaks your heart.  
It is designed  
to break your heart.

The game begins in spring,  
When everything  
begins again.

Filling afternoons  
and evenings.  
Keeping the memory  
of sunshine and high skies...  
...alive.

And then, as soon as the chill rains come  
When the days are all twilight  
When you need it most

It stops.  
And leaves you  
to face the fall...  
...alone.\*

**CURTAIN.**

\*A. Bartlett Giamatti

1	CHART 1	1:55
2	FIRST INNING (DUTCH/ANGEL/MARVIN)	5:39
3	CHART 2	:53
4	SECOND INNING (LILLY/JAN/ANGEL/MARVIN)	7:09
5	CHART 3	:51
6	THIRD INNING (JAN/DUTCH/ANGEL/MARVIN)	6:39
7	CHART 4	1:23
8	FOURTH INNING (LILLY/JAN/ANGEL)	9:43
9	CHART 5	:52
10	FIFTH INNING (MARVIN/JAN)	5:55
11	CHART 6	1:03
12	SIXTH INNING (DUTCH/MARVIN/ANGEL)	6:18
13	CHART 7	1:18
14	SEVENTH INNING (LILLY/JAN/MARVIN)	7:11
15	CHART 8	1:29
16	EIGHTH INNING (ALL)	8:26
17	CHART 9	1:21
18	NINTH INNING (ALL)	10:08
	TOTAL TIME	79:00



## PRODUCER NOTES

---

The instrumental sessions took place at Brooklyn's Systems Two Recording. Recording engineer Mike Marciano has two jazz engineering Grammys under his belt. The studio had a superb collection of microphones both vintage and modern, and instruments that included a truly outstanding Steinway B piano which used to reside at Carnegie Hall.

The jazz quintet set up in a rough semicircle facing Sasha at the podium. Trumpeter Russ Johnson and sax player Jason Rigby were to Sasha's left behind windowed screens. Rich Mollin on double bass was in an isolation booth at the back of the room. Gernot Bernroider's drums were to the right, with more isolating screens keeping down the leakage into the other instruments' microphones. Finally, Sean Wayland's piano, Hammond organ with its Leslie cabinet, and Fender Rhodes 88 electric piano were positioned to Sasha's far right.

The vocal sessions took place at Schnee Studio in Studio City, California. For vocal recording, the attraction was Bill Schnee's collection of vintage tubed microphones, and his use of the renowned Mastering Lab microphone preamplifiers. The sounds our "canaries" would be making would be picked up with Neumann U87s, perhaps the finest vocal microphone extant.

The instruments and vocalists were recorded "flat," without equalization or reverberation, although there was some occasional peak limiting on the vocals. For the final mixing sessions back in Systems Two, Mike Marciano took the raw session files, adjusted levels, and added equalization and reverberation with both plug-ins and onboard devices. But other than some dynamic adjustments of volume for each instrument and voice, using ProTools' gain overlays, there is no overall compression applied to *Cooperstown*. All tracks had been recorded with ProTools, set at an 88.2Hz/24-bit sample rate. The goal in a mix is that the whole will be greater than the sum of the individual parts. Right at the beginning of my involvement on the *Cooperstown* project, Sasha had told me he hoped to recreate the feeling of the great jazz quintet recordings of the 1950s. I think Mike Marciano realized that goal for him with the mix.

— John Atkinson

## COMPOSER NOTES

"It breaks your heart." That was the poetic language A. Bartlett Giamatti used in his beautiful essay *The Green Fields of the Mind*, and I am pleased that the Giamatti estate gave us permission to use his text. I began to work backward from there in the fall of 2000.

Whose heart? How was it broken?

In Giamatti's thinking, baseball is a game but also an art form, with the capacity to express the deepest emotional truths about individuals and society. One has only to pick up the sports pages to see this dynamic acted out against the economic and cultural realities of our time.

Baseball has its own specific historical musical attributes. One of them is the sound of the stadium organ. That sound led me quickly to scoring the music for a Miles jazz quintet. This particular grouping of instruments is as capable as any large orchestra of realizing music in all its potential variety. The musical materials boil down to the rising three-chord Charge fanfare still heard in stadiums everywhere, which can be turned to the dark side by becoming an altered dominant harmony.

Early on in the composing process I had a sonic picture in my ear of what a finished recording of *Cooperstown* might sound like. I used as a model the great Blue Note stereo recordings of the late '50s and early '60s engineered by Rudy Van Gelder. Trumpet hard left, saxophone hard right—then added the vocal cast of five.

— Sasha Matson

© 2020 by Sasha Matson Music Co. BMI  
www.sashamatson.com

SASHA  
MATSON

*Cooperstown*

JAZZ OPERA IN NINE INNINGS  
REVISED VERSION



WARNING: COPYRIGHT  
SUBSISTS IN ALL RECORDINGS  
ISSUED UNDER THIS LABEL.

TROY1848  
**Albany**

WWW.ALBANYRECORDS.COM  
ALBANY RECORDS U.S.  
915 BROADWAY, ALBANY, NY 12207  
TEL: 518.436.8814 FAX: 518.436.0643

ALBANY RECORDS U.K.  
BOX 137, KENDAL, CUMBRIA LA8 0XD  
TEL: 01539 824008  
© 2020 ALBANY RECORDS MADE IN THE USA





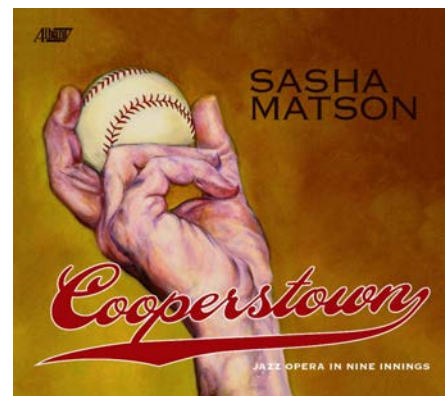
## Streamlined *Cooperstown* Hits it Out of the Park A jazz opera in nine innings



Albany Records has announced the December release of *Cooperstown* by **Sasha Matson**. "This is a revised version of a longer opera, and I feel that trimming its dimensions has actually added an enormous focus and potency to the piece and its essence," says Mr. Matson.

*Cooperstown* utilizes five solo singers and a 1950s-style jazz quintet, and is described as "a jazz opera in nine innings". The full-length work was released by Albany Records in 2015. "Highly recommended to jazz and opera lovers alike", said *Fanfare*; "Well sung and inventively composed, this intriguing blend is a bracingly new mix of genres", said *Stereophile*. "As happy as I was with the original version and in particular the quality of the performers and their interpretation", says Mr. Matson, "over time I came to feel that a revision would strengthen the piece, so I plunged into waters that many composers have navigated before - revising completed work - and in a way it was more daunting than writing the original in the first place!" The newly re-mixed audiophile recording of the one-act edition of the work, first performed by Opera Las Vegas in 2019, has a running time of 79 minutes. *Cooperstown* is available (including libretto) on CD (Troy 1848), and for download and streaming in both standard and hi-resolution audio formats.

Based on A. Bartlett Giamatti's essay, *The Green Fields of the Mind*, Mr. Matson and **librettist Mark Miller** have presented baseball as an art form with the capacity to express the deepest emotional truths about individuals and society, melding elements of the *Othello* story into the modern world of Major League Baseball. Matson's compositional language



summons baseball's own specific musical associations. The musical materials boil down to the rising three-chord "Charge" fanfare still heard in stadiums everywhere, and he even utilizes the quintessential baseball earworm, the sound of the stadium organ.

As for the inclusion of jazz, Matson feels that a jazz quintet is as capable as any large orchestra of realizing the human experience in all its complexity. "It's unorthodox to use jazz in an opera, but from day one this is how I heard it in my head," he says. Added to the stellar instrumentalists on the recording (Jason Rigby, reeds; Russ Johnson, trumpets; Sean Wayland, keyboards; Rich Mollin, bass; Gernot Bernroider, drums), the "luxury casting" (*Fanfare*) includes Daniel Montenegro, Rod Gilfry, Julie Adams, Daniel Favela and Carin Gilfry.

**Sasha Matson** graduated from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and UCLA, where he received his Ph.D. He has scored music for feature film and other multi-media in addition to own his compositions. Recordings of his work, including 2019's *Tight Lines*, have been released on the AudioQuest, New Albion, Stereophile, and Albany/Troy labels. Matson also writes about audio and music, and is currently a Contributing Editor for *Stereophile* magazine. He has taught at LaGrange College, Long Island University, and The State University of New York. In 2000 he moved with his family to Cooperstown NY. His music is published by Subito Music Corporation.

**Mark Miller** earned a history degree at Stanford and reported for Reuters and CBS Radio. He began a parallel career in show business at 20th Century-Fox as a writer for director-choreographer Bob Fosse, and co-wrote the screenplay for the Universal feature film *Mr. Baseball*, among other films. He has written 40 books and articles for the *National Geographic Society* and was a columnist for the *San Francisco Examiner*. As a writer for CBS Radio, Mark was nominated for a 2012 Writers Guild of America Award for Outstanding Achievement in Television and Radio Writing.

\* \* \* \* \*

Photo of Sasha Matson by Joseph D'Alessio

For more information about Sasha Matson, call 917-751-8228 and visit

[kathryningmedia.com](http://kathryningmedia.com) and [sashamatson.com](http://sashamatson.com)