

Curated by Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center

SWINGIN' THE BLUES

COMPOSED BY COUNT BASIE AND EDDIE DURHAM
ARRANGED BY EDDIE DURHAM

As performed by the Count Basie Orchestra

Transcribed and Edited by David Berger for Jazz at Lincoln Center

FULL SCORE

This transcription was made especially for Jazz at Lincoln Center's 2010-11
Sixteenth Annual *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program.

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An Annual High School Jazz Band Program
Produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center since 1995



NOTES ON PLAYING BASIE

At least 95% of modern-day large ensemble jazz playing comes out of three traditions: Count Basie's band, Duke Ellington's band, and the orchestrations of small groups. Young players interested in jazz will be drawn to small groups for the opportunity to improvise and for practical reasons (it is much easier to organize four or five people than it is 15). Schools have taken over the task (formerly performed by dance bands) of training musicians to be ensemble players. Due to the Basie band's popularity and its simplicity of style and emphasis on blues and swing, the better educators have almost exclusively adopted this tradition for teaching jazz ensemble playing.

There were three distinct periods in the Basie Band's history:

The Old Testament (1936-1949), The Sextet (1949-1952) and The New Testament (1952-1984). The New Testament Band was at its peak from 1955 (when Joe Williams joined as singer) through the mid-'60s. The Count Basie Orchestra was always first and foremost a collection of great jazz soloists with a swinging rhythm section. Basie was once asked what his music was all about. His answer was, "Pat your foot". Some of the great soloists that played with Basie were: Old Testament Band: Saxes: Lester (Prez) Young, Hershel Evans, Buddy Tate, Don Byas, Earl Warren, Jack Washington. Trumpets: Buck Clayton, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Joe Newman. Trombones: Dickie Wells, Eddie Durham. Guitar: Freddie Green, Bass: Walter Page, Drums: "Papa" Jo Jones, and of course Count Basie on piano. For a short time Billie Holiday sang with Basie, but the classic recordings feature singers Jimmy Rushing and Helen Humes. Eddie Durham was the chief arranger who created the band's Kansas City style. The Octet: Clark Terry on trumpet, Buddy DeFranco on clarinet, Wardell Gray on tenor, Freddie Green on guitar, Jimmy Lewis on bass, Gus Johnson on drums, vocalist Helen Humes and Basie on piano.

The New Testament Band: Saxes: Marshall Royal, Frank Wess, Frank Foster, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis. Trumpets: Thad Jones, Joe Newman, Snooky Young. Trombones: Al Grey, Benny Powell. Guitar: Freddie Green. Bass: Eddie Jones. Drums: Sonny Payne. Piano: Count Basie. Vocals: Joe Williams. Arrangers: Neal Hefti, Ernie Wilkins, Thad Jones, Frank Foster, Quincy Jones, Billy Byers, Benny Carter, Chico O'Farrill. Many other great soloists (like Paul Gonsalves, Sal Nistico, Chu Berry, JJ Johnson) passed through the band, but made their reputations elsewhere. The concept of the Old Testament Band was that the arrangements provided a framework to feature the soloists, all of which served to provide music for people to swing dance to. Basie always performed dance music - even when the New Testament Band started playing more concerts and clubs, the music could always be danced to. This is very important to keep in mind when performing this style of music. The following is a list of performance conventions for the great majority of Basie's music. Any deviations or additions will be spelled out in the individual performance notes that follow.

1. Listen carefully many times to the Basie recordings of these pieces. There are many subtleties that will elude even the most sophisticated listener at first. Although our goal as jazz musicians is to express ourselves with our unique sound, knowledge of these definitive versions will lead musicians to make more educated choices when creating new performances and finding our true selves. In some rare spots you will hear slight note differences in the recording and the transcriptions. This is intentional, as there are mistakes and alterations from the original intent of the music in the recording. You should have your students play what's in the score.
2. General use of swing phrasing: the triplet feel prevails except for ballads or in very rare instances where notations such as even eighths or Latin appear. In these cases, eighth notes are given equal value.
3. There is a chain of command in ensemble playing. The lead players in each section determine the phrasing and volume for their own section, and their section-mates must conform to the lead. When the saxes and/or trombones play with the trumpets, the lead trumpet is the boss. The lead alto and trombone must listen to the first trumpet and follow him or her. In turn, the other saxes and trombones must follow their lead players. If this is done effectively, there will be very little balancing work left for the conductor.
4. In jazz music, each player should express the individuality of his own line. He or she must find a musical balance of supporting and following the section leader and bringing out the character of the underpart. Each player should be encouraged to express his or her personality through the music. In this music, the underparts are played at the same volume and with the same conviction as the lead.
5. Blues inflection should permeate all parts at all times, not just when these opportunities occur in the lead.
6. Vibrato is used to warm up the sound. Saxes usually employ a heavy vibrato on harmonized passages and no vibrato on unisons. Trumpets use a little vibrato on harmonized passages and no vibrato on unisons. Trombones do not use slide vibrato. A little lip vibrato is good at times. Try to match the speed of vibrato. Unisons are played with no vibrato.
7. Crescendo as you ascend and diminuendo as you descend. The upper notes of phrases receive a natural accent and the lower notes are ghosted. Alto and tenor saxophones need to use subtone in the lower part of their range in order to blend properly with the rest of the section. For the most part the music follows the natural tendencies of the instruments; play loud in the loud part of the instrument and soft in the soft part of the instrument. For instance, a high C for a trumpet will be loud and a low C will be soft.
8. Quarter notes are generally played short unless otherwise no-

tated. Long marks above or below a pitch indicate full value: not just long, but full value. Eighth notes are played full value except when followed by a rest or otherwise notated. All notes longer than a quarter note are played full value, which means if it is followed by a rest, release the note where the rest appears. For example, a half note occurring on beat one of a measure would be released on beat three.

9. Unless they are part of a legato background figure, long notes should be played somewhat *fp*; accent then diminish the volume. This is important so that the moving parts can be heard over the sustained notes. Don't just hold out the long notes, but give them life and personality: that is, vibrato, inflection, *cre-scendo*, or *diminuendo*. There is a great deal of inflection in this music, and much of this is highly interpretive. Straight or curved lines imply non-pitched glisses, and wavy lines mean *scolor* (chromatic or diatonic) glisses. In general, all rhythmic figures need to be accented. Accents give the music life and swing. This is very important.

10. Jazz music is about individuality: one person per part - do not double up because you have extra players or need more strength. More than one on a part makes it sound more like a concert band and less like a jazz band. Americans are rugged individualists. This is reflected in our music.

11. Count Basie's music is acoustic music. Keep amplification to an absolute minimum; in the best halls, no amplification or almost no amplification should be necessary. Everyone needs to develop a big sound. It is the conductor's job to balance the band. The guitar should be a hollow-body, unamplified rhythm guitar. Simple three-note voicings should be used throughout. An acoustic string bass is a must. In mediocre or poorly designed halls, the bass and piano may need a bit of a boost. I recommend miking them and putting them through the house sound system. This should provide a much better tone than an amplifier. Keep in mind that the rhythm section's primary function is to accompany. The bass should not be as loud as a trumpet. That is unnatural and leads to over-amplification, bad tone, and limited dynamics. Stay away from monitors. They provide a false sense of balance and encourage everyone to play louder.

12. Solos and rhythm section parts without chord changes should be played as is or with a little embellishment. Solos and rhythm section parts with chord changes should be improvised whenever possible. However, written passages should be learned because they are an important part of our jazz heritage and help the player to understand the function of his particular solo or accompaniment. Soloists should learn the chord changes. Solos should not be approached as opportunities to show off technique, range, or volume, but should be looked at as a great opportunity to further develop the interesting thematic material of the arrangement.

13. The notation of plungers for the brass means a rubber toilet

plunger bought in a hardware store. Kirkhill is a very good brand (especially if you can find one of their old hard rubber ones, like the one I loaned Wynton and he lost). Trumpets use 5" diameter and trombones use 6" diameter. Where "Plunger w/Mute" is notated, insert a pixie mute in the bell and use the plunger over the mute. Pixies are available from Humes & Berg in Chicago. Tricky Sam Nanton and his successors in the Ellington plunger trombone chair did not use pixies. Rather, each of them employed a Nonpareil (that's the brand name) trumpet straight mute. Nonpareil has gone out of business, but the Tom Crown Nonpareil trumpet straight mute is very close to the same thing. These mutes create a wonderful sound (very close to the human voice), but they also create some intonation problems that must be corrected by using alternate slide positions. It would be easier to move the tuning slide, but part of the sound is in the struggle to correct the pitch. If this proves too much, stick with the pixie - it's pretty close. Quentin "Butter" Jackson carried on this tradition when he left Ellington to play with Basie in the early '60's. Other mutes that are used in the brass are straight mutes, cups, harmons (most often with the stem removed), buckets and hats. Hats (also known as derbies) are nearly always Humes and Berg stonelined red and white or red and black, but the Basie Band used aluminum hats. These are hard to find, but they have a wonderful tone and look fantastic. The trumpets can wave their hats up and down and side to side in a choreographed manner for visual and aural effect. This was a Basie band trademark along with Sonny Payne twirling his drumsticks. Don't underestimate the importance of the visual presentation.

14. The drummer must understand that he is the de facto leader of the band. He establishes the beat and controls the volume of the ensemble. For big band playing, the drummer needs to use a larger bass drum than he would for small group drumming. A 22" (or possibly 24") is preferred. The bass drum is played softly (nearly inaudible) on each beat. This is called feathering the bass drum. It provides a very important bottom to the band. The bass drum sound is not a boom and not a thud - it's in between. The larger size drum is necessary for the kicks; a smaller drum just won't be heard. The key to this style is to just keep time - often on the high hat. A rim knock on two and four (chopping wood) is used to lock in the swing. When it comes to playing fills, the fewer, the better. Keep it simple and swinging.

15. Basie's piano style was a combination of stride and Kansas City blues. When comping for the ensemble, he looked for holes in the ensemble and answered the band. He very rarely doubled ensemble figures. As he aged, he pared his playing down to the bare essentials - often just short jabs that answered the



ensemble. His signature was the Harlem Stride train bell voicing either in a singular chord or in the classic 3-chord sequence.

16. The horn players should stand for their solos and solis. Brass players should come down front for moderate to long solos, surrounding rests permitting.

17. Horns should pay close attention to attacks and releases. Everyone should hit together and release together. Be very precise when playing short notes. Play with lots of accent and hold the note just long enough to hear the voicing. I cannot overemphasize the importance of accents and dynamics. I have yet to hear a band modern band that plays with anywhere near the accent that the Basie played with. The music need not be loud to be exciting if the band plays spectacular accents.

18. Exaggerated dynamics was a trademark of the Jimmie Lunceford Band. This became an integral part of the New Testament style.

19. Above all, everyone's focus should remain at all times on the swing. As the great bassist Chuck Israels says, "The three most important things in jazz are rhythm, rhythm, and rhythm, in that order." Or as Count Basie succinctly put it, "Pat your foot".

GLOSSARY

The following are terms which describe conventions of jazz performance, from traditional New Orleans to the present avant garde.

Break: within the context of an ongoing time feel, the rhythm section stops for one, two, or four bars. Very often a soloist will improvise during a break.

Call and response: repetitive pattern of contrasting exchanges (derived from the church procedure of the minister making a statement and the congregation answering with "amen"). Call-and-response patterns usually pit one group of instruments against another. Sometimes we call this "trading fours," "trading twos," etc., especially when it involves improvisation. The numbers denote the amount of measures each soloist or group plays. Another term frequently used is "swapping fours."

Coda: also known as the "outro." "Tags" or "tag endings" are outgrowths of vaudeville bows that are frequently used as codas. They most often use deceptive cadences that finally resolve to the tonic, 2 or they go from the tonic to the sub-dominant and cycle back to the tonic: I V/IV IV #IV° I (second inversion) V/II V/V I.

Comp: improvise accompaniment (for piano or guitar).

Groove: the composite rhythm. This generally refers to the combined repetitive rhythmic patterns of the drums, bass, piano, and guitar, but may also include repetitive patterns in the horns. Some grooves are standard (i.e., swing, bossa nova, samba), while others are manufactured (original combinations of rhythms).

Head: melody chorus.

Interlude: a different form (of relatively short length) sandwiched between two chorus forms. Interludes that set up a key change are simply called modulations.

Intro: short for introduction.

Ride pattern: the most common repetitive figure played by the drummer's right hand on the ride cymbal or hi-hat.



Riff: a repeated melodic figure. Very often, riffs repeat verbatim or with slight alterations while the harmonies change underneath them.

Shout chorus: also known as the "out chorus," the "sock chorus," or sometimes shortened to just "the shout." It is the final ensemble passage of most big band charts and where the max most often happens.

Soli: a harmonized passage for two or more instruments playing the same rhythm. It is customary for horn players to stand up or even move in front of the band when playing these passages. This is done so that the audience can hear them better and to provide the audience with some visual interest. A soli sound particular to Ellington's music combines two trumpets and a trombone in plungers/mutes in triadic harmony. This is called the "pep section."

Stop time: a regular pattern of short breaks (usually filled in by a soloist).

Swing: the perfect confluence of rhythmic tension and relaxation in music creating a feeling euphoria and characterized by accented weak beats (a democratization of the beat) and eighth notes that are played as the first and third eighth notes of an eighth-note triplet. Duke Ellington's definition of swing: when the music feels like it is getting faster, but it isn't.

Vamp: a repeated two- or four-bar chord progression. Very often, there may be a riff or riffs played on the vamp.

Voicing: the specific spacing, inversion, and choice of notes that make up a chord. For instance, two voicings for G7 could be:



Note that the first voicing includes a 9th and the second voicing includes a 19 and a 1 3. The addition of 9ths, 11ths, 13ths, and alterations are up to the discretion of the pianist and soloist.

SWINGIN' THE BLUES

INSTRUMENTATION

Reed 1 - Alto Sax	Trumpet 1	Trombone 1	Piano
Reed 2 - Alto Sax	Trumpet 2	Trombone 2	Bass
Reed 3 - Tenor Sax	Trumpet 3	Trombone 3	Drums
Reed 4 - Tenor Sax			

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION

Composer: Count Basie and Eddie Durham

Arranger: Eddie Durham

Recorded: February 16, 1938, New York City

Time: 2:45

Master Number: 63289

Original Issue: Decca 78 De 1880

Currently Available on CD: The Complete Decca Recordings (3 CDs) – Universal/Decca

Download Available: The Complete Decca Recordings, www.itunes.com or www.amazon.com

Personnel: Count Basie (piano); Ed Lewis, Buck Clayton, Harry Edison (trumpets); Benny Morton, Dan Minor, Eddie Durham (trombones); Earl Warren, Jack Washington, Herschel Evans, Lester Young (reeds); Freddie Green (guitar); Walter Page (bass); Jo Jones (drums).

Soloists: Count Basie (piano); Benny Morton (trombone); Lester Young (tenor saxophone); Buck Clayton (trumpet); Herschel Evans (tenor saxophone); Harry Edison (trumpet); Jo Jones (drums).

REHEARSAL NOTES

Eddie Durham was the architect of the Old Testament Basie band that began in Kansas City in the mid-1930's. His arrangements and compositions simplified the ensemble parts down to swinging riffs with simple harmonies that provided the barest structure to feature the great soloists in the band.

Swingin' The Blues was written in 1938 just prior to the band's opening at the Famous Door on 52nd Street in New York City. The band wanted to surprise everyone with a great new chart, so they rehearsed in secret, and didn't let anyone hear it until opening night.

Like many other charts in the book, Swingin' The Blues is a traditional 12-bar 4/4 blues based on a simple two-bar riff. There are three choruses of melody, a chorus of trombones, a four-bar dogfight between the brass and saxes, two solo choruses (tenor and trumpet), a six-bar modulation up a half step, a chorus of tenor solo, a chorus of call and response between the brass and saxes, a chorus of trumpet solo, a chorus of 2's with the drums, a chorus of ensemble and a nine-bar coda which utilizes stop time which is filled up by the drums.

This is the proto-type Old Testament Basie band Kansas City 4/4 swing riffs blues chart. Everything rested on his "All-American Rhythm Section". Each man had his function. I strongly recommend that each member of the rhythm section learn and internalize his part on this transcription. This style is at the heart of jazz and will inform most big band playing.

Freddie Green played high-action acoustic rhythm guitar 4 beats to the bar. The key points are to keep the voicings simple - three notes or less - root, third, fifth; root, third, seventh; occasionally 3, 7 9 or 1,3 6—sometimes just 3rd and 7th. Denser voicings make the band sound heavy and plodding. There is a slight accent on beats 2 and 4 and each chord is dampened so that they are all short. Green's bandmate Eddie Durham invented the guitar amp, and even played an occasional electric guitar solo with Basie and Lunceford, but that was purely for solos. Rhythm guitar was always played acoustically. Amplification weighs the band down and gums up the swing.

Walter Page was one of the early walking bassists. His lines are always simple and define the tonality. They either arpeggiate the triad or walk scalewise into the next chord. He tends to play a repetitive pattern for a chorus and then a different repetitive pattern for the next chorus. Since bass amps did not come into usage until 25 years later, they sound anachronistic and are a detriment to the light, swinging feel of the band. Playing without an amp necessitates pulling the strings hard with your right hand and firmly pressing the strings into the fingerboard with your left hand. The amount of energy expended is proportional to the intensity of the whole band. If you are doing it right, you should be sweating more than everyone else in the band - including the drummer.

Papa Jo Jones moved the center of the time-keeping (ride pattern) from the snare drum to the hi-hat. This has remained the central feature of Basie's drummers. Papa Jo would go to the ride cymbal later on when the band opened up, but mostly stayed on the hi-hat (either closed, open-and-closed, or half opened). The bass drum is feathered on all four beats. The makes us feel the beat without it being audible. The crash cymbal is used for excitement and the snare is used mainly for simple chatter, hits with the brass (in conjunction with the crash cymbal) and accenting beats two and four (either played normally or rim knocks (cross sticks).

Although Basie only solos on the second chorus and doesn't comp at all on this recording, he was an early developer of modern comping (feeding the soloist). He always kept in mind staying out of the way of the band figures and finding the holes, while listening and carrying on a conversation with the soloist.

In the 1930's Basie only carried four saxes. Jack Washington played 2nd alto and doubled on baritone. If you have the normal five saxes, you may want to split the part between the 2nd alto and the baritone player.

A key aspect of the Old Testament band was the Lester/Herschel rivalry. The two tenors played in opposing style and were frequently featured in the same chart (like this one). Herschel played the top part and came from the Coleman Hawkins (big sound, heavy vibrato, chromatic melodies) school, while Lester Young, "Prez", created the cool school (detached and light sound, small terminal vibrato and diatonic melodies).

The brass derbies and plungers are well worth the hassle. They not only give the music more character, but it looks great when the brass are waving them.

Do not overplay the dynamics or make the music too busy. Basie liked it simple and swinging. **M** and **N** are more about the accents than the volume. It's a nice touch to play a sfp in m11 and crescendo (with a little vibrato) in **M12**. Same thing in **N11-12**.

To view videos of Wynton Marsalis leading the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in rehearsals of the Essentially Ellington 2010-11 repertoire please visit: jalc.org/EssentiallyEllington.

CONDUCTOR

Jazz at Lincoln Center Library - Essentially Ellington

SWINGIN' THE BLUES

Music by Count Basie and Eddie Durham

Arranged by Eddie Durham

Transcribed by David Berger

A Fast swing ♩ = 232

Reeds 1 Alto Sax *f*

2 Alto Sax *f*

3 Tenor Sax *f*

4 Tenor Sax *f*

Trumpets 1

2

3

Trombones 1 Plunger wa wa *f*

2 Plunger wa wa *f*

3 Plunger wa wa *f*

Guitar *mf* C C7 F7 C

Piano C C7 F7 C

Bass *mf* C C7 F7 C

Drums *mf* H.H. j

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a jazz ensemble. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Fast swing' with a quarter note equal to 232 beats per minute. The first section, labeled 'A', consists of eight measures. The saxophone section (Reeds 1-4) plays a melodic line starting with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes. The trombone section (1-3) plays a plunger line with a 'wa wa' vocalization. The guitar, piano, and bass provide harmonic support with chords C, C7, F7, and C. The drums play a simple pattern on the hi-hat.

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