Big Swing Face

Composed by WILLIAM O. POTTS
Arranged by RICH SIGLER

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor
1st Eb Alto Saxophone
2nd Eb Alto Saxophone
1st Bb Tenor Saxophone
2nd Bb Tenor Saxophone
Eb Baritone Saxophone (Optional)
1st Bb Trumpet
2nd Bb Trumpet
3rd Bb Trumpet
4th Bb Trumpet (Optional)

1st Trombone
2nd Trombone
3rd Trombone (Optional)
4th Trombone (Optional)
Guitar Chords
Guitar (Optional)
Piano
Bass
Drums

Optional/Alternate Parts

C Flute
Bb Clarinet
Vibraphone
Tuba (Doubles Bass)
Horn in F (Doubles 1st Trombone)
1st Baritone Horn T.C./Bb Tenor Saxophone (Doubles 1st Trombone)
2nd Baritone Horn T.C./Bb Tenor Saxophone (Doubles 2nd Trombone)
NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

This is a straight-ahead swing chart. The tempo should not exceed the suggested 152 BPM. A recurring interlude vamp (repeated) section occurs in mm. 9–12, mm. 49–58, and mm. 92–117. Driven by the bass line, this vamp leads into the solo section and provides underlying support for a short sax solo. Later on, it is a lead-in for the shout section. Regarding articulation, marcato, or rooftop, markings should be played detached and accented—think “daht.” Quarter notes with no articulation are generally played for their full value.

The swing feel begins in m. 13 for the rhythm section. The guitarist can play a typical Basie swing style. For a very bright, acoustic sound, ask the guitarist to use medium-thick picks and to hold the pick loosely between the thumb and index finger. Strum straight quarter notes, and cut off (mute) the chord right after striking the strings. Strum from the elbow to create a bright, swinging sound that propels the rhythm section forward. (Don’t strum from the wrist or fingers, as this will create a very forced sound. This type of strumming also tends to drag rather than propel the rhythm.) The guitarist’s quarter-note rhythm should perfectly mesh with the bass, so that they merge into one big sound.

The piano part is written to provide typical swing comping throughout. The piano generally has more rhythmic freedom than the guitar. The drums should play a basic swing pattern. The most important elements are the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4, and a strong, steady ride-cymbal pattern that helps maintain the tempo as well as a solid swing feel. The walking quarter-note bass line, along with the drums, also drives the tempo. During the vamp sections, the focal point becomes the repetitive bass line.

The brass melody in m. 15 should be articulated with slurs to connect the 2nd and 3rd eighth notes, 4th and 5th eighth notes, etc. I suggest the horn players use breath accents to push the eighth notes a little. Breath accents will create a smooth, flowing line that swings and has forward motion. In addition, the trumpets and trombones should all listen to the lead trumpet to attain a nice, brass-section blend.

For mm. 59–60, remind the students to crescendo and attack the quarter-note in m. 60 with a solid marcato. In m. 92, the “question-and-answer” hits in the trumpets and trombones should be clean and precise. Those figures arenotated with marcato accents—again, think “daht.” Measure 120 in the shout section should be the dynamic high point of the chart. The drummer can open up the volume for about four measures, drop back down to for a short sax solo, and then gradually build to the end of m. 135. The fermata at the end is.

Enjoy!

—Rich Sigler

Rich Sigler is former jazz trumpeter and music director for the USAF Airmen of Note. An acclaimed composer, arranger, educator, and producer, his music and performances have been featured with many artists, including Jerry Bergonzi, Roseanna Vitro, James Williams, Phil Woods, Nicholas Payton, Slide Hampton, Al Jarreau, Michael and Randy Brecker, Peter Erskine, Bob Mintzer, and Clark Terry. As a producer, Rich’s work can be heard on numerous recordings, including the highly acclaimed Airmen of Note recording A Cool Yule, the recently released Eastern Standard Time by the Alan Baylock Jazz Orchestra, as well as the Airmen of Note’s most recent recording, Compositions. In addition, Rich is the creator of the Jazz Font used in Finale music notation software.