

Jazz at Lincoln Center Library

Concerto for Cootie

Music By DUKE ELLINGTON

TRANSCRIBED BY DAVID BERGER FOR JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

FULL SCORE

This transcription was made especially for *Essentially Ellington* 2000:
the Fifth Annual Jazz at Lincoln Center High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival.

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Annual High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival



Jazz at Lincoln Center

NOTES ON PLAYING ELLINGTON

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. Those 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 4 or 5 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. As wonderful as Count Basie's style is, it doesn't address many of the important styles developed under the great musical umbrella we call jazz. Duke Ellington's comprehensive and eclectic approach to music offers an alternative.

The stylistic richness of Ellington's music presents a great challenge to educators and performers alike. In Basie's music, the conventions are very nearly consistent. In Ellington's, there are many more exceptions to the rules. This calls for greater knowledge of the language of jazz. Clark Terry, who left Count Basie's band to join Duke Ellington, said, "Count Basie was college, but Duke Ellington was graduate school." Knowledge of Ellington's music prepares you to play any big band music.

The following is a list of performance conventions for the great majority of Ellington's music. Any deviations or additions will be spelled out in the individual performance notes which follow.

1. Listen carefully many times to the Ellington recording of these pieces. There are many subtleties that will elude even the most sophisticated listener at first. Although it was never Ellington's wish to have his recordings imitated, knowledge of these definitive versions will lead musicians to make more educated choices when creating new performances. Ellington's music, though written for specific individuals, is designed to inspire all musicians to express themselves. In addition, 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 players play what's in the score.
2. General use of swing phrasing. The triplet feel prevails except for ballads or 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 her. In turn, the other saxes and trombones must follow their lead players. When the clarinet leads the brass section, the brass should not overblow him. That means that the first trumpet is actually playing "second." If this is done effectively, there will be very little balancing work left for the conductor.
4. In Ellington's music, each player should express the individuality of his own line. He 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 quite a bit to warm up the sound. Saxes (who most frequently represent the sensual side of things) usually employ a heavy vibrato on harmonized passages and a slight vibrato on unisons. Trumpets (who very often are used for heat and power) use a little vibrato on harmonized passages and no vibrato on unisons. Trombones (who are usually noble) 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. This music was originally written with no dynamics. It pretty much 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 notated. 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, crescendo, 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 scalar (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. Ellington's 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.
11. This is acoustic music. Keep amplification to an absolute minimum; in the best halls, almost no amplification should be necessary. Everyone needs to develop a big sound. It is the conductor's job to balance the band. When a guitar is used, it 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.
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. However, written passages should be learned because they are an important part of our jazz heritage and help the player 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 that Ellington has provided.
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 rubber ones, like the one I loaned Wynton and he lost). Trumpets use 5" diameter and trombones use 6" diameter. Where Plunger/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 which must be corrected by the lip only. 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.

14. The drummer 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" 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. 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.
15. The horn players should stand for their solos and solis. Brass players should come down front for moderate to long solos, surrounding rests permitting. The same applies to the pep section (two trumpets and one trombone in plunger/mutes).
16. Horns should pay close attention to attacks and releases. Everyone should hit together and end together.
17. Brass must be very precise when playing short notes. Notes must be stopped with the tongue, à la Louis Armstrong!!
18. 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 Bubber Miley (Ellington's first star trumpeter) said, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing."

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 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 climax 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 of 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 b9 and a 13. The addition of 9ths, 11ths, 13ths, and alterations are up to the discretion of the pianist and soloist.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

The following are placed in their order of importance in jazz. We should never lose perspective on this order of priority.

- RHYTHM** — meter, tempo, groove, and form, including both melodic rhythm and harmonic rhythm (the speed and regularity of the chord changes).
- MELODY** — what players play: a tune or series of notes.
- HARMONY** — chords and voicings.
- ORCHESTRATION** — instrumentation and tone colors.

— David Berger

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CONCERTO FOR COOTIE

Instrumentation:

Reed 1 Alto Sax	Trombone 1
Reed 2 Alto Sax	Trombone 2
Reed 3 Clarinet	Trombone 3 (opt. valve)
Reed 4 Tenor Sax	Bass
Reed 5 Baritone Sax	Drums
Trumpet 1	
Trumpet 2	
Trumpet 3 (opt. cornet)	

Original Recording Information:

Concerto for Cootie, by Duke Ellington (3:19)

Recorded 3/15/40, Chicago

The Blanton-Webster Band (RCA/Ariola International; Victor 049016-1)

Otto Hardwick, Johnny Hodges, Barney Bigard, Ben Webster, and Harry Carney, reeds; Wallace Jones and Cootie Williams, trumpets; Rex Stewart, cornet; Lawrence Brown and Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton, trombones; Juan Tizol, valve trombone; Duke Ellington, piano, conductor; Jimmy Blanton, bass; Sonny Greer, drums.

Rehearsal Notes:

- Cited by some critics as Ellington's greatest masterpiece, "Concerto for Cootie" was actually a collaboration between Duke Ellington and his trumpet star Charles Melvin "Cootie" Williams. Cootie showed his boss the opening eight-note motif and Duke offered him \$75 (equal to Cootie's weekly salary) for all the rights. From those eight notes, Duke then wrote more than three minutes of inspired music perfectly framing Cootie's playing with the plunger as well as with open horn.
- Historically, this piece had a profound effect on the Ellington band and all of jazz to come. When the recording was issued in the summer of 1940, a young trumpet player with Benny Goodman's band, Jimmy Maxwell, played the record over and over on his wind-up Victrola in the back of the band bus. This caused Benny to offer Cootie a job and, two years later, to bankroll him to his own big band that included Bud Powell on piano and Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson on alto and vocals. They played the compositions of a then unknown pianist named Thelonious Monk.
- In 1943 Ellington re-worked the melody at **A** somewhat, altered the bridge, deleted the secondary theme, had lyrics written, and retitled the song "Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me," which to this day remains one of Ellington's most popular songs.
- Written in concerto form, "Concerto for Cootie" has two contrasting themes: the highly chromatic playful motif at **A** and the diatonic heroic theme at **E**. The use of the plunger at **A** and the open horn at **E** highlight the different characters. Notice the different variations of

plunger settings and the use of growl. Which plunger sounds the soloist uses is up to him or her, just so long as there is sufficient contrast. For optimal aural and visual focus, it is recommended that the trumpet soloist play this entire number in front of the band. Chord symbols are not included in the trumpet part; this piece works literally or with slight paraphrasing. However, the bass and drum parts may be approached from an improvisational standpoint.

- Take care to differentiate between the figures that are marked "swing" and those that are marked with even eighths. This is a bit peculiar, but adds a nice touch of drama to the piece.
- The backgrounds are extremely important. Careful attention to dynamics is essential for a rich and interesting performance where every note can be heard. Each player should approach his or her part with individuality and blues sensibility.
- There are a few spots in the ensemble that vary from standard swing phrasing. In measure 7 of the intro, all four notes are to be played short. The last three are also accented. A similar figure occurs in bar 7 of **A** and **D**. Here the first two notes are short and the third is full value. Similarly, bars 10 and 11 of **D** offer some unusual staccato downbeats. In measure 7 of **F**, this figure reappears on beat 3 of **F7** and beat 1 of **F9**. Conversely, there is a series of legato eighths and quarters in the reeds' **H7** and 8. Be aware of the interesting relationship of long and short notes throughout this piece. Making any changes might disrupt the balance.
- There is a general tendency to play on top of the beat and even to rush on slow swing charts such as this. Everyone should try to feel loose and comfortable throughout. A particular spot to watch out for is **G6**. Hold back on the sixteenths—give them full value. The tendency is to think that sixteenths are fast, but at this tempo they are not all that fast.
- The bass part is very involved with the ensemble figures and passing harmonies. I stress the importance of using an acoustic unamplified bass for balance, tone, and blend; attack and decay are essential to swing.
- A final thought: Do not be intimidated by the greatness of this piece of music. Most of all, it is an exercise in sensuality that we can all savor as players and listeners.

—David Berger

Notes from Wynton Marsalis:

This is a masterpiece. It is a great piece to teach dynamics and balance to your band. Make sure everyone knows who's playing the lead line and who's doubling who. The bass functions both in the rhythm section and as a lower brass part, so he or she must be aware of the difference between those two roles. This is an arrangement that has a tendency to drag because the eighth notes have to be interpreted different ways—sometimes lightly swung, and other times straight—but at all times swinging. The trumpet soloist should play around with the melody, making his or her own slight alterations, while recognizing the call and response with the rest of the band. The bridge at **E** gives our soloist an opportunity to develop the bravura, Louis Armstrong-esque style of trumpeting. It shouldn't be loud and brash, but loud and full. It helps the soloist to learn these pieces from memory. Soloists should, in all cases, learn all harmonic progressions that they are soloing over. It seems insurmountable at first, but with diligent practice, it becomes routine.

CONCERTO FOR COOTIE

Duke Ellington
Transcribed by David Berger

Slow swing $\text{♩} = 99$

Reeds 1

Alto Sax. Even 8ths *mf* *cresc.* *f* Swing 8ths

2 Alto Sax. *mf* *cresc.* *f*

3 Clarinet *mf* *cresc.* *f*

4 Tenor Sax. *mf* *cresc.* *f*

5 Baritone Sax. *mf* *cresc.* *f*

Trumpets 1

Plunger/mute - solo *mf* *cresc.* *f* 1/2 open *mf*

2 *mf* *cresc.* *f*

3 *mf* *cresc.* *f*

Trombones 1

2 *f*

3 *mf* *cresc.* *f*

Bass *mf* *cresc.*

Drums *mf* *cresc.* Brushes

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The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The top five staves are for woodwinds: Alto (two parts), Clarinet, Tenor, and Bari. The next three staves are for trumpets (1, 2, 3) and three trombones (1, 2, 3). The bottom two staves are for Bass and Drums. A rehearsal mark 'A' is located at the start of the first Alto staff. Dynamics are indicated throughout, with *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte) being the most prominent. The score features various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and triplets.

Concerto For Cootie

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The top five staves are for woodwinds: Alto (two parts), Clarinet, Tenor, and Bari. The next three staves are for brass: Tpt. 1, 2, and 3, followed by Tbn. 1, 2, and 3. The bottom two staves are for Bass and Drums. The woodwind parts feature melodic lines with dynamic markings of *ff*, *mp*, and *p*. The brass parts are mostly silent, with some activity in the Tbn. 3 and Bass parts. The drum part provides a steady rhythmic accompaniment. A section marker 'B' is located at the top of the first staff in the second system. A large red watermark 'Preview Only - Legal Use Requires Purchase' is overlaid diagonally across the entire page.

Concerto For Cootie

Even 8ths Swing

Alto

Alto

Clar.

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

Tbn. 1

2

3

Bass

Dr.

mp *f* *mp* *mf*

mp *f* *mp* *mf*

mp *f* *mp* *mf*

mp *f* *mp* *mf*

mf *mf* *mf*

mf *f*

mf

1/2 open

mf

Concerto For Cootie

C

Alto *mp* *mp* *mf*

Alto *mp* *mp* *mf*

Clar. *mp* *mp* *mf*

Tenor *mp* *mp* *mf*

Bari. *mp* *mp* *mf*

Tpt. 1 *mp* *mf*

2 *mp* *mf*

3 *mp* *mf*

Tbn. 1 *mp* *mf*

2 *mp* *mf*

3 *mp* *mf*

Bass *mp* *mf*

Dr. *mp* *mf p*

Even 8ths

Growl

F Bb7 F

Concerto For Cootie

D

Alto

Alto

Clar.

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

Tbn. 1

2

3

Bass

Dr.

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

p

p

p

p

p

p

mf

To Open

Concerto For Cootie

Alto

Alto

Clar.

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

Tbn. 1

2

3

Bass

Dr.

mf *f* *f* *ff* *ff* *ff*

F7 Bb Bbm7 Eb7 F Bb7 Ebm7 D7

Crash

Concerto For Cootie

E

Alto *p* *mp* *mf*

Alto *p* *mp* *mf*

Clar. *p* *mp* *mf*

Tenor *p* *mp* *mf*

Bari. *p* *mp* *mf*

Tpt. 1

2 *Open - Boldly* *ff* *Lay back* 3

3

Tbn. 1 *f* *mp* *mf*

2 *f* *mp* *mf*

3 *f* *mp* *mf*

Bass *Db* *Bb7* *Bbm* *Ab7* *Db (as is)* *Eb7* *Ab7*

Dr.

Concerto For Cootie

F

Alto *p* *mp* *f*

Alto *p* *mp* *f*

Clar. *p* *mp* *f*

Tenor *p* *mp* *f*

Bari. *p* *f*

Tpt. 1 *f*

2 *f*

3 *f*

Tbn. 1 *mp* *f*

2 *mp* *f*

3 *mp* *f*

Bass *Db* *Gb* *Gbm* *Db* *Bbm* *Ebm7* *Ab7* *Db* *Db7*

Dr. *f*

Concerto For Cootie

Musical score for Concerto For Cootie, page 10. The score includes parts for Alto, Clar., Tenor, Bari., Tpt. 1-3, Tbn. 1-3, Bass, and Dr. A large red watermark is overlaid on the score: "Preview Only Legal Use Requires Purchase".

Key features of the score include:

- A boxed **G** chord marking above the first Alto staff.
- Dynamic markings: *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *f* (forte).
- A performance instruction: "Plunger w/mute" with a "+" sign above the first Tpt. 2 staff.
- Chord markings in the Bass staff: *F/C*, *F*, *F7*, *B \flat* , and *E \flat 7*.

Concerto For Cootie

The musical score for page 11 of 'Concerto For Cootie' is arranged for a large ensemble. The parts include:

- Alto:** Two staves, both playing a melodic line with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*.
- Clarinet:** One staff, playing a melodic line with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*.
- Tenor:** One staff, playing a melodic line with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*.
- Bari.:** One staff, playing a melodic line with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*.
- Tpt. 1:** One staff, playing a melodic line with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*.
- Tpt. 2:** One staff, playing a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets. Dynamics range from *ff* to *mf*.
- Tpt. 3:** One staff, playing a melodic line with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*.
- Tbn. 1:** One staff, playing a melodic line with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*.
- Tbn. 2:** One staff, playing a melodic line with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*.
- Tbn. 3:** One staff, playing a melodic line with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*.
- Bass:** One staff, playing a bass line with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp*. Chord symbols include Bb, Bbm, F, Am7-5, D7, and G7.
- Dr.:** One staff, playing a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets. Dynamics range from *f* to *mf*. Includes a 'Crash' mark.

Concerto For Cootie

12

Musical score for Concerto For Cootie, page 12. The score includes parts for Alto, Clarinet, Tenor, Bari., Tpt. 1, 2, 3, Tbn. 1, 2, 3, Bass, and Dr. A large red watermark "Preview Only" is overlaid diagonally across the page.

Alto *mf*

Alto *mf*

Clar. *mf*

Tenor *mf*

Bari. *mf*

Tpt. 1 *mf*

2 *f*

3 *mf*

Tbn. 1 *mf*

2 *mf*

3 *mf*

Bass *C7* (as is)

Dr.