

## **JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER LIBRARY**

# **Prelude to a Kiss**

**Composed by DUKE ELLINGTON, IRVING MILLS  
and IRVING GORDON  
Arranged by BILLY STRAYHORN**

Transcribed by David Berger and Mark Lopeman for Jazz at Lincoln Center

**FULL SCORE**

This transcription was made especially for *Essentially Ellington 1998: the Third Annual Jazz at Lincoln Center High School Jazz Band Competition and Festival*.

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**J@zz**  
Lincoln Center  
Wynton Marsalis,  
Artistic Director  
Rob Gibson,  
Executive Producer and Director

# 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 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 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 and 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 also 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.

- ## GLOSSARY

**Ride pattern** — the most common repetitive figure played by the drummer's right hand on the ride cymbal or high hat.



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



# THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

**ORCHESTRATION** — instrumentation and tone colors.

— *David Berger*



# PRELUDE TO A KISS

## Instrumentation:

Conductor	Trumpet 3
Reed 1 (Alto Sax)	Trumpet 4
Reed 2 (Alto Sax/Clarinet)	Trombone 1
Reed 3 (Tenor Sax/Clarinet)	Trombone 2
Reed 4 (Tenor Sax)	Trombone 3
Reed 5 (Baritone Sax/Bass Clarinet)	Piano
Trumpet 1	Bass
Trumpet 2	Drums

## Original Recording Information:

**PRELUDE TO A KISS** composed by Duke Ellington, arranged by Billy Strayhorn (4:42)  
Recorded 10/1/57 New York City Ellington Indigos (Columbia CK 4444; Columbia C059897)

Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney, reeds; Cat Anderson, Willie Cook, Clark Terry, Shorty Baker, trumpets; Ray Nance, cornet; Britt Woodman, Quentin Jackson, trombones; John Sanders, valve trombone; Duke Ellington, piano; Jimmy Woode, bass; Sam Woodyard, drums.

## Rehearsal Notes:

- The piano intro should not be rushed, but played somewhat leisurely, savoring each luscious note.
- The alto solo is a transcription of Johnny Hodges' performance. It would be impossible to notate all the subtleties of phrasing, dynamics and inflection. This must be heard. Aside from letter **E**, which is improvised (chord symbols included), the alto plays the melody. I suggest learning how Hodges plays it and then don't look at the page and play the feeling you remember. Notice how little this great musician strays from the melody. Sometimes you don't have to change very much to personalize a melody.
- Although the trombone backgrounds are marked soft, they should be played with a full sound, both proudly and sensitively. Long notes offer an opportunity to tune up each voicing so that it sounds and feels good. Players should add slight diminuendos and crescendos as well as inflections to make the most music out of this simple looking music. All three bones should bring out the juiciness of their notes.

- Since this is a ballad, the eighth notes are even and the quarter notes are full value. This is true even for the horns while the rhythm section is swinging (letter **E**) or implying some swing (**B**, **D** or **F** in the piano). Ellington's piano comping is transcribed here because it adds so much to the arrangement. Your pianist need not play the same way, but this may give him or her some interesting ideas.
- This is a very simple piece of music that needs to be performed in a smooth manner, delicate but firm. After all, this prelude to a kiss is a most tender seduction. Romance may be a bit out of fashion, but if we can dig down beneath our machismo facades and the embarrassment when we show our vulnerability, we can project the feelings of love that we all long to express.

## Notes from Wynton Marsalis:

This is one of the greatest arrangements of a ballad in the history of jazz. Tone and inflection are extremely important. Very advanced harmony in the voicings requires diligence to get kids to hear where they are in the harmony. Solo alto, good luck: Johnny Hodges is the inventor of this style of playing. The bass has a very difficult job maintaining the pulse with so much space between each note. Drummers have to be intelligent with the use of cymbals. The trombone section must be in balance and of full, sinewy tone. Solo alto, learn the changes on the piano. When the ensemble comes in at the end, it must be balanced. The interlocking of sax voicings and trombone answers should provide a seamless background for the soloist. This is a very difficult arrangement that requires a lot of attention. But it's worth it.

# PRELUDE TO A KISS

Duke Ellington,  
Irving Mills and Irving Gordon  
Arranged by Billy Strayhorn

Transcribed by David Berger and Mark Lopeman

**Rubato**  
Alto Sax.

Reeds 1

Clarinet

Clarinet

Tenor Sax.

Bass Clarinet

Trumpets 1

Trombones 1

Piano

solo

sim.

8ba...

Bass

Drums

JLC9804C

# Prelude to a Kiss

3

Alto

Clar.

Clar.

Tenor

Bs. Cl.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drms.

The musical score is for a piece titled "Prelude to a Kiss". It is arranged for a large ensemble. The instruments listed on the left are Alto, Clarinet (two parts), Tenor, Bass Clarinet, Trumpet (four parts), Trombone (three parts), Piano, Bass, and Drums. The Alto part has a melodic line with some triplets. The Clarinet and Tenor parts are mostly rests. The Bass Clarinet part has a few notes. The Trumpet and Trombone parts have a rhythmic pattern. The Piano part has a few notes. The Bass part has a rhythmic pattern. The Drums part has a simple drum pattern. The score is marked with a large red "Preview Only" watermark.

**B**

Alto

Clar.

Clar.

Tenor

Bs. Cl.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drms.



# Prelude to a Kiss

5

Alto

Clar.

Clar.

Tenor

Bs. Cl.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drms.

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**C**

Db Bb7+5 Bbm Ebm7 Ab7+5

Db C7 Fmaj7 Dm7 Ab° Gm7-5 C7-9

JLC9804C

## Prelude to a Kiss

7

Prelude to a Kiss

[D]

Alto

Clar.

Clar.

Tenor

Bs. Cl.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

E♭7 D7 D♭7 G♭ C7 B7 B♭7 E♭m E♭m7 A♭7

Bass

Drms.

even

JLC9804C



# Prelude to a Kiss

9

Chord progression: D, Bm7, Em7, Eb7/A, D, Bm7, G#m7-5, Em7-5, A7+5

Alto

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drms.

## Prelude to a Kiss

Chord symbols: Dm, B°, Cm7, C#m7, Dm7, Ebm7, Eb7, D7, Db7, Gb, C7, B7.

Instrument parts: Alto, Tenor, Bari., Tpt. 1, 2, 3, 4, Tbn. 1, 2, 3, Pno., Bass, Drms.

Performance markings: *mf*, *ff*, *mp*, *f*, *arco*, *pizz.*, *Brushes*.

Rehearsal mark: **F**

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## Prelude to a Kiss

11

[illegible]

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