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# **Portrait of Louis Armstrong**

from New Orleans Suite

BY DUKE ELLINGTON

TRANSCRIBED BY DAVID BERGER FOR JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

## **FULL SCORE**

This transcription was made especially for *Essentially Ellington 1999*; the Fourth Annual Jazz at the Lincoln Center High School Jazz Band Competition and 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, 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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# PORTRAIT OF LOUIS ARMSTRONG

## Instrumentation:

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

## Original Recording Information:

**Portrait of Louis Armstrong** by Duke Ellington (3:02)  
Recorded 5/13/70, New York City  
*New Orleans Suite* (Atlantic 1580-2)

Norris Turney, Russell Procope, Harold Ashby, Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney, reeds; Cat Anderson, Alan Rubin, Mercer Ellington, Fred Stone, Cootie Williams, trumpets; Julian Priestler, Booty Wood, trombones; Chuck Connors, bass trombone; Duke Ellington, piano; Joe Benjamin, bass; Rufus "Speedy" Jones, drums.

## Rehearsal Notes:

- *Portrait of Louis Armstrong* (originally titled *Oo-ee*), the third movement of the *New Orleans Suite*, was written to feature long-time Ellingtonian and Armstrong disciple Cootie Williams. This piece is reminiscent of numerous charts Pops played with his big band in the '30s and early '40s. This style of pre-bebop trumpet playing may seem foreign, but this is a good opportunity to explore this classic style that is the root of nearly all trumpet styles that followed. Get a big, fat sound and exaggerate everything: dynamics, articulations, rhythms. The more extroverted and bravura the better. Our soloist battles through the minor bridges and the sus 4 cadenza and emerges the victorious hero when he/she lands solidly on the tonic.
- This piece uses a standard AABA song form with the A's in major and the B in the relative minor. The overall form is intro AABA AAB AABA cadenza coda. You might call this a single-theme trumpet concerto; the trumpet soloist is featured throughout. For staging and sound, the soloist should stand in front of the band for the entire number. Cootie rests at **E** and **F**, but chord symbols are included so that the soloist might play there if desired.

- Similarly, Ellington (at the piano) rests quite a bit. This is not necessary. Outside of the intro, which should probably be played as is, the pianist should feel free to comp in an appropriate style. The same goes for the bass (however, maintain the pedal figure at **L** and **M**) and drums. Keep it simple, straight-ahead, and swinging.
- **H**, **I**, **K**, and **N** are tutti sections (four-part harmony is distributed throughout all the horns). Work for a homogenous blend. You might rehearse each of the couplings separately: bari/tpt 1/tbn 1, alto 1/tpt 2/tbn 2, alto 2/tpt 3, and tnr 3/tpt 4/tbn 3. Each part has a good melody and should play with conviction and style as if it were the lead.
- Beat three of the fourth bar of **J** is a bit tricky. It turns the normal "triplet" swing eighth-note figure around. Accent the and of one and the downbeat of three, and place the quarters squarely on the beat.
- The cadenza (**L** and **M**) can be played as is or as a two-bar vamp until cue at **N**.
- When playing a straightforward chart like this, be reminded that once it starts swinging, there is a tendency to want to play loud all the time. Remember, volume is relative. Loud only sounds loud next to something softer. It can be more exciting to embrace the dynamic spectrum and help the form of the piece to emerge.
- It might be helpful to play several of Louis Armstrong's records (like *Swing That Music* or *Jubilee*) for the band so they can hear his wonderful spirit. Every time someone plays or sings jazz, he or she is paying homage to Pops. Jelly Roll Morton may have invented jazz, but Louis Armstrong is the soul of our music.

David Berger

## Notes from Wynton Marsalis:

This piece must be played with soul, intensity, feeling, and pure intent. It is to be sung, shouted, and swung. There has to be a parade-like joy to the swing. Listen to some Louis Armstrong, something like *Jubilee* (recorded 1/12/38), as David Berger recommended, or *Tight Like This* (recorded 12/12/28).

# PORTRAIT OF LOUIS ARMSTRONG

from the NEW ORLEANS SUITE

By Duke Ellington  
Transcribed by David Berger

Medium swing, ♩ = 148

A

Reeds 1 Alto Sax

2 Alto Sax

3 Tenor Sax

4 Tenor Sax

5 Bari Sax

Trumpets 1

2

3

4

5

Trombones 1

2

3

Piano

Bass

Drums

Solo

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

*mf*

*f*

Gm D7 Gm F7-9 Bb D7 Gm Fm7 Bb7

Ride

**B**

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

# Portrait of Louis Armstrong

3

C

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

E<sub>b</sub>

E<sub>b</sub>m

Gm

E<sub>b</sub>

E<sub>b</sub>m

Gm

3

3

3

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## Portrait of Louis Armstrong

D

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

(Gm)

C7

F7

Bb

D7

Gm6

Bb7

(Gm)

C7

F7

Bb

D7

Gm6

Bb7

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# Portrait of Louis Armstrong

5

E

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

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Chords: Eb, Ebm7, Bb, Gm7, Cm7, F7-9, Bb, D7, Gm, Fm7, Bb7

Chords: Eb, Ebm7, Bb, Gm7, Cm7, F7, Bb, D7, Gm, Fm7, Bb7

Chords: C, E7, Am, Gm7, C7

3

3

## Portrait of Louis Armstrong

F

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

*ff*

F Fm C Am7 Dm7 G7 C E7 Am Gm7 C7

Eb Ebm Bb Gm7 Cm7 F7 Bb D7 Gm Fm7 Bb7

Eb Ebm Bb Gm7 Cm7 F7 Bb D7 Gm Fm7 Bb7

# Portrait of Louis Armstrong

7

G

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

F Fm C Am 3 0

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

E♭ E♭m B♭ Gm

E♭ E♭m B♭ Gm

Bass

Drs.

The musical score is arranged for a jazz ensemble. The vocal parts (Alto, Tenor, Bari.) enter in the first measure with a melodic line. The brass section (Tpt. 1-5, Tbn. 1-3) provides harmonic support. The piano (Pno.) and bass (Bass) play a steady accompaniment. The drums (Drs.) play a consistent rhythm. The score includes a large red watermark reading 'Preview Only Requires Purchase'.

This image shows a page of a musical score for a jazz ensemble. The score includes staves for Alto, Tenor, Bari, Tpt. 1-5, Tbn. 1-3, Pno., Bass, and Drs. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex harmonic structure with various chords and melodic lines. A large red watermark "Preview Use Requires Purchase" is overlaid diagonally across the page.



# Portrait of Louis Armstrong

9

I

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The top section includes five vocal parts (Alto, Alto, Tenor, Tenor, Bari.) and five trumpet parts (Tpt. 1-5). Below these are three trombone parts (Tbn. 1-3), a piano part (Pno.) with a chord chart, a bass line (Bass), and a drum line (Drs.). The piano part includes a chord chart with the following sequence: Eb, Eb7, Ebm, Bb, G7+9, C7-9, F7-9, Bb, D7-9. The bass line includes a chord chart with the following sequence: Eb, Eb7, Ebm, Bb, G7, C7, F7, Bb, D7. The drum line is marked with 'x' for hits. A large red watermark 'Preview Use Requires Purchase' is overlaid diagonally across the entire page.

## Portrait of Louis Armstrong

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Gm6 G° Fm7 Bb7-9 Eb Ebm7 Bb

Bass

Gm G° Fm7 Bb7 Eb Ebm7 Bb

Drs.

Cr Ride Cr Ride Cr Ride

*mf*

## Portrait of Louis Armstrong

11

**J**

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

K

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

Cr. Ride

Chords: C, E7-9, Am6, Gm7, C7, F, Fm7, Bb, D7-9, Gm6, Fm7, Bb7, Eb, Ebm7, D7, Gm, Fm7, Bb7, Eb, Ebm7



L

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

C

Am7

D7<sup>-9</sup><sub>+5</sub>

G7sus4

B $\flat$

Gm7

C7<sup>-9</sup><sub>+5</sub>

Cm7/F

B $\flat$

Gm7

C7

Cm7/F $\cdot$

Cr

Ride

3

## Portrait of Louis Armstrong

M

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

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G7sus4

Cm7/F

Cm7/F

[N] Opt. on Cue

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari.

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

5

Tbn. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

Bb Am7-5 D7 Gm

f Cr Ride Cr

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