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JACK THE BEAR

BY DUKE ELLINGTON

Transcribed by David Berger for Jazz at Lincoln Center

FULL SCORE

This transcription was made especially for *Essentially Ellington* 2004:
The Ninth Annual Jazz at Lincoln Center High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival.

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ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON
Annual High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival

Jazz at Lincoln Center

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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 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. 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 that 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 sub-tone 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.

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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 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 that 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 ♭9 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

Special thanks to Andrew Homzy for editing the score.

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JACK THE BEAR

INSTRUMENTATION:

Reed 1 - Alto Sax	Trombone 1
Reed 2 - Alto Sax	Trombone 2
Reed 3 - Clarinet	Trombone 3 (opt. Valve)
Reed 4 - Tenor Sax	Guitar
Reed 5 - Baritone Sax	Piano
Trumpet 1	Bass
Trumpet 2	Drums
Trumpet 3 (opt. Cornet)	

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION:

Composer: Duke Ellington
Arranger: Duke Ellington
Recorded: March 6, 1940, in Chicago, IL
Time: 3:15
Master Number: BS-044888-1A
Original Issue: Victor 26536

Currently Available on CD:
Never No Lament: The Blanton-Webster Band—Duke Ellington
Bluebird (RCA/BMG) 82876508572

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

Solo Order: Jimmie Blanton; Duke Ellington; Barney Bigard, clarinet; Cootie Williams; Bigard, clarinet; Harry Carney, baritone sax; Tricky Sam Nanton; Blanton.

REHEARSAL NOTES:

- Although Jimmie Blanton had been recording with the Duke Ellington Orchestra since October 1939, it was this tune that both brought him to the attention of the jazz world and changed the way the bass would be played forever. Originally titled **Take It Away,** this arrangement had been rehearsed and discarded by Ellington before Blanton, Webster, and Strayhorn joined the band. According to Mercer Ellington, Strayhorn came across this score and suggested a new introduction and editing letters **A** and **J** to feature a call-and-response with Blanton. Ben Webster (on tenor) merely doubled the clarinet part down an octave. Originally written as a tribute to the now obscure stride pianist Jack the Bear, all of a sudden this chart was perfect for the transformed Ellington Orchestra.

- Although Blanton only solos at the beginning and ending, this piece belongs to him. His presence is felt at every moment whether soloing or walking. Listen to his strength, agility, swing, and imagination. He was to the bass what Louis Armstrong was to the trumpet ten years before. The sheer energy he puts into his playing is unparalleled. This is something to strive for. Although bass amplifiers have been in vogue for nearly 40 years, I strongly discourage their use on this type of music. Although they artificially increase the bass's volume, they also lengthen the decay of each note (lessening the impact of the attack) and distort the tone, but worst of all, they eliminate the bassist's struggle to be heard. It is the energy in that struggle that creates the great feeling of swing we hear in this music.

- Although ostensibly a blues, **Jack the Bear** combines several forms with the blues form. Following an eight-bar intro derived from the reed part at **H2** (with answers from the bass) is the A theme at **A,** a 12-bar blues chorus that neglects to go to the sub-dominant on the fifth bar, and then a four-bar unison tag that is a variant on the old vaudeville tag (IV #IV° I vi, etc.), then **B** (B theme—eight bars), **C** (eight bars), **D** (eight bars), **E** (a repeat of the B theme), and the four-bar tag. Then starting at **F** we have four blues choruses, the last of which inserts the four-bar tag as the last four measures. Then at **J** it's back to the intro, only this time with bass alternating with the ensemble instead of piano. Instead of the four-bar tag, the bass improvises a cadenza and the band puts a final chord on the end.

- Since the advent of rock-and-roll and amplification, dynamics have been virtually non-existent in pop music. This has bled over into jazz as well. So much of **Jack the Bear** is dependent on dynamics. Notice the terraced diminuendo in the intro and the crescendos and sudden pianos at **B** and **E.** These phrases make no sense without the changes in dynamics.

- For those bands wishing to create more solo space, letters **F** and **G** may be opened up for solos. If this is the case, the backgrounds should be played on cue.

- The bass cadenza at the end may be improvised or extended. If so, the final chord will be on cue.

David Berger

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COMMENTS FROM WYNTON MARSALIS:

- This piece starts off with call-and-response between the trombones and saxophones. Special attention should be paid to the dynamics because they play an important role throughout the arrangement.
- **A3** and **A4** feature one of the greatest syncopated responses ever written for a large ensemble. It must swing.
- The trombone's quarter notes at letter **C** pose a problem for the swing. Whenever there are a lot of people playing on consecutive downbeats, the music tends to get sloppy. At **C4** the trombones are on the offbeat while the saxophones play the downbeat. It will take a little work to get the coordination right.
- At letter **D,** the counterpoint between the reeds and brass must be crisp and clear.
- Dynamics are very important at letter **E** in the brass. In addition, the clarinet part should be looked at very carefully and then, after thoughtful analysis, must be shed.
- The rhythm section must renew their dedication to the swing at letter **F.** The saxes will want to drag at two before **G** and into **G** because the rhythms are not syncopated.
- Letter **H** echoes the call-and-response of the beginning. This is very creative riff writing, since the riffs change a bit every time, giving you the excitement of repetition without the boredom.
- Be sure to maintain the momentum of the swing when the bass starts soloing at **J.** The tendency will be to rush or drag depending on where the bass plays.

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CONDUCTOR

Jazz at Lincoln Center Library - Essentially Ellington

JACK THE BEAR

Composed by Duke Ellington
Transcribed by David Berger

Medium Swing ♩ = 153

Reeds 1 — Alto Sax
2 — Alto Sax
3 — Clarinet
4 — Tenor Sax
5 — Bari Sax

Trumpets 1
2
(Cornet) 3

Trombones 1 — Cup
2 — Cup
Trombone 3 (Valve) — Cup

Guitar — Ab, G, Ab, G7, Ab

Piano

Bass — Answer Reeds

Drums — Brushes

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Jack the Bear

A

Alto
Alto
Clar.
Tenor
Bari.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
Gtr.
Pno.
Bass
Dr.

mf

Open

A♭ E♭7 A♭ D♭7 A♭ A♭ B♭m7 A♭

Solo

Walk

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Alto
Alto
Clar.
Tenor
Bari.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
Gtr.
Pno.
Bass
Dr.

A♭7 E♭7+5 A♭ E♭7 E♭° E♭7 A7+9 A♭7 E♭7+5 A♭

Sizzle

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Alto
Alto
Clar.
Tenor
Bari.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
Gtr.
Pno.
Bass
Dr.

Ab Eb7-9 Fm7 G7 Ab Eb7-9 Ab

As is

Brushes

Solo

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Essentially Ellington

The *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival *(EE)* is one of the most unique jazz programs for high school bands in the U.S., Canada, and Australia. *EE* extends the legacy of Duke Ellington by widely disseminating his music, in its original arrangements, to high school musicians for study and performance. Utilizing Ellington's music challenges students to increase their musical proficiency and knowledge of the jazz language. *EE* consists of the following initiatives and services:

- **Supplying the Music:** Each year, Jazz at Lincoln Center (J@LC) transcribes, publishes, and distributes Duke Ellington charts (along with additional educational materials) to high school bands in the U.S., Canada, and American schools abroad.
- **Talking About Duke:** Throughout the school year, band directors and students correspond with professional clinicians who answer questions regarding Ellington's music. *EE* strives to foster mentoring relationships through e-mail correspondence, various conference presentations, and the festival weekend.
- **Sharing Experiences:** Students are encouraged to enter an essay contest by writing about an experience they have had with jazz music. The first-place winner earns the honor of naming a seat in Frederick P. Rose Hall—the future home of Jazz at Lincoln Center.
- **Professional Feedback:** Bands are invited to submit a recording of their performance of the charts either for entry in the competition or for comments only. Every submission receives a thorough written assessment.
- **Finalists and In-School Workshops:** Fifteen bands are selected from competition entries to attend the competition and festival in New York City. To prepare, each finalist band receives an in-school workshop led by a professional musician. Local *EE* participants are also invited to attend workshops.
- **Competition & Festival:** *EE* culminates in a three-day festival at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall. Students, teachers, and musicians from across the country participate in workshops, rehearsals, and performances. The festival concludes with an evening concert that features the three top-placing bands joining Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra in an all-Ellington performance.
- **Band Director Academy:** This professional development program for band directors is designed to enhance their ability to teach and conduct the music of Duke Ellington and other big band composers. Led by prominent jazz educators each summer, this four-day program integrates performance, history, pedagogy, and discussion into an intensive educational experience for educators at all levels.
- **Essentially Ellington Down Under:** A partnership between Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts at Edith Cowen University, *EE Down Under* mirrors the model J@LC has produced successfully in the U.S. and Canada by bringing the music of Duke Ellington to secondary schools in Western Australia.

To date, Jazz at Lincoln Center has distributed more than 50,000 EE scores to more than 3,500 schools in all 50 U.S. states, Canadian provinces, and schools in Western Australia. Through this program, more than 175,000 students have been exposed to Duke Ellington's music.

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Jazz at Lincoln Center

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER is a not-for-profit arts organization dedicated to jazz. With the world-renowned Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, and a comprehensive array of guest artists, Jazz at Lincoln Center advances a unique vision for the continued development of the art of jazz by producing a year-round schedule of performance, education, and broadcast events for audiences of all ages. These productions include concerts, national and international tours, residencies, weekly national radio and television programs, recordings, publications, an annual high school jazz band competition and festival, a band director academy, a jazz appreciation curriculum for children, advanced training through the Juilliard Institute for Jazz Studies, music publishing, children's concerts, lectures, adult education courses, film programs, and student and educator workshops. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis and President & CEO Hughlyn F. Fierce, Jazz at Lincoln Center will produce more than 400 events during its 2003–04 season. Currently, Jazz at Lincoln Center is building its new home—Frederick P. Rose Hall—the first-ever performance, education, and broadcast facility devoted to jazz, slated to open in fall 2004.

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