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# STOMPY JONES

## 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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#### 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 under- stand 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 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 thythm section stops for one, two, or four bars. Very often a solbist 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<sup>O</sup> 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  $\flat 9$  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.

### **STOMPY JONES**

#### **INSTRUMENTATION:**

Reed 1 - Alto Sax Trombone 1
Reed 2 - Alto Sax Trombone 2

Reed 3 - Clarinet Trombone 3 (opt. Valve)

Reed 4 - Baritone Sax/Alto Sax Guitar
Trumpet 1 Piano
Trumpet 2 Bass
Trumpet 3 Drums

#### **ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION:**

**Composer:** Duke Ellington **Arranger:** Duke Ellington

Recorded: January 9, 1934, in Chicago, IL

**Time:** 3:00

Master Number: BS-80145-2 Original Issue: Victor 24521

#### **Currently Available on CD:**

The Chronological Duke Ellington and His Orchestra 1933–1935 Classics 646

Personnel: Duke Ellington, piano; Louis Bacon, Freddy Jenkins, Arthur Whetsol, Cootie Williams, trumpets; Lawrence Brown and Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton, trombones; Barney Bigard, clarinet; Harry Carney, baritone sax; Otto Hardwick and Johnny Hodges, alto saxes; Fred Guy, guitar; Wellman Braud, bass; Sonny Greer, drums; unknown, maracas.

**Solo Order:** Lawrence Brown; Barney Bigard; Cootie Williams; Harry Carney; Lawrence Brown; Duke Ellington; Barney Bigard; Tricky Sam Nanton and Bigard.

#### **REHEARSAL NOTES:**

- I hesitate to use superlatives because immediately I will be barraged with: "But what about . . . ?" but in the case of **Stompy Jones**, I just have to say that this is the most joyous three minutes of music I know. Although this is one of the simplest pieces of music in the Ellington canon, it requires nothing short of robust energy from all players concerned.
- You will notice that the original recording has four trumpets and two trombones. This
  is because Tizol took a leave of absence from the fall of 1933 until the spring of
  1934. Ellington temporarily replaced him with trumpeter Louis Bacon. Ellington wrote
  Stompy Jones with Tizol in mind prior to his departure, and Tizol resumed playing his
  original part upon his return. I have notated the Tizol/Bacon part for trombone since
  this was Ellington's original conception.
- Although we generally think of Ellington's music as complex, here is a great example
  of a straightforward form with the most basic chord changes. Named after Ellington's
  band boy (a step up from modern-day roadie), this piece is a throwback to the stomps
  of the previous decade. (A stomp was a lively dance that featured a heavy step for
  accents.)
- Another characteristic of stomps is the rag-derived form. In most cases they use only the trio section of a rag. That is the case here. This 16-bar chord progression comes from **Panama Rag** and also shares its chord progression with **Happy Birthday**. Ellington loved this progression and used it throughout his entire career on such pieces as **Flaming Sword** (1940) and **Limbo Jazz** (1962).
- The form for **Stompy Jones** is an eight-bar introduction followed by nine 16-bar choruses. The intro is a call-and-response with the trombone. This idea returns at letter **E** (expanded to a full chorus and alternating with the piano rather than the trombone).
- Nearly the entire band solos at one time or another, and each chorus features a different soloist. For these reasons and the simple chord changes and riffs, I suggest beginning rehearsals of young bands with this piece and have everyone in the band play a chorus, a good way to the get the band swinging and everyone improvising. This piece also makes an excellent encore piece: it is short, features solos by everyone (except the drums), and leaves the audience smiling and tapping their toes.
- Part of the charm of this piece is the series of one-chorus solos. Each of these solos is a contrast and challenge to the previous and succeeding soloist, appealing to the audience's competitive nature. Longer solos would obscure the form; this is not recommended.

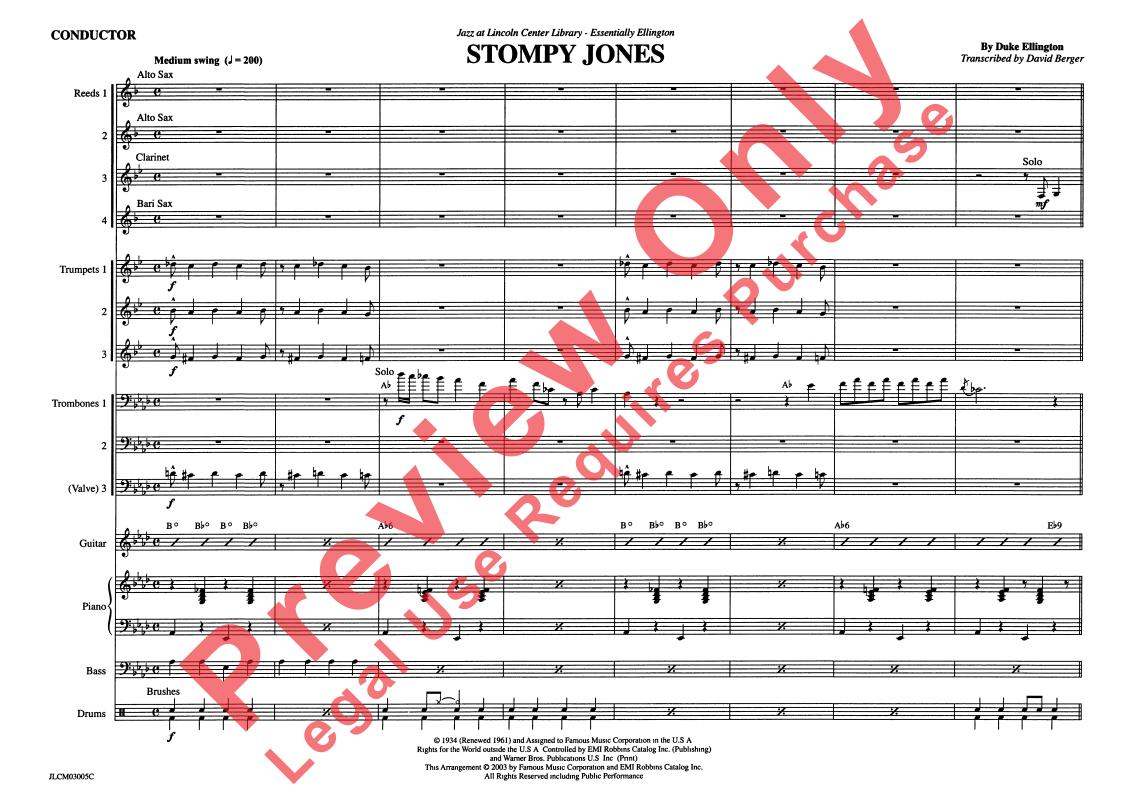
- When playing scores from the '20s and early '30s, the energy is established and maintained by playing ever so slightly on top of the beat, but never rushing. This is especially true of the rhythm section. The piano should play all the oom-pahs softly but with rhythmic precision, placing an accent on the push beats (and-of-3's). Do not confuse energy with loudness. This piece roars at a medium volume. The unamplified bass and drummer's brushes lead the way.
- The bass should play a different pattern each chorus. If he or she is given a solo, I recommend pizzicato. If arco is used, it would be a good idea to sing along an octave higher (à la Slam Stewart or Major Holly). This combination adds appropriate humor. Arco without singing seems a bit serious for this piece.
- All the solos may be improvised except the plunger trombone at F. This call-andresponse is a wonderful stroke of comedy; the repetition goes well beyond annoying and becomes hilarious.
- At F, Reed 4 switches to alto and stays on alto to the end of the piece. Your baritone
  player may not play the alto saxophone. If this is the case, you might try transposing
  this part up a perfect fourth and having your tenor player (who is tacet on this piece)
  cover the part. I do not recommend having the bari play the alto part (it sounds too low
  where written and is out of range up an octave).
- Remember to have the horns play the quarter notes short and to use plenty of accent.
   We are looking for a crisp, buoyant sound. This requires a light feel and constant attention to the time. If the band is doing its job, it should sound like everyone is just having a good time swinging, and as writer Albert Murray says, "Swinging is the American imperative."



#### COMMENTS FROM WYNTON MARSALIS:

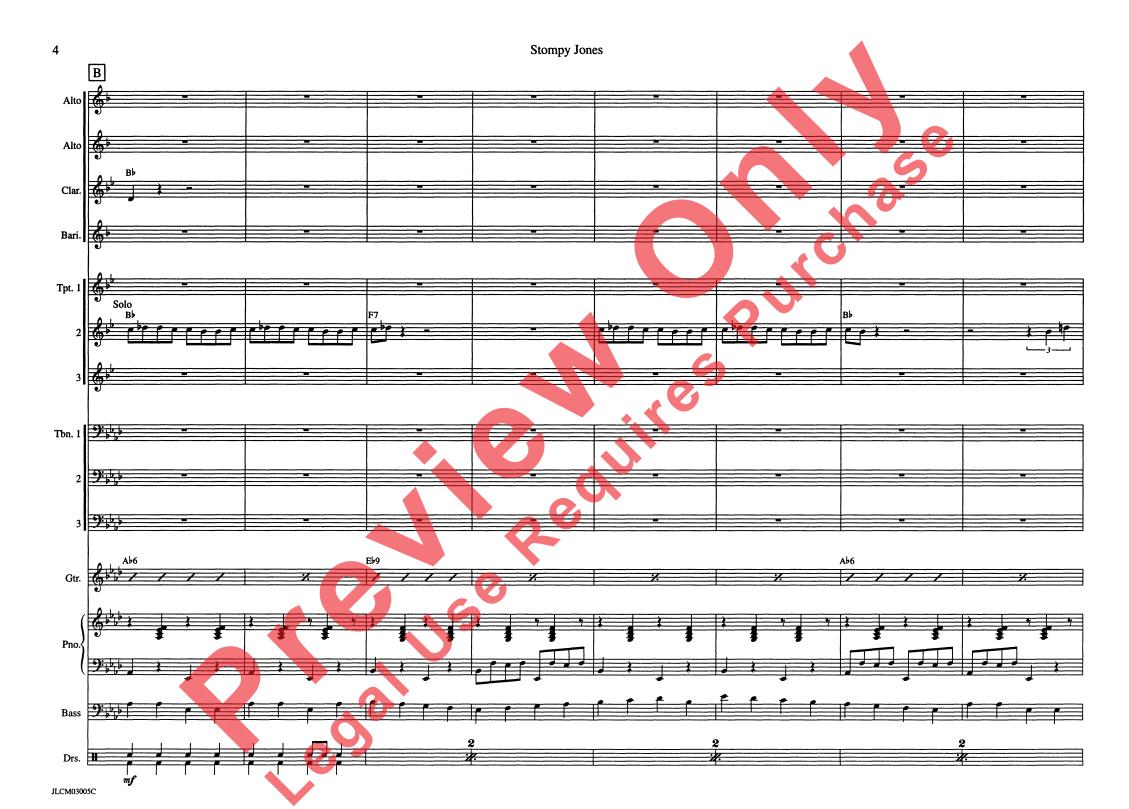
- This arrangement offers a great opportunity to learn to play a realistic call-and-response. First, the trombone responds to the brass in the intro. The brass then responds to the clarinet at letter **A** with a classic Charleston rhythm. At letter **G** the clarinet appears as an obbligato instrument over the ensemble riff, and later the trombone serves the same role at **I**. Each section exits in reverse order in which it entered.
- Stompy Jones also provides a chance to teach the rhythm section how to swing on all four beats in a style that combines stride piano, 4/4 guitar, moving bass on all four beats, and the drum shuffle on all four beats. This swing feeling requires control from rhythm players. The pulse of the rhythm section must be extremely stiff and tight, while the soloists in the band syncopate and play their rhythms light and loose. This approach to swing combines opposite feelings in a manner very similar to great art. It is a classic form of American swing, and it's very difficult because it requires pure selflessness and a hunger for the beat. The swing must be stingy.
- Students should enjoy soloing on these changes because they are a classic harmonic pattern like blues, "Bhythm Changes," and **Tiger Rag.** This harmonic progression fits **Happy Birthday and Just a Closer Walk With Thee**, among other songs.
- It's great to practice the moaning at letter **F**; the call-and-response should sound as human as humanly possible. The three choruses from **G** to the end form the perfect shout chorus; each chorus presents a hotter variation on a riff. The clarinet creates excitement in the upper register, and for the last chorus, the trombone comes in and covers the middles and lows so well that even your great, great grandma will want to dance. I don't know who Stompy Jones was, but he had a good time.







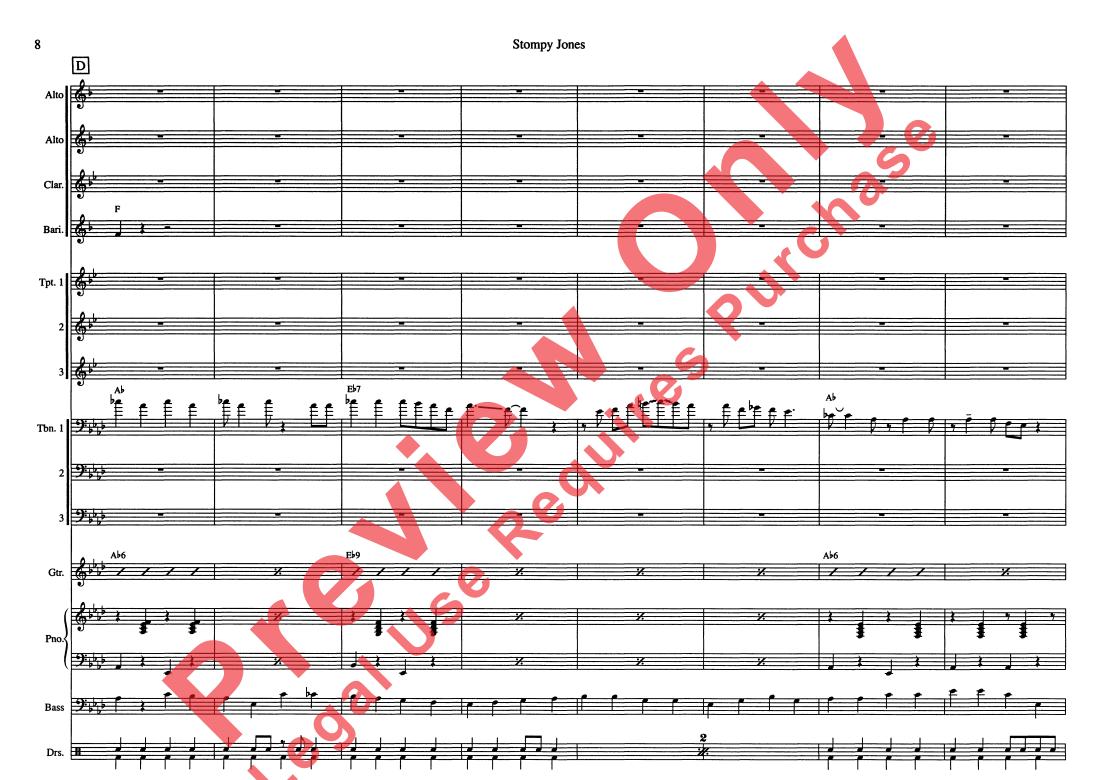






















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## **Essentially Ellington**

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 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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