

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

WHIRLYBIRD

RECORDED BY COUNT BASIE

ARRANGED BY NEAL HEFTI

FULL SCORE

JLP-7740

MUSIC BY NEAL HEFTI

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A NOT-FOR-PROFIT JAZZ RESEARCH ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PRESERVING AND PROMOTING AMERICA'S MUSICAL HERITAGE.



THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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COUNT BASIE SERIES

WHIRLYBIRD (1957)

Count Basie:

Next to Duke Ellington, there is no more famous band in the history of jazz than that of William 'Count' Basie. Although his economical piano playing was ahead of his time compared to several of his more stride-oriented contemporaries, Basie was always best known as the face of an organization that played a continuous role in shaping the trajectory of jazz for over 50 years.

Born on August 21, 1904 in Red Bank, New Jersey, even as a youth Basie was attracted to not just music in general, but the idea of being a bandleader specifically. Settling on the piano as his main instrument as a teen, Basie's musical apprenticeship was fairly typical for the time. Most of his education stemmed from hanging around the Harlem stride piano scene of the 1920s. A series of tours with vaudeville troupes came next; when one of the troupes broke up in Kansas City in 1927, Basie found himself stranded.

This turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as it was not long before Basie found himself hired by bassist Walter Page to play with his now-legendary territory band, the Blue Devils. His notoriety rising, Basie eventually left the Blue Devils to take over the piano chair in the Bennie Moten Orchestra, considered to be the finest band in the Kansas City area. After Moten's sudden death in 1935, rather than letting the band fall apart, Basie ended up taking over the reins himself, bringing in several of his former Blue Devils band mates, including Page himself, in the process. It did not take long for this new band to make its impact on the world of jazz. The Basie organization specialized in arrangements that were fairly loosely organized and easy to customize on the spot, known informally as "head" arrangements. This allowed for a much more soloist-friendly environment than most of the other bands of the swing era. In addition, the band's rhythm section was responsible for a distinctive shift in the way time is kept in jazz. Spurred by drummer "Papa" Jo Jones' more free-form approach and guitarist Freddie Green's steady "rhythm" style of playing, the innovations of this organization would play a key role in setting up the eventual rise of bebop in the 1940s.

World War II was not kind to big bands for a variety of reasons, and Basie's band was no exception. Financial considerations would force him to reduce his ensemble to an octet by the end of the 1940s. By the mid-1950s, however, Basie was able to reform his big band, aided in no small part to a series of hit recordings, including a particularly popular version of the jazz standard **April In Paris**. This new Basie band maintained the same relentless sense of swing as the earlier units, but was much more organized as a whole. Gone were the "head" arrangements of old in favor of a consistently expanding library of charts provided by what may have been the greatest stable of arrangers ever housed by a single band.

Basie's celebrity firmly cemented by this point, his band remained true to this new format for the rest of his life. The 1960s and 1970s would see a string of successful albums backing singers such as Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Tony Bennett, among others. In addition, the band began to see an increased presence in Las Vegas and Hollywood; Basie's famous cameo in Mel Brooks's **Blazing Saddles** is no doubt a highlight of the now-classic comedy. Basie continued a busy touring and recording schedule even when he was wheelchair-bound in his final years.

Basie passed away on April 26, 1984. The band that bears his name continues to tour to this day, performing both the favorites of the past as well as new arrangements and continuing to collaborate with some of jazz's top vocalists, including George Benson and Diane Schuur. The list of notable artists brought to prominence through the ranks of his band include saxophonists Lester Young, Frank Foster and Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis, trumpeters Harry 'Sweets' Edison, Buck Clayton, and Thad Jones, trombonists Dicky Wells and Al Grey, and drummer Sonny Payne. Notable arrangers who contributed to the band's book include Frank Foster, Neal Hefti, Ernie Wilkins, Thad Jones, Billy Byers, Quincy Jones, and Sammy Nestico.



Neal Hefti:

The importance of Neal Hefti cannot be understated. His work in the worlds of both big band jazz and commercial music have resulted in some of the most iconic sounds in the history of music. Born in 1922, Hefti took up the trumpet at age 11 and by the end of his high school years was performing with territory bands to help support his family. It was during his time as a member of Woody Herman's First Herd that his skills as an arranger began to shine. Influenced by the burgeoning bebop movement, Hefti's arrangements of ***The Good Earth*** and ***Wild Root*** managed to straddle the middle ground between commercially viable and artistically progressive perfectly, and were significant instrumental hits for the band.

Beginning in 1950, Hefti formed a highly fruitful relationship with Count Basie. Serving as one of the chief arrangers for Basie's 'New Testament' band, Hefti's charts played a significant role in the development of the new Basie sound of the 1950s. The pinnacle of the Hefti-Basie relationship is the 1958 album known as ***The Atomic Mr. Basie***, an album entirely made of Hefti's arrangements that included such classics as ***The Kid from Red Bank***, ***Splanky***, ***Flight of the Foo Birds*** and ***Lil' Darlin'***.

After moving to California in the 1960s, Hefti became a mainstay arranger for film and television. His composition ***Girl Talk*** netted him two Grammy nominations; nowadays, however, his theme songs for the television series ***The Odd Couple*** and ***Batman*** are easily his best-known and most popular works. Hefti would continue working throughout the 1970s before eventually retiring and passing away in 2008.

The Music:

There are few collaborations in the world of big band jazz that have produced more classic outcomes than those of bandleader Count Basie and arranger Neal Hefti. At the start of their association in 1951, Basie was looking to revive his big band after a period where economics had forced him to downsize his unit to an octet. Hefti, a youthful veteran who had already written for Woody Herman, Buddy Rich, and Charlie Parker, was looking to expand his name in the public eye. When the two brought their highly sympathetic musical personalities together, the result was a completely re-defined sound of the Basie organization, and big band jazz in general, by combining the easy-swinging riff-based style of Basie's 1930s groups with Hefti's more contemporary, orchestrated sensibility. Their relationship reached its apex with three albums comprised entirely of Hefti's arrangements: 1957's ***The Atomic Mr. Basie***, 1958's ***Basie Plays Hefti***, and 1962's ***On My Way & Shoutin' Again***. These universally-acclaimed classics left the sound of big band jazz permanently altered for the better, revived Basie's fortunes as a bandleader, and paved the way for Hefti's transition to the world of scoring for television and film.

Notes to the Conductor:

Originally titled ***Roller Coaster***, ***Whirlybird*** (AKA ***Whirly-Bird***) is a textbook example of a big band 'flag-waver' - a raucous, up-tempo romp that will generate almost endless excitement to musicians and listeners alike. Taken at a brisk tempo and building in intensity over the entire course of the performance, it also serves as an excellent feature for your band's star tenor saxophone soloist.

A typical Basie introduction sets up the brisk tempo for the band's opening fanfare, an eight measure statement of the tune's main theme. As quickly as the band announces its presence, it recedes into the background for a chorus of Basie's piano. The rollicking melody kicks off at measure 51 in the saxes, with some timely 'blats' from the trombones to provide a little extra kick. The full band plays the melody in unison at measures 59 and 75, and although things should be fairly forceful, don't allow your band to be too overly exuberant in order to allow them to save up a bit for the finale.

An open tenor sax solo commences at measure 83, handled by the incomparably lively Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis on the original recording. What follows this solo is a shout chorus that has become known as one of the most thrilling in the entire big band pantheon. Featuring the horns ripping up and down between registers, it is quite a blow for the brass section, but when executed properly creates an unforgettable rush of musical excitement. The shout is followed by some off-rhythm, Louis Armstrong-inspired brass hits that set up an eight measure drum solo. The hits return once again after the drums in order to set up the return of the main melody statement one last time at measure 172. Said melody is briefly tagged, followed up by a quick Basie piano break, and finished off with one final ensemble roar to bring the proceedings to an appropriately energetic conclusion.

This publication was based on the original set of parts used during the recording session - this is not a transcription.

Dylan Canterbury

July 2021

WHIRLYBIRD

RECORDED BY COUNT BASIE

SCORE

MUSIC BY NEAL HEFTI

ARRANGED BY NEAL HEFTI

PREPARED BY DAVID BERGER, DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

FAST SWING ♩ = 240

The musical score is arranged for a jazz ensemble. It includes parts for Alto Sax 1 & 2, Tenor Sax 1 & 2, Baritone Sax, Trumpet 1-4, Trombone 1-3, Guitar, Piano, Bass, and Drum Set. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'FAST SWING' with a quarter note equal to 240 beats per minute. The score begins with a series of rests for all instruments. At measure 2, the piano enters with a solo section marked '(SOLO)' and 'mf'. The piano solo continues through measure 9, ending with '(END SOLO)'. The guitar and bass provide accompaniment throughout. The score concludes at measure 10 with a final chord marked 'A^b6' and a dynamic marking of 'f'.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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11

A Sax. 1
A Sax. 2
T Sax. 1
T Sax. 2
B Sax.
TPT. 1
TPT. 2
TPT. 3
TPT. 4
TBN. 1
TBN. 2
TBN. 3
GTR.
PNO.
BS.
DR.

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

$A^{\flat 6}$ $Fm7$ $Em7$ $E^{\flat}m7$ $A^{\flat 9}$ $D^{\flat 6}$ $D^{\flat}m7$ $Cm7$ $F7(\sharp 9)$ $B^{\flat}m7$ $E^{\flat 9}$ $A^{\flat 6}$ $B^{\flat}m7$ $E^{\flat 9}$
 $A^{\flat 6}$ $Fm7$ $Em7$ $E^{\flat}m7$ $A^{\flat 9}$ $D^{\flat 6}$ $D^{\flat}m7$ $Cm7$ $F7(\sharp 9)$ $B^{\flat}m7$ $E^{\flat 9}$ $A^{\flat 6}$ $B^{\flat}m7$ $E^{\flat 9}$
 $A^{\flat 6}$ $Fm7$ $Em7$ $E^{\flat}m7$ $A^{\flat 9}$ $D^{\flat 6}$ $D^{\flat}m7$ $Cm7$ $F7(\sharp 9)$ $B^{\flat}m7$ $E^{\flat 9}$ $A^{\flat 6}$ $B^{\flat}m7$ $E^{\flat 9}$

mp (SOLO)
mp (HI-HAT)