

Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center

Nancy Jo

By Gerald Wilson

As performed by Gerald Wilson and His Orchestra
Transcribed and Edited by David Berger for Jazz at Lincoln Center

Full Score

This transcription was made especially for Jazz at Lincoln Center's 2013-14
Nineteenth Annual *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program.

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ESSENTIALLY
ELLINGTON

jazz

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 orchestration 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 music 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 him. 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 vibrato on harmonized passages and no vibrato on unisons. The vibrato can be either heavy or light depending on the context. Occasionally saxes use a light 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 on harmonized passages at times. Try to match the speed of vibrato. In general 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* (forte-piano); 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 hard 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 mute/plunger combinations create a wonderful sound (very close to the human voice), but they also can create some intonation problems which must be corrected by the lip or by using alternate slide positions. 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" or 24" 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 release together.
17. 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 sub-dominant and cycle back to the tonic.

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.

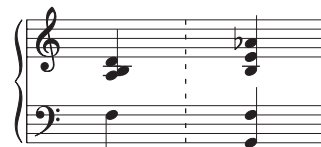
Soli • a harmonized passage for two or more instruments playing the same rhythm. It is customary for horn players to stand up or even move in front of the band when playing these passages. This is done so that the audience can hear them better and to provide the audience with some visual interest. A soli sound particular to Ellington's music combines two trumpets and 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 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 9th and a 13th. 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 • a tune or series of pitches.

Harmony • chords and voicings.

Orchestration • instrumentation and tone colors.

— David Berger

NANCY JO • INSTRUMENTATION

Reed 1 • Alto Sax
Reed 2 • Alto Sax
Reed 3 • Tenor Sax
Reed 4 • Tenor Sax
Reed 5 • Baritone Sax
Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Trumpet 4
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Trombone 4
Guitar
Piano
Bass
Drums

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION

Composer • Gerald Wilson
Arranger • Gerald Wilson
Recorded • August 27, 1962 in Los Angeles
Original Issue • Pacific Jazz ST-61 (*Moment of Truth*) [LP]

Currently Available on CD • American Jazz Classics 4201395
(*You Better Believe It/Moment of Truth*)

Download Available • The Complete Pacific Jazz Recordings of Gerald Wilson and His Orchestra • itunes.com

Personnel • Gerald Wilson (leader); Carmell Jones, Jules Chaiken, John Audino, Freddie Hill (trumpet); Bob Edmondson, Lou Blackburn, Frank Strong (trombone); Bob Knight (bass trombone); Bud Shank (alto sax/flute); Joe Maini (alto sax); Teddy Edwards, Harold Land (tenor sax); Don Raffell (baritone sax); Jack Wilson (piano); Joe Pass (guitar); Jimmy Bond (bass); Mel Lewis (drums)

Soloists • Carmell Jones (trumpet); Harold Land (tenor sax); Joe Pass (guitar)

REHEARSAL NOTES

• Gerald Wilson first rose to national prominence when he replaced Sy Oliver as a trumpet player and arranger in the Jimmie Lunceford Band in 1939. Like Sy, his composing and arranging abilities outshone his trumpet playing, so ultimately he wound up putting the trumpet on the back burner and became an active arranger in Los Angeles from the late '40s into the '70s. **Nancy Jo** is named after one of Gerald's daughters and was written for and recorded by the great LA band he led in the '60s.

• Like his idol, Duke Ellington, Gerald's style is blues and swing based. By the early 1940s Gerald was combining dissonant, dense voicings with bebop lines and rhythms. **Nancy Jo** is a great example – a 12-bar F blues

utilizing a simple, repetitive 2-bar riff. The harmonies start on the flat five half-diminished chord and then use the bebop ii V's in a progression similar to *Blues For Alice* and *Dance Of The Infidels*. The big difference is that Gerald adds a 16-bar bridge (8 bars of ii V's descending by whole steps that cadence on the bii chord plus 8 bars up a half step ending on the ii V in the home key of F) thus creating a large AABA form (2 choruses of blues, bridge, 1 chorus of blues – 12+12+16+12, which comes to 52 measures). Using “A” for a blues chorus and “B” for the bridge, the form is: A (sax melody) A (add brass hits) A (trumpet solo) A (add sax background) B (tenor solo with brass background) A (trumpet over sax background) AA (guitar solo) B (sax soli) A (Guitar solo) sudden modulation to Bb (no preparation) A (sax melody with brass hits) A (sax melody) Coda (abbreviated blues chorus ending on the bII maj⁷. Notice that the last chord is a B maj⁷ and the first chord of the piece is a Bm7⁻⁵. I like that symmetry.

• The tempo is brisk. Keep it light and swinging. Back off the unisons and keep the long notes soft. Accented notes are hit very hard and then immediately soft. Think of them all as *sfp*. This starts on the first note of the piece. The accented quarter note is on beat 4. New Orleans musicians call this “the big 4”. Later on the swing musicians called this a scronch.

• Ellington composed a piece for the Cotton Club in the late '30s called *The Scronch*. The lyric starts, “Scronch on the fourth beat...” I was at a recording session of his in the early '70s where Ernie Wilkins was conducting one of his own arrangements that started just like **Nancy Jo** – a quarter note on the 4th beat tied over to the next measure. Ray Nance was playing 4th trumpet and kept coming in on the wrong beat. Ernie pointed out Ray's error, but Ray kept getting the rhythm wrong. Ernie tried explaining it, but time after time, Ray would make the same mistake. Eventually, in frustration Ernie turned to Duke for help. Duke looked up from the keyboard and calmly looked at Ray and asked, “Raymond, don't you remember *The Scronch*?” That was all it took. Duke Ellington – a genius in many ways.

• The score and parts in the *Essentially Ellington* series are transcriptions from classic jazz recordings. Sometimes there are discrepancies between what the players actually played and the composer's intentions. This happens in a number of places in **Nancy Jo**. The pianist plays Em7⁻⁵ on the 2nd bar of the blues instead of Em⁷. I have changed it to conform to the horn voicings, but left it as an Em7⁻⁵ in the 2nd measure of **A**. For performance purposes, I recommend using Em⁷ in every blues chorus throughout the chart. If your pianist is reading the transcribed part, you will need to mark natural signs on the Bs.

• The bassist on the recording, Jimmy Bond, ends each blues chorus with a ii V putting a C on the 3rd beat of bar 12 rather than a Gb root of the Gb maj⁷ chord. This is not what Gerald intended, but it seems to work. You might try it both ways and see which feels better to you.

• A funny thing happens in the turnaround in letter **C** (11th and 12th measure). In every other chorus the turnaround starts on Bm7⁻⁵ and moves around the circle of 5ths first in quarter notes for a bar and then in half notes (Gm⁷ C⁷). In this one instance, the rhythm section and soloist all play a simple I V/V ii V turnaround. This is the only tonic chord in the entire chart. The original parts used the Bm7⁻⁵ turnaround. You're the conductor.

It's your call. I'd probably go with the Bm7⁻⁵ turnaround. I see no reason to cadence.

• Remember that quarter notes are played short except where notated with a dash (tenuto mark). ^ means short and accented and > means accented and full value.

• I have put in accents for the sax soli at **J** through **K**. The tempo is too fast to tongue, so the saxes slur each 2-bar phrase using breath accents where marked. Originally, Gerald wrote brass responses (quarter notes on the and of 3 in bars 2, 4 and 6), but he had the brass tacet for these 2 choruses and just left it to the saxes. Notice that the pianist on the recording takes over this call-and-response function for the first 4 bars at **J**.

• To sum it up: accent, keep it light and swinging and have fun playing bebop over all the iiV progressions without losing sight of the blues.

– David Berger

Courtesy of Tutti Dynamics, Inc., videos of Wynton Marsalis leading the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in rehearsals of the *Essentially Ellington* 2013-14 repertoire can be downloaded FREE at jalco.org/EssentiallyEllington

CONDUCTOR

Jazz at Lincoln Center Library - Essentially Ellington

NANCY JO

Gerald Wilson
Transcribed by David Berger

Fast Swing ♩ = 242

Alto Sax **A**

Reeds 1

Alto Sax 2

Tenor Sax 3

Tenor Sax 4

Baritone Sax 5

Trumpets 1

Trumpets 2

Trumpets 3

Trumpets 4

Trombones 1

Trombones 2

Trombones 3

Trombones 4

Guitar

Piano

Bass

Drums

Nancy Jo

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

Tbn. 1

2

3

4

Gtr.

Pno.

Bass

Drs.

B

mf

f

A m7 G m7 Bbm7 Bm7-5 E7 A m7 D7 G m7 Gbmaj7 Bm7-5 E m7 A7-5 D m7 C m7 F7 Bb7

