

# JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

*Presents*

## THE ELDER

RECORDED BY COUNT BASIE

ARRANGED BY THAD JONES

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

## FULL SCORE

JLP-7718

MUSIC BY THAD JONES

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# COUNT BASIE SERIES

## THE ELDER (1962)

### **Background:**

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 reigns 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’ “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 Foster, Jones, Neal Hefti, Quincy Jones, and Sammy Nestico.



Thad Jones was born in Pontiac, Michigan on March 28, 1923, into a family that must be considered along with the Marsalises to be among America's greatest jazz clans. His older brother and pianist Hank lived to be 91 and played in his beloved lyrical style through every era and in every style; swing and big band and bop, backing vocalists and playing solo. Thad's younger brother Elvin was one of the most virtuosic and influential drummers in jazz history, also enjoying a long career shining in many different genres of jazz. Thad was self-taught, and clearly possessed genes and natural abilities that ran deep in this incredible musical family.

After spending time in the military and honing his formidable trumpet skills while playing in bands centered in the Midwest, Thad joined the Count Basie Orchestra in 1954, becoming a featured soloist on some of the band's greatest tunes and soon becoming an arranger for the group as well, writing about two dozen arrangements in his near-decade with Basie. In 1963 Thad left the Basie Orchestra to become an independent studio musician and arranger in the thriving New York City jazz world. He and drummer Mel Lewis soon hit upon the idea of starting a working big band that would be a vehicle for some of NYC's best and busiest musicians to jam and work on ideas and compositions, and this eventually became the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. After playing at various clubs, in 1966 they approached Max Gordon, owner of the famed Village Vanguard, and began a regular gig there which amazingly continues to this day, as the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, currently under the leadership of trombonist John Mosca.

Thad took a teaching position at William Paterson University in New Jersey in 1972, where he conducted the student big band and taught arranging and other classes. This was a pioneering move, as he became one of the first musicians at his level to embark on a career as a full-time professor, and continued until he decided to move to Europe. Thad spent most of the late 1970s and the first half of the 1980s in Denmark, where many American jazz musicians had taken up residence. While there, he took over the Danish Radio Big Band and turned it into one of the world's best ensembles. He also composed, arranged, taught, and continued to study during this period. He moved back to the U.S. in 1985 to take over the leadership of his late mentor Count Basie's band. Unfortunately, he soon became ill and had to step down, and moved back to Europe where he was hospitalized for months. He passed away at the age of 63 in August 1986, leaving the world without one of the very best creators and interpreters of the jazz idiom.

Dr. David Demsey, Coordinator of Jazz Studies and Curator of the Thad Jones Archive at William Paterson University, has referred to Thad as a "savant" when it comes to his jazz arranging abilities. He shares a story about a vocal session Thad had written charts for, and one of the arrangements was apparently not in the singer's key. So late one night Thad took the chart home, and while everyone expected it to be transposed for the next day's session, apparently he brought in a chart that was completely new and had been done in a few hours. And, of course it was spectacular. Few people have ever heard a great-sounding band in their head like Thad Jones did; every nuance of every instrument, every melody, every dynamic and shade of color played out vividly in his incredibly fertile mind, and these newly-discovered charts are more examples of this. They also show his singular ability to write music for others, which clearly reflected the style and sound of the artists he worked for, yet firmly reflected Thad's own very unique musical footprint as well.

When one attends a jazz concert and hears a band playing a collection of songs by a group of jazz's greatest arrangers, Thad's still stand out. The professionalism is one thing, but what really sears the Thad Jones trademark in one's ears is the depth of his art: the charts exude what Dr. Demsey has so ideally termed "a rhythmic adeptness and an ingenious thematic coherence." His arrangements are full of life, often very complex, yet retain a playful exuberance that makes them so memorable and enjoyable to hear, to learn, and to play. They contain intricacies which are appreciated by the very best players yet at the same time have such harmonic richness and bluesy warmth that even the most casual listener can truly love them as well.

### **The Music:**

Recorded in 1962 at one of the sessions that would make up the album *Back with Basie*, Thad Jones's *The Elder* is a unique entry in the catalogue of charts he contributed to the Count Basie Orchestra's library. Clocking in at roughly 7 minutes, its performance time is about double that of the average Basie recording from this time period. Musically, the arrangement showcases several harmonic and rhythmic ideas that indicate the direction Jones's writing would take a few years later.

### **Notes to the Conductor:**

The warm melody at measure 9 is handled by saxophones with the trombones filling in the gaps with some bluesy unison lines. The feel should be relaxed and gentle all the way until measure 35, where a trumpet solo (handled by Al Aarons on the original recording) takes center stage. The first chorus features markedly complex background figures throughout the band, but in particular the saxes, who have some tricky 16th note lines. Be careful that your ensemble doesn't overwhelm the soloist during this part.

Measure 65 sees a surprise shift to a double time feel (another un-Basie-like feature of this particular arrangement) for the second chorus of trumpet solo. The ensemble backgrounds here are almost like a mini shout chorus, and your trumpet soloist is encouraged to craft their solo in and around the cracks during this section. Just as things appear to be losing control, the tempo drops out of double time for a chorus of piano beginning at measure 99.

The full band comes in for a more typically Basie “soft shout” chorus at measure 130 with an extremely unusual twist - a Freddie Green chordal guitar solo! This solo should fill in the gaps around the ensemble, with these gaps being noted in the guitar part. Also take note that the trumpet 4 part handles the ensemble lead here, so be aware that you’ll need a strong player with a little bit of range.

A sense of tension begins to sneak in for the final A section at measure 155, with everything boiling over when the band takes off at full volume for half a chorus at measure 162. For all of the experiments Jones has thrown in to this point, this shout is pure, classic Basie through and through. The lead has now shifted to the trumpet 2 part, so once again be sure to have a strong player ready to handle this section. An eight measure Basie solo on the bridge sets up the tagged melody recap at measure 187, with the band lowly singing one final “amen” to bring things to a close.

This publication is not a transcription; it has been based on the original set of parts used during the 1962 recording session.

A note: Jones originally wrote an 8 measure introduction that was replaced with an 8 measure Basie piano solo for the studio recording (the intro was played during the live recording also from 1962). This intro section has been included and may be played at the discretion of the conductor.

**Doug DuBoff and Dylan Canterbury**

- *December 2018*

\*THE ELDER\*

Handwritten piano part for "The Elder" on the left page. It features a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The music is written on a grand staff with a bass line below. Chord symbols are written above the notes. A "Solo" section is marked with a circled "Solo" and a red line. The piece is divided into sections A, B, and D, each marked with a letter in a red box. Section A includes a circled "S" and a circled "G". Section B includes a circled "C". Section D includes a circled "D".

Chord symbols include: D#9, Ab9, G-Ab9Db7C7, Gb7F, D7, G7, C7, F Bb7#9, Ebmaj7+11, D#9, G13b9, C7+G7Gb, F D- G-C7+, F, C-D-EbD-C-F7(4), BbC-B(F), Bb, D-E-FE-, D7+G7+, CA7D7, G-C7+, F Bb7#9, Ebmaj7, D#9, G13b9, C7+G7GbF, F, Eb9, D7, G7b9b5, C7 Bb-9.

LAB

Handwritten piano part for "The Elder" on the right page. It features a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The music is written on a grand staff with a bass line below. Chord symbols are written above the notes. The piece is divided into sections E, G, H, and I, each marked with a letter in a red box. Section E includes a circled "E". Section G includes a circled "G". Section H includes a circled "H". Section I includes a circled "I".

Chord symbols include: A-9 D7+b9, G9 C7(4) C7, F C7(4) F7 F, Eb9b5, D9, G9, C13, F D-G7 C7, F B0 E, C-F7, C-F, Bb C709 F7, Bbmaj7 A9b5 Ab9b5, G9b, D-G7, G-7, C7 A-Ab0 G-C709 F, F, Eb7+, A-, D7+, G7, C7, F D-, G7 C7 G, F, Eb9+11, D#9, A-D7#9, G13, C7 Bb-9, A7 D7, G7 C7, F, Eb9+, A-Ab0 A-D7, A-D7, G9, C13, F, C-Db-C-F7, Bbmaj7, G9, D-G7, C9 D7 G7 C7, F C7 F- Eb9.

Here is the original Count Basie piano part used during the 1962 recording session.



# SCORE

# THE ELDER

RECORDED BY COUNT BASIE

MUSIC BY THAD JONES

ARRANGED BY THAD JONES

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

MEDIUM SWING ♩ = 120

The score is arranged for a jazz ensemble. The saxophone section (Alto Sax 1 & 2, Tenor Sax 1 & 2, Baritone Sax) plays a melodic line with dynamics ranging from *mp* to *f*. The trumpet section (Trumpet 1-4) and trombone section (Trombone 1-3) provide harmonic support with dynamics from *mf* to *f*. The guitar, piano, and bass play a steady accompaniment with dynamics from *mf* to *f*. The drum set provides a consistent rhythmic pattern. The score is divided into measures 2 through 8, with a solo section for the piano in measure 7.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9

A Sax. 1  
A Sax. 2  
T Sax. 1  
T Sax. 2  
B Sax.  
Tbn. 1  
Tbn. 2  
Tbn. 3  
Gtr.  
Pno.  
Bs.  
Dr.

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

Chord progression: F6, B<sup>b</sup>7(9), E<sup>b</sup>ma13(11), D7(9), D7(11/9), G13(9), C7(11/9), G9 G<sup>b</sup>ma9, F6, Dm7, Gm7, C7(11/9), F6

SOLO (Guitar) from measure 15 to 17.

19

Chord Chart:

Gtr.	Cm7	Dm7	E <sup>b</sup> ma7	Dm7	Cm9	F <sup>9</sup> sus	B <sup>b</sup> ma13	Cm9	Bma <sup>9</sup> /f	B <sup>b</sup> ma13	Dm7	Em7	Fma7	Em7	D13 <sup>(#11)</sup>	G13 <sup>(#9)</sup>	C13	D13	Gm9	C7 <sup>(#9)</sup>
Pno.	Cm7	Dm7	E <sup>b</sup> ma7	Dm7	Cm9	F <sup>9</sup> sus	B <sup>b</sup> ma13	Cm9	Bma <sup>9</sup> /f	B <sup>b</sup> ma13	Dm7	Em7	Fma7	Em7	D13 <sup>(#11)</sup>	G13 <sup>(#9)</sup>	C13	D13	Gm9	C7 <sup>(#9)</sup>
Bs.	Cm7 <sub>(n 4)</sub>	Dm7	E <sup>b</sup> ma7	Dm7	Cm9	F <sup>9</sup> sus	B <sup>b</sup> ma13	Cm9	Bma <sup>9</sup> /f	B <sup>b</sup> ma13	Dm7	Em7	Fma7	Em7	D13 <sup>(#11)</sup>	G13 <sup>(#9)</sup>	C13	D13	Gm9	C7 <sup>(#9)</sup>
Dr.	(m 4)														(4)					(8)

19                      20                      21                      22                      23                      24                      25                      26