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LATIN AMERICAN SUNSHINE
from "Latin American Suite"

BY DUKE ELLINGTON

Transcribed by David Berger for Jazz at Lincoln Center

F U L L S C O R E

This transcription was made especially for *Essentially Ellington* 2006:
The Eleventh Annual Jazz at Lincoln Center High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival

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Annual 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, since 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 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 1 of a measure would be released on beat 3.

9. Unless they are part of a legato background figure, long notes should be played somewhat *fp*; accent and 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. 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 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" 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 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 2 and 4 (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 is where the climax most often happens.

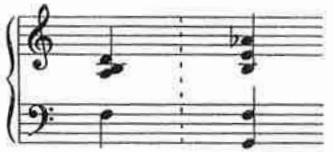
Soli: a harmonized passage for two or more instruments playing the same rhythm. It is customary for horn players to stand up or even move in front of the band when playing these passages. This is done so that the audience can hear them better and to provide the audience with some visual interest. A soli 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 Ryan Keberle for editing the score.

LATIN AMERICAN SUNSHINE

INSTRUMENTATION:

Reed 1 - Alto Sax
Reed 2 - Clarinet
Reed 3 - Tenor Sax
Reed 4 - Tenor Sax
Reed 5 - Baritone Sax
Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Trumpet 4
Trumpet 5
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Piano
Bass
Drums

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION:

Composer: Duke Ellington
Arranger: Duke Ellington
Recorded: November 5, 1968 in New York City
Time: 6:52
Original Issue: "Latin American Suite" Fantasy F-8419

Currently Available on CD:
"Latin American Suite" Original Jazz Classics 469

Personnel: Duke Ellington, piano; William "Cat" Anderson, Cootie Williams, Willie Cook, Mercer Ellington, trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Chuck Connors, Buster Cooper, trombones; Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Harold Ashby, Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney, reeds; Jeff Castleman, bass; Rufus Jones, drums.

Soloists: Duke Ellington, piano; Lawrence Brown, trombone.

Note: Although they do not "solo" per se, Harry Carney, baritone saxophone and Rufus Jones, drums, are prominently featured.

—Clifford Priess, Jazz at Lincoln Center

REHEARSAL NOTES:

- The "Latin American Suite," which began its life as the "Mexican Suite," is a late Ellington masterpiece. This movement, which had the working title of **Gaye**, named after Ellington's granddaughter, is a wonderful confluence of the blues and a Latin American groove. These two elements are not usually associated with each other, so a successful amalgam is especially delightful—like when a chef puts two unlikely ingredients together—say peanut butter and sardines. You see it on the menu and say to yourself, "This can't be. It's got to taste awful, but this chef is a master. I'd better check it out." And when you do, if the chef is a genius, he has created a universal taste that successfully weds two cultures. Duke Ellington is such a genius, and **Latin American Sunshine** is an example of him being "beyond category."

- This is a long-form blues; instead of the usual 4+4+4 measure structure, he doubles the lengths and then extends the dominant section of the blues to include a return to the subdominant that is more substantial than the passing subdominant we are used to in traditional blues. He then hints at minor with his use of the iim7-5. All this adds up to a 34-bar blues that feels as natural as 12. Following the piano chorus we have a 4-bar intro, a chorus of alto sax melody, a chorus with trumpet added in harmony with the alto, a 16-bar bridge, a chorus of alto/trumpet/clarinet melody, a repeat of the bridge (played staccato rather than the legato treatment earlier), a chorus of ensemble with a bit of trombone cosigning, a chorus of piano (ensemble takes over for the final 10 bars) and a repeat of the dominant section for the piano and vamp out on the tonic. The tonic vamp doesn't necessarily have to be this amount of measures. If we look at the large form, we see that Ellington has used the 34-bar blues as the *a* section of a long *aaba* form (34+34+16+34).

- Although Latin music is generally played with even eighth notes, Ellington's band liked to infuse a touch of swing phrasing and blues inflections into pieces like this. Normally that would be out of place in a Latin setting, but due to the blues nature of the melody and changes, it seems just right. I suggest you listen to the Ellington recording and also the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra recording to see how this works.

- The opening piano solo is a statement of the melody. Ellington fills in the open spots with some call and response with himself. The melody is essential, the responses are improvised and should remain so. But even his statement of the melody has quite a bit of flexibility. I suggest that your pianist figure out what is the basic melody and then embellish as he/she sees fit.

- There are two basic grooves for the drums and bass: the one at the top of the chart and the double time groove. With the exception of the fills, repetition is key to the foundation for what is placed on top of the groove. It is not essential that the bass and drum parts be played verbatim, only that the form be respected. Since Ellington did not write either the bass or drum parts, and they don't seem to be critical to the success of the piece, I feel no allegiance to them. The main thing is to find a groove that is fun to play and make the written material sound good. Many years ago I was teaching at the Manhattan School of Music, and Milt Hinton, the great bassist, spent a day working with the students. After a few hours, one of the students asked Milt how he saw his function as a bassist. He answered, "I make everyone else sound good."

—David Berger

WYNTON MARSALIS ON PLAYING ELLINGTON'S MUSIC:

Duke Ellington's music is about finding a groove and swinging, and it has in it what the real meaning of hipness is. When you play his music, it makes you hip. It starts to feel good to you because it's very optimistic and rich. There's so much room in his music for you to play. His music does not have fear in it.

Swinging is about coordination: attaining an equilibrium of forces that many times don't go together. Someone who loves to swing is a great facilitator, and Duke Ellington is the very greatest of the great facilitators, because he played every style of rhythm that we know. He had his rhythm section with Sam Woodyard on the drums and Jimmy Woode on the bass and the rhythm section with Sonny Greer on the drums and Jimmy Blanton playing the bass. And they don't swing in one style. They had the shuffle swing; slow, slow, deep-in-the-pocket groove swing; church grooves; the Afro-Cuban pieces; ballads with the brushes; exotic grooves on an album like *Afro-Bossa*.

When you come into contact with Duke Ellington, you're interacting with the very substance and essence of what American life is about. It takes a while to really understand what it is, but it's worth that. It's worth that extra effort it takes. Because once you understand it, it transforms your life and opens you up to a world of beauty that perhaps you didn't know existed.

CONDUCTOR

Jazz at Lincoln Center Library - Essentially Ellington

LATIN AMERICAN SUNSHINE

Music by Duke Ellington
Transcribed by David Berger

A **Med. latin** ♩ = 148

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

Trumpets 1
2
3
4
5

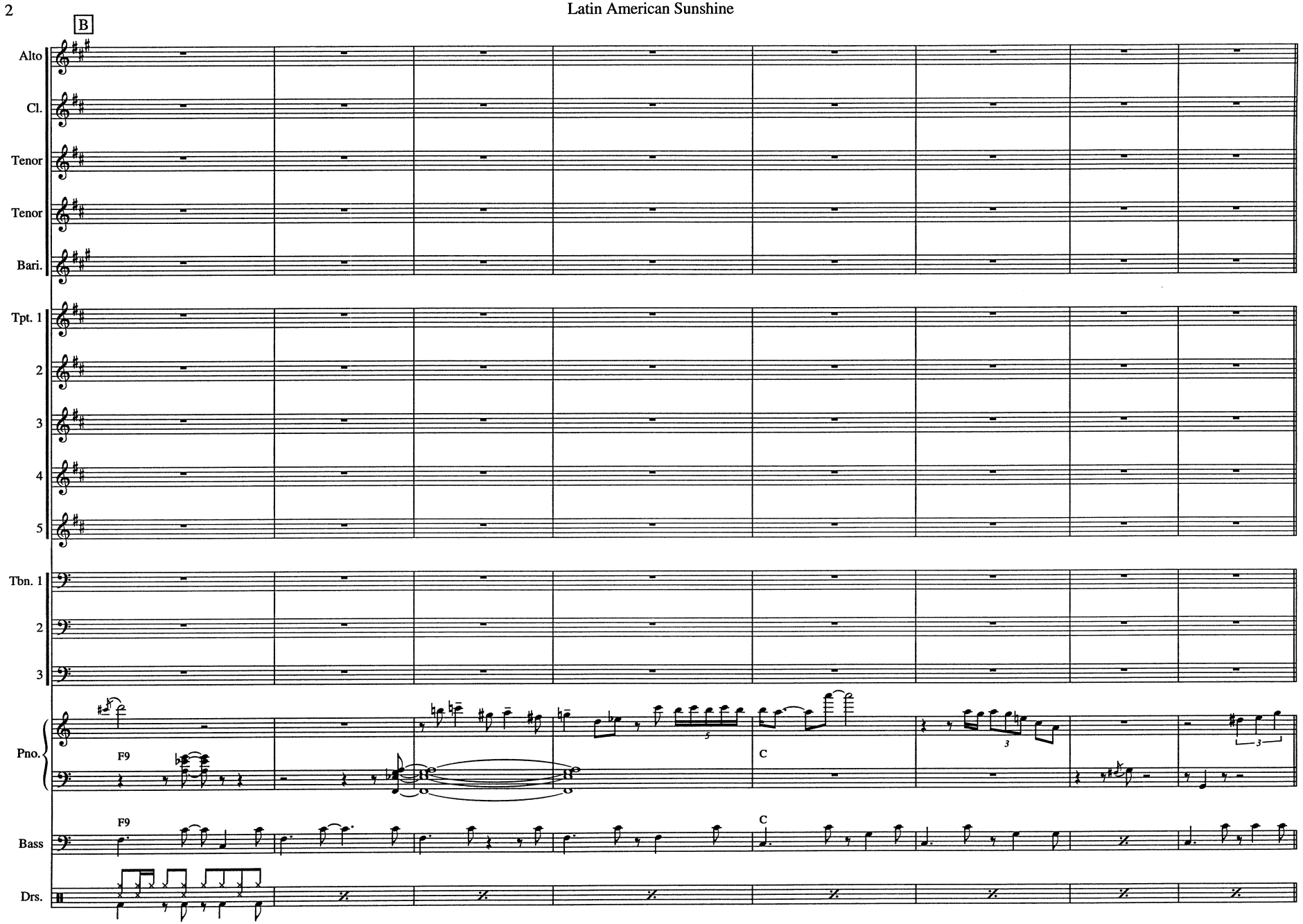
Trombones 1
2
3

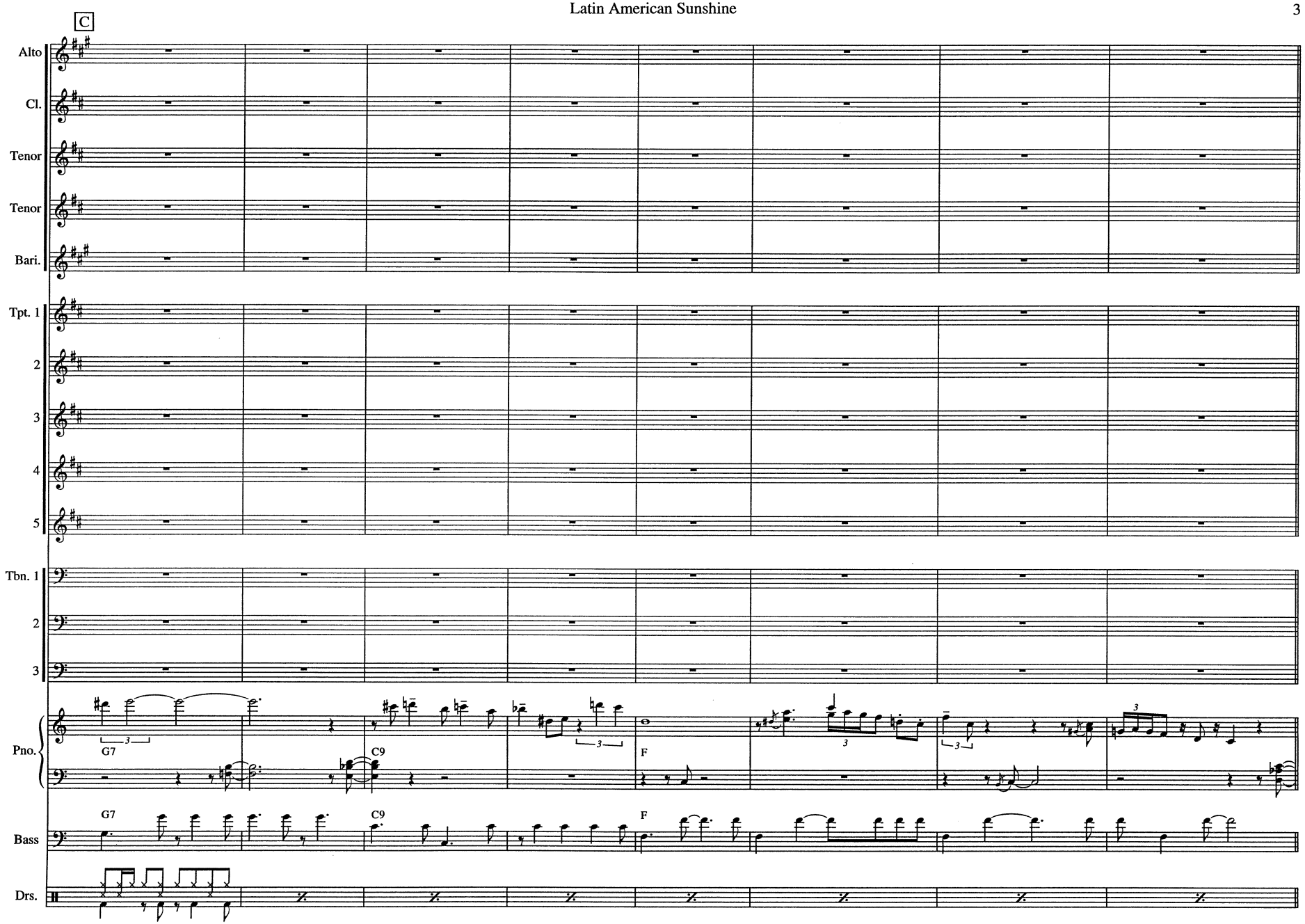
Piano — Solo — *mf* C — C7

Bass — C — C7

Drums — Snares off — Rim knocks *mp*

Latin American Sunshine

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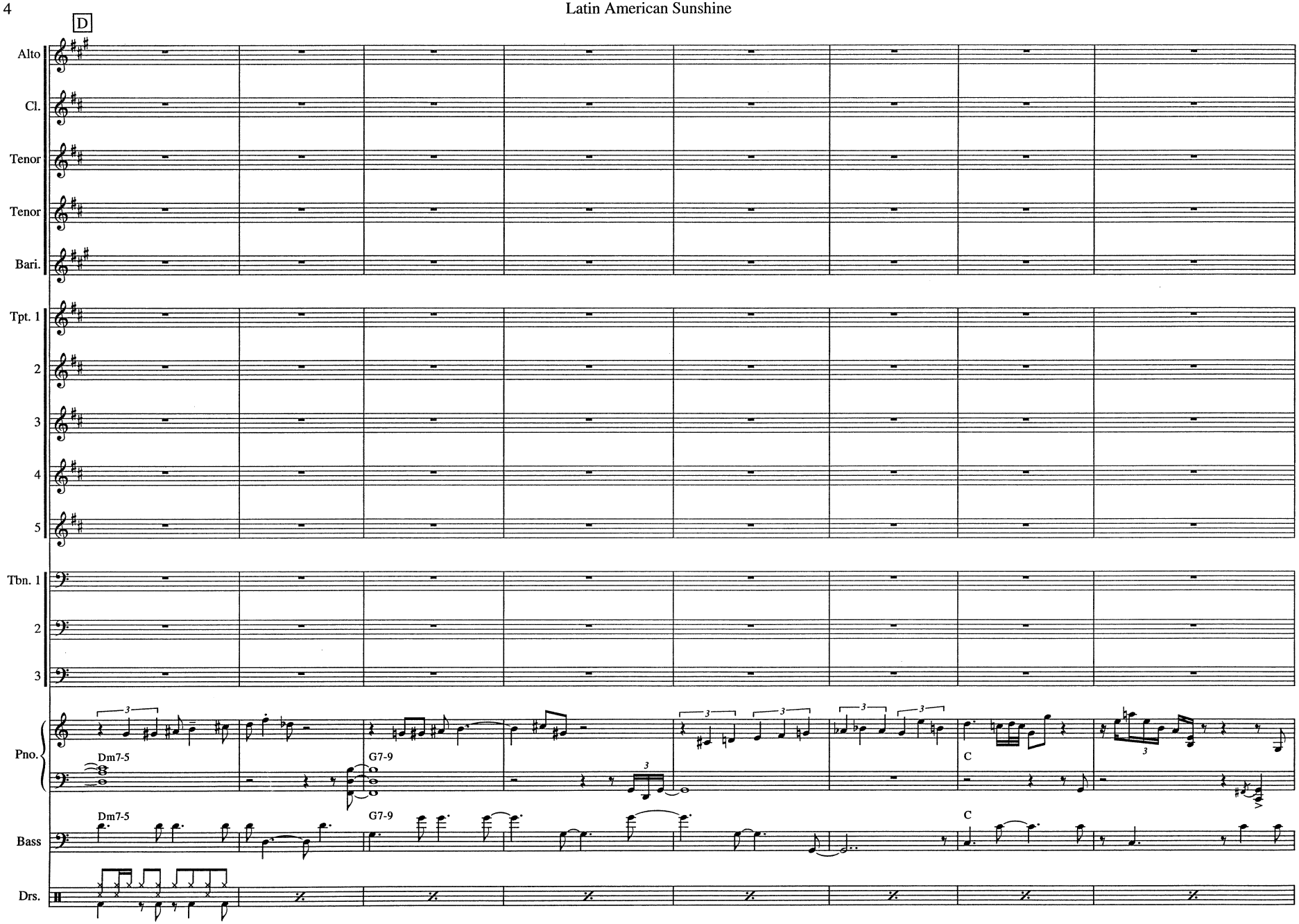
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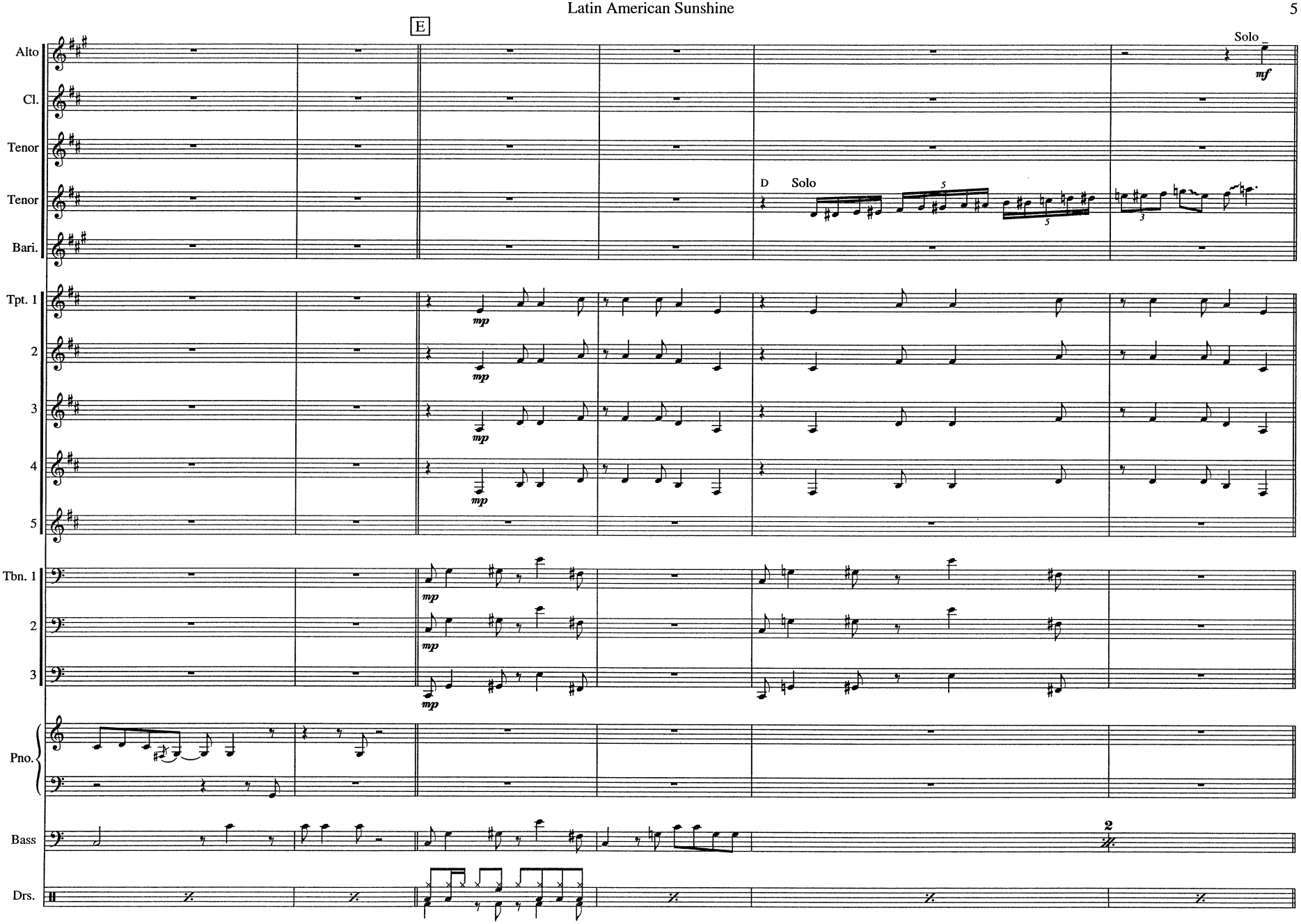
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