

Presents

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

MISUNDERSTOOD BLUES

ARRANGED BY FRANK FOSTER

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

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MUSIC BY FRANK FOSTER

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FRANK FOSTER SERIES

MISUNDERSTOOD BLUES (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.



Saxophonist, composer and arranger Frank Foster (1928-2011) helped shape the sound of the New Testament edition of the Count Basie Orchestra, from 1953 to 1964. He wrote and arranged for played for the Basie band following his service in the Korean War. Foster earned his place in jazz history with tunes like *Shiny Stockings*, *Down for the Count*, *Blues Backstage*, *Back to the Apple*, *Discommotion*, and *Blues in Hoss' Flat*.

Frank Benjamin Foster III was born into Cincinnati's African-American middle class and began his musical studies on piano, later picking up the clarinet and the alto saxophone. Within a year, he was playing in a local dance band. Foster started arranging while still in high school, and attended Wilberforce University before moving to Detroit to pursue a career in music.

Foster played with and arranged for Benny Goodman, Elvin Jones, George Coleman, Joe Farrell, Duke Pearson, Johnny Richards, Frank Sinatra, Sarah Vaughan and the Thad Jones–Mel Lewis big band. His career also includes stints with The Lloyd Price Orchestra, The Lionel Hampton Orchestra, and The Woody Herman Orchestra. Foster also led the Living Color and Loud Minority Big Bands and toured Europe as a member of Jimmy Smith's quintet in 1985. Foster succeeded Thad Jones as leader of the Basie band in 1986, where he remained until 1995.

After leaving Basie, Foster played in smaller groups, including those led by his wife's first cousin, the drummer Elvin Jones. The album "Well Water" features Foster and Jones leading the Loud Minority Big Band, with a decidedly modern mind-set. The album includes their take on *Simone*, Mr. Foster's best-known post-Basie composition.

Foster continued to write and arrange music, even after a stroke left him unable to play the saxophone in 2001. During a 60 year career, he received two Grammy Awards and was nominated for two others. He composed and orchestrated material for The Carnegie Hall Jazz Ensemble, The Detroit Civic Symphony Orchestra, The Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble, The Jazzmobile Corporation of New York City, The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, The Malaysia Symphony Orchestra, The Metropole Orchestra of Hilversum, Holland, and The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. He is the subject of the 2010 film, *Shiny Stockings*.

The Music:

Originally released on the Count Basie Orchestra's 1962 album *Easin' It*, *Misunderstood Blues* is a lesser known gem from the pen of Frank Foster. Its slow, grinding tempo and pleading melody do an excellent job of invoking turn of the century blues singers while still being rhythmically and harmonically sophisticated and modern.

Notes to the Conductor:

The melody wastes no time in making its entrance at the beginning, with the saxophone section handling it as a soli. Rhythmically, the saxes shift back and forth between double-time and regular feels over the steadily churning slow blues feel in the rhythm section. Throughout the first two melody choruses, a plunger trumpet obbligato fills in the cracks around the saxes while the trombones play some low-moaning groans underneath.

The spotlight shifts fully to the trumpet soloist at measure 25 for two blues choruses. The saxophones provide some simple underpinning backgrounds for the second chorus. A tenor solo commences at measure 49, lasting 3 blues choruses with two separate sets of backgrounds. The first (at measure 61) are some gentle held chords in the brass, the second is a simple but rhythmically prodding call-and-response between the saxophones and the wah-wah-ing brass.

Two choruses of piano solo set up the thrilling, full powered shout section at measure 98. Although the lead trumpet range is not excessively high during this section, due to the slower tempo this part can be a bit of a blow, and requires a strong brass section in general. The final ensemble fall leads back into the melody's re-entrance at measure 110, and is approached the same way now as it was at the chart's beginning. The ending features the ensemble tagging the last four bars of the melody while slowly tapering off in volume until the final subdued chord and plunger trumpet cadenza.

Most of this arrangement matches the original 1962 recording; however, Frank revised this arrangement in later years and included additional solo sections with backgrounds. This version represents his last word on this arrangement. Although the majority of this publication has been based on Frank Foster's original score, the last four measures of the shout chorus appear to be missing. They have been transcribed accordingly.

Doug DuBoff and Dylan Canterbury

May 2018

MISUNDERSTOOD BLUES

The score is for a 12-bar blues in 4/4 time, marked with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first system includes staves for Alto Saxophone (1, 2), Saxophone Tenor (3, 4), and Baritone Saxophone (5). The second system is for Trumpets (1-4), with a 'HARMON' section in the first measure and a 'SOLO' section in the second measure. The third system is for Trombones (1-4), with a 'SOFTLY' instruction and 'COL 1ST TBN' markings. The fourth system is for Guitar, with a 'SOFTLY' instruction and various chord notations. The fifth system is for Piano/Conductor, with 'SAXES' and 'mf' markings, and 'GUITAR CHORDS' written below. The sixth system is for Bass, with various chord notations. The seventh system is for Drums, with a 'p' dynamic marking and a '2' marking. The score is numbered 1 through 7 at the bottom.

Here is the first page of Frank Foster's score for *Misunderstood Blues*.

MISUNDERSTOOD BLUES

RECORDED BY THE COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA

MUSIC BY FRANK FOSTER

ARRANGED BY FRANK FOSTER

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

SCORE

SLOW SWING ♩ = 80 (1)

The score is for a 4/4 jazz piece in G major. It features a full saxophone section (Alto, Tenor, Baritone), a four-piece trumpet section, a four-piece trombone section, guitar, piano, bass, and a drum set. The tempo is marked 'SLOW SWING' at 80 beats per minute. The score is divided into six measures. The saxophones play a melodic line with a 'mf' dynamic. The trumpets are mostly silent, with some 'IN HAT' and 'PLUNGER' markings. The trombones play a rhythmic pattern with a 'p' dynamic. The guitar, piano, and bass provide harmonic support with chords and bass lines. The drum set plays a steady swing pattern.

Chord progression for guitar, piano, and bass:

- Measure 1: B^b9
- Measure 2: E13 E^b13
- Measure 3: E^o7 B^b9
- Measure 4: B9(9b5) B^b9
- Measure 5: E^b9
- Measure 6: E13 E^b13
- Measure 7: E^o7

Trumpet 2 Solo Fill: C⁹ D^b9(9b5) C⁹

Trombone 4 Solo: SOLO -----

The musical score is arranged in a standard jazz format with the following parts and markings:

- Saxophones (Sx. 1 & 2):** Melodic lines in treble clef with various articulations and slurs.
- Trumpets (Tpt. 1 & 2):** Melodic lines in treble clef. Tpt. 2 has "SOLO FILL" markings above the staff.
- Trombones (Tbn. 1, 2, 3, 4):** Melodic lines in bass clef.
- Guitar (Gtr.):** Chordal accompaniment in treble clef.
- Piano (Pno.):** Chordal accompaniment in treble clef.
- Bass (Bs.):** Chordal accompaniment in bass clef.
- Drums (Dr.):** Rhythmic accompaniment in bass clef.

Chord Progressions:

- Measures 7-9:** C⁹ (Solo fill), D^{b9}(^{6b9}), C⁹
- Measure 10:** G¹³ (Solo fill)
- Measure 11:** F¹³ (Solo fill)
- Measure 12:** C¹³ (Solo fill), G⁹(^{6b9}), C¹³

Chord Progressions (Guitar/Piano/Bass):

- Measures 7-8:** B^{b9}, B⁹(^{6b9}) B^{b9}
- Measure 9:** F¹³
- Measure 10:** E^{b13}
- Measure 11:** B^{b13}
- Measure 12:** F⁹(^{6b9}) B^{b13}, F⁷SUS

Drum Markings: (8) and (12)