CHAPTER 5

The Swing Era

by John Edward Hasse

TAKE NOTE

- How did jazz become a "mass attraction" during the swing era?
- What were the key African American bands of the swing era and why were they important?
- What were the main white bands of the swing era and why were they important?
- What were the challenges in keeping a band together and financially successful?
- Why did all-female bands arise during this period, and how did they help advance women's role in jazz?
- How did arrangers help create the successful big band sound?
- What roles did smaller ensembles, instrumental soloists, and singers play during this era?
- Why did the big bands decline at the end of World War II?

HISTORICAL EVENTS — The 1930s — MUSICAL EVENTS

1926 — Savoy Ballroom opens in New York City, later becomes a center for swing dancing

1927 — Casa Loma Orchestra forms in Detroit, first major white swing band

1928

1929

1930

1931 — *The Star-Spangled Banner* is officially made the National Anthem of the United States

1932 — Duke Ellington records *It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)*, whose title predicts the national mania for swing several years later

Franklin Delano Roosevelt elected president, and launches the New Deal in 1933 to fight the Depression

1933

- Tommy Dorsey forms his big band
- Bandleader/drummer Chick Webb hires a young Ella Fitzgerald to be his group's vocalist

1934

- Benny Goodman band opens at Los Angeles's Palomar Ballroom

1935 — Social Security is passed by Congress, giving benefits to elderly Americans

- *Porgy and Bess* by George and Ira Gershwin debuts on Broadway

1936 — Count Basie band makes its New York City debut

1937 — Golden Gate Bridge opens in San Francisco, California — Artie Shaw forms his first big band

1938

1939 — Prompted by the actions of Nazi Germany's leader Adolph Hitler, World War II begins in Europe, although the United States remains officially neutral

- Glenn Miller leaps to fame thanks to his band's national radio broadcast
- All-female band International Sweethearts of Rhythm forms

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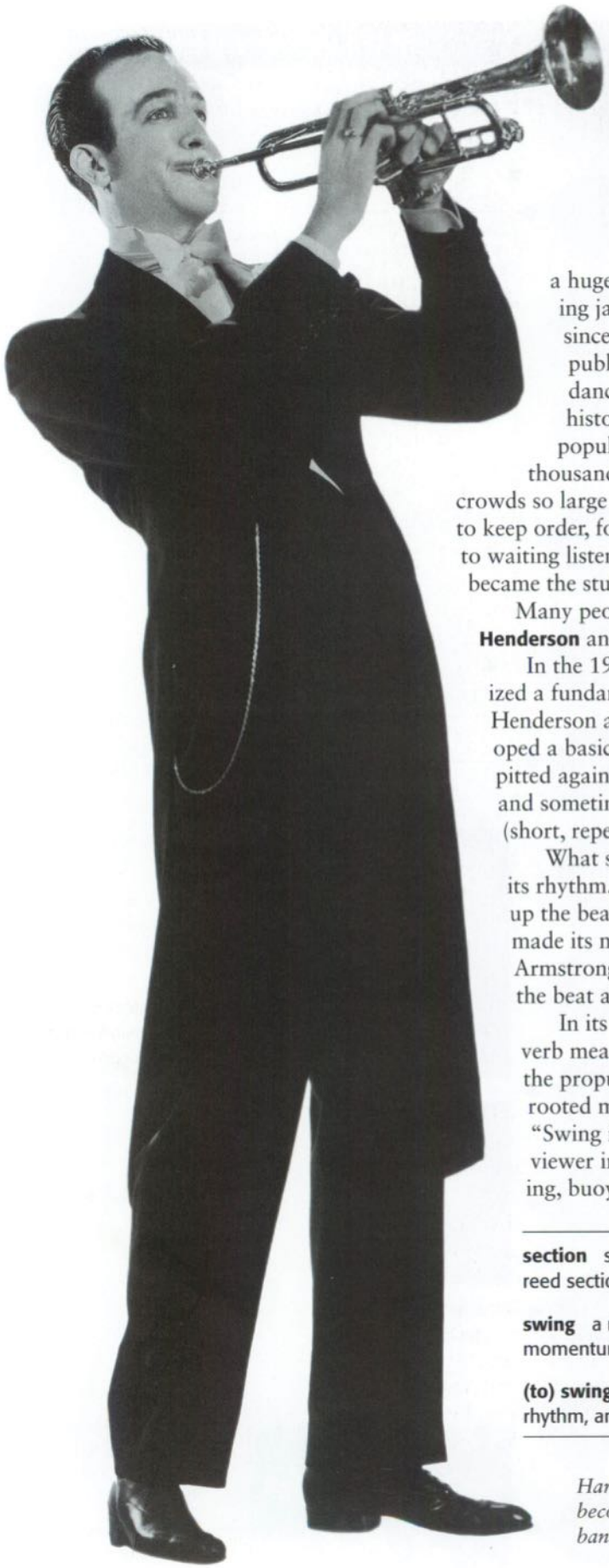

If novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald had it right when he called the 1920s the Jazz Age, then the 1930s through the mid-1940s could even more aptly be termed the swing era. That's because during that time, the swing pulse and impulse transformed jazz—and through it, much of American vernacular music.

Swing music and dancing became a huge phenomenon, almost a national obsession, taking jazz to heights of popularity never achieved before or since. More jazz musicians gained favor with the general public—more audiences turned to jazz as a backdrop for dancing and entertainment—than at any other time in history. Never before had jazz so dominated the field of popular music. At no other time was jazz such a catalyst for thousands of fans queuing up for a performance, for turn-away crowds so large and enthusiastic that the police had to be called in to keep order, for so many live radio broadcasts carrying the music to waiting listeners coast-to-coast, and for heated band battles that became the stuff of legends.

Many people helped create swing, but two musicians, **Fletcher Henderson** and **Louis Armstrong**, were especially influential.

In the 1920s, Fletcher Henderson's orchestra had popularized a fundamental format for, and style of, big band arranging. Henderson and his principal arranger, Don Redman, fully developed a basic framework that featured **sections** of reeds and brass pitted against each other, sometimes in call-and-response patterns, and sometimes with one section playing supporting motifs or riffs (short, repeated phrases).

What separated **swing** from jazz that preceded? Most of all, its rhythm. Louis Armstrong's rhythmic innovations loosened up the beat of jazz, provided a greater variety of rhythms, and made its momentum more flowing. Between 1930 and 1935, Armstrong influenced other musicians to play slightly ahead of the beat and, in so doing, transformed the rhythmic feel of jazz.

In its most original and most fundamental sense, swing is a verb meaning to play with the feeling of forward momentum, the propulsive rhythmic quality that is found in much African-rooted music. It's a looseness, almost an elasticity of the pulse. "Swing is not a kind of music," **Duke Ellington** told an interviewer in 1939. "It is that part of rhythm that causes a bouncing, buoyant, terpsichorean urge."

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section subdivision of an ensemble defined by instrument group (as in reed section) or function (as in rhythm section).

swing a rhythmic characteristic of much jazz, *swing* is a forward momentum, an elasticity of the pulse, that defies precise definition.

(to) swing to play with a perceptible forward momentum, a propulsive rhythm, and a flowing beat; found in much African-rooted music.

Harry James paid dues in territory bands before becoming one of the most popular swing era bandleaders. PHOTO COURTESY DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

Frank Sinatra's popularity echoed the success of big bands in the 1930s. The singer first rose to fame with the Harry James and Tommy Dorsey orchestras. This portrait was taken in early 1947.

PHOTO COURTESY WILLIAM P. GOTTLIEB/WILLIAM P. GOTTLIEB COLLECTION/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION.

The change in the rhythms of jazz became more pronounced as bands, over time, began replacing traditional instruments and introducing new instrumental techniques. The plodding tuba, originally used to keep a two-to-the-bar beat, gave way to the fleeter string bass, which promoted an even, flowing feel of four-to-the-bar. The banjo was abandoned in favor of the more versatile guitar. Drummers shifted the fundamental pulse from the drum itself to the hi-hat cymbal. These changes made the music feel less staccato and jerky, and more long-lined, forward-moving, and, well, swinging.

Singers also became an important part of the swing era. Paul Whiteman was among the first bandleaders to feature a vocalist (Bing Crosby), and in 1931 Duke Ellington hired Ivie Anderson. Other bandleaders began to follow their lead: in the 1930s, **Benny Goodman** offered singer Helen Ward, **Count Basie** had Jimmy Rushing, **Chick Webb** featured **Ella Fitzgerald**, **Earl Hines** engaged Billy Eckstine, **Harry James** employed **Frank Sinatra**, and **Artie Shaw** presented Helen Forrest and **Billie Holiday**. At its essence, however, swing was an instrumental music. "In the middle and late thirties," wrote Barry Ulanov, "swing lost its standing as a verb and was elevated to the stature of a noun and a category. Jazz was dead, long live swing."

To most people, swing meant big band jazz.

Watch the documentary on the swing era on **mymusiclab.com**

Jazz: A Mass Attraction

The 1920s and 1930s were, as Russell Nye has observed, the time when "public dancing in America reached its highest point of popularity and profit, and the dance hall became one of the nation's most influential social institutions."

The kind of dance hall that drew the largest attendance was the dance palace: "Huge, brilliantly lighted, elaborately decorated with columns, gilt, drapes, mirrors, and ornate chandeliers, often with two bands, these became synonymous with glamour and romance," wrote Nye. The most celebrated dance palaces were the Roseland and Savoy in New York City, the Trianon and Aragon in Chicago, the Graystone in Detroit, the Indiana Roof Garden in Indianapolis, and the Avalon Casino on Santa Catalina Island, California. A step down in space and luxury were the Marigold in Minneapolis, the Pla Mor in Kansas City, and the Madrid in Louisville, Kentucky. Several nightclubs with big ballrooms became famous, including Glen Island Casino in New Rochelle, New York; Castle Farm in Cincinnati; and Shadowland in San Antonio, Texas.

Public dancing became, by the 1930s, one of the key American courtship rituals. For many young people, swing music and dancing served as important emotional outlets; for others, they offered a much-needed escape from the economic difficulties of the lingering Depression. With partner in hand, caught up in shared euphoria and momentary forgetfulness, dancers could stomp and swing themselves into states of transcendence. While the music's time surged forward, real-world time, paradoxically, seemed to stop. Ears flooded with irresistible melodies and intoxicating rhythms, skin flushed with excitement (and perhaps desire), and pulses

Lindy Hop a fast swing dance step that burst forth in 1928, and became widely popular in the 1930s; it featured improvised "breakaways" and athletic aerial movements; named for aviator Charles Lindberg.

Jitterbug another name for the *Lindy Hop*, a fast swing dance step that emerged in 1928.

Jazz & the Arts

The Swing Dances

From the beginning, ragtime, jazz, and often blues had been music to dance to, spawning a progression of famous steps—the Slow Drag, the Grizzly Bear, Ballin' the Jack, the Mooche, the Shimmy, the Black Bottom, the Charleston, and others. Most of the steps originated among southern African Americans in down-home juke joints and, in expurgated versions, eventually reached the stages of northern nightclubs, vaudeville theaters, and Broadway.

During the swing era, jazz dancing reached its apex of public participation, attention, and virtuosity. "The beat," asserted dancer Norma Miller, "is what swing dancing is all about. . . . Swing music. There's never been any music so perfectly attuned to what the body can do."

As always, hip dancers were open to new steps, and the 1930s saw a parade of them, including the Shim-Sham (also known as the Shim-Sham-Shimmy) and the Big Apple, which featured a "caller" shouting out the steps. Some dances originated in Harlem ballrooms or as Cotton Club production numbers—Truckin' (1933), the Suzy-Q (1936), Peckin' (1937), and the Scronch (1937)—and then, as fads, spread widely to dance halls and ballrooms.

The most spectacular and exciting dance step of the swing era, the fast, furious **Lindy Hop**, had burst forth in 1928—probably from the Savoy Ballroom. It was developed there in the 1930s and taken to exceptional heights, literally and figuratively. The dance, encompassing a tension between partnering and individual expression, featured improvised "breakaways" and athletic aerial movements or "air" steps—pioneered by the Harlem dancer Frankie Manning—in which women were tossed into the air like rag dolls. As the Lindy Hop caught on, energetic young dancers expanded its routine of floor and aerial steps at ballrooms and competitions. Known in white communities as the **Jitterbug**, the step drew young enthusiasts across America. Twirling dancers, swirling skirts, exuberant smiles, youthful energy, virtuosic displays, the night charged with excitement—this was the Lindy Hop. A dancing audience gave musicians a charge, too. "Outstanding musicians inspire

quickened as dancers Lindy-Hopped, Suzy-Q'ed, Shim-Shammed, and Shagged the nights, and their cares, away. If ballrooms had won public acceptance in the 1920s and offered a diversion from the Depression of the early 1930s, in the late 1930s they reached their all-time height of popularity. Most of the dancers were young people, and swing took center stage in American youth culture, just as rock and roll would two decades later.

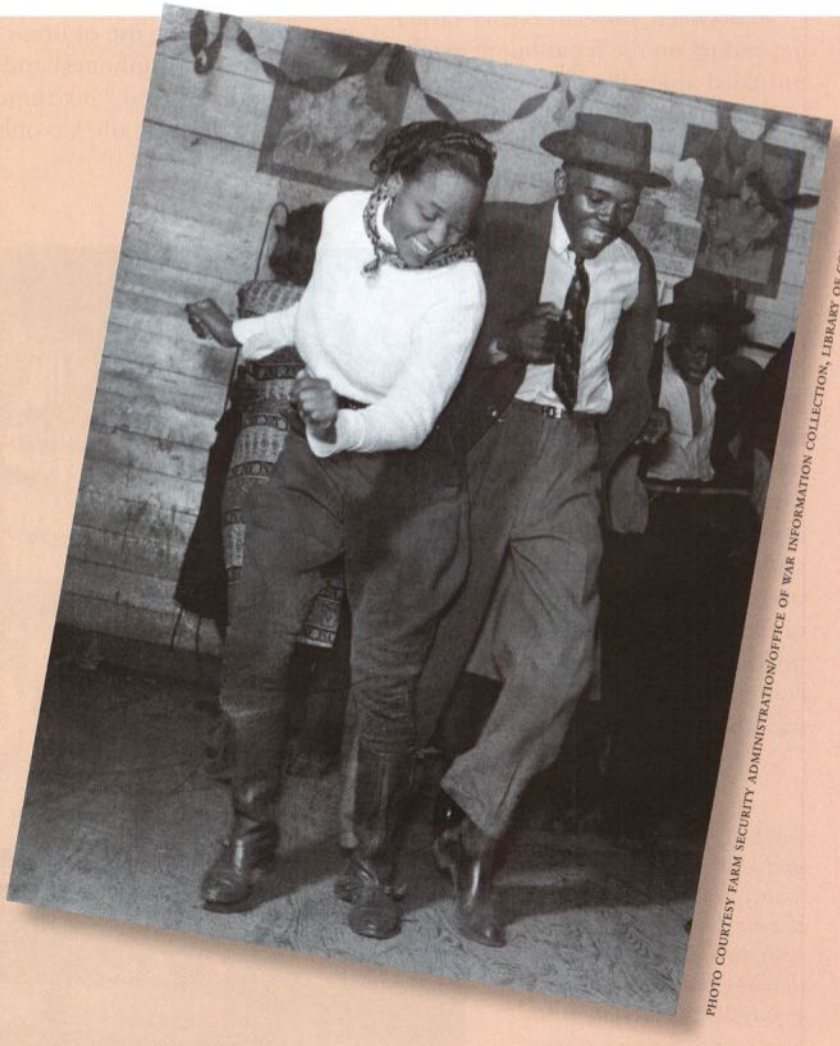
Swing may have been a national phenomenon, but Manhattan was the music's capital and Harlem its absolute epicenter. There, "uptown," one could catch swing at ballrooms such as the Savoy and Renaissance; such theaters as the Apollo and the Harlem Opera House; such nightclubs as Monroe's Uptown House, Small's Paradise, and the Rhythm Club; and all sorts of lesser spots. Outside of Harlem, swing venues dotted the map of New York City, but they were concentrated in three areas of Manhattan: one ran along a stretch of West 52nd Street (also known as Swing Street or simply the Street), where the basements of brownstones crammed in dozens of nightspots, among them the Onyx Club, the Famous Door, the Three Deuces, and the Hickory House. The prominent midtown hotels—among them the Waldorf, the Edison, the New Yorker, and the Pennsylvania—provided another locus for swing dancing and listening, albeit for affluent white people. And finally, Greenwich Village offered such swinging clubs as the Village Vanguard, Black Cat, and Café Society.

Throughout the nation, swelling masses of listeners and dancers created an explosion in the popularity of jukeboxes, on which swing recordings were increasingly heard. The number of jukeboxes in the United States jumped dramatically from 25,000 in 1933 to 300,000 in 1939, by then consuming 13 million discs a year. Spurred on by the swing music craze, the recovering economy, the popularity of the phonograph, the jukebox boom, and the new low-priced (35-cent) discs issued by music-industry upstart Decca Records and others, the record industry climbed back to recovery. From a low of 10 million units sold in 1933, sales surged to 33 million in 1938 and 127 million in 1941.

great dancers and vice versa," observed saxophonist **Lester Young**. "The rhythm of the dancers," he added, "comes back to you when you're playing." Duke Ellington, when performing in stage shows became routine for his musicians, liked to take his band out for a string of dance gigs, because "when they see people moving around the floor, they've got to put snap and ginger into their work."

And so the musicians and the dancers would form a swinging union, the band's music interplaying with the dancers' limbs and feet, creating what novelist Ralph Ellison called "that feeling of communion which was the true meaning of the public jazz dance. The blues, the singer, the band, and the dancers formed the vital whole of jazz as an institutional form, and even today neither part is quite complete without the rest."

—John Edward Hasse



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Big Band, Big Sound

Much of the appeal of big bands had to do with the sheer depth, breadth, textural variety, and volume of their sound. Where combos of two to five or six musicians tended to thrive in small, intimate surroundings, big bands were geared to fill vast spaces and envelop large audiences.

To create that sound, they employed **instrumentation** that filled the entire sonic spectrum, from the string bass anchoring the low end to clarinets, trumpets, and piano defining the highest limits of the music's range.

In between, musical events varied depending on the band but generally unfolded along the following lines.

The rhythm section (drums, string bass, piano, and guitar) served as the foundation of the sound. The drums would keep time, generally on the **hi-hat cymbal** and bass drum, and provide rhythmic kicks, accents, and fills on the **snare drum**, **tom-tom** drum, and other cymbals. The string bass would serve a double function, reinforcing a steady beat by "walking" in sync with the drums and simultaneously outlining the harmony by playing the lowest notes of the changing chords or providing **counterpoint**—complementary melodies—to the main melody. The guitar would also keep time and establish harmony with chords generally played four-to-the-bar, with occasional rhythmic accents. The piano served a somewhat freer role, keeping time and providing chordal accompaniment while sometimes playing melody and inserting melodic **fills** in musical spaces. In some bands, the vibraphone was used in much the same way as a piano, adding an airy yet percussive timbre to the overall sound.

Melody and solos would be played by any of a number of instruments, including clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, or trombone.

The distinctive big band quality came from the use of brass (trumpets and trombones) and woodwind, or "reed," instruments (primarily clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor sax, baritone sax) to fill out the sound. They were used in sections to create chordal blocks of sound that could be used to punch out rhythmic accents or provide smooth harmonic textures under and around the melody. They could also play repeating melodic figures (riffs) or serve as a kind of chorus answering the main melody.

The different tonal qualities of the instruments—crisp, bright, and metallic brass (sometimes greatly altered with the use of mutes) and warm, reedy woodwinds—allowed for contrast, with the brass and the winds often interacting as separate sections. In Duke Ellington's band, however, instruments were frequently combined in unusual ways to create entirely new tone colors and moods.

—Tad Lathrop

In 1937, swing bands and Hollywood films had comparable clout in the marketplace. Theater operators doubled their drawing power by pairing the two types of entertainment.

PHOTO COURTESY DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

The 1950 Gene Krupa band's front line of saxes, second tier of brasses, and four-piece rhythm section typified the instrumentation of big swing bands. PHOTO COURTESY DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

Bands had always competed for popularity, but in the swing era competition between dance bands came to the fore, taking on the characteristics of rivalry between great athletic teams. Bands attracted ardent followers, orchestras engaged in sometimes epic band battles, and jazz magazines and black newspapers ran readers' polls to select the top groups. Fans kept track of changes in bands' personnel and argued the merits of one band over another.

One cause of swing's ability to draw so many passionate adherents was the depth of its meaning: it affirmed the joys of dance, music, and youthful courtship; of risk-taking improvisation; and of a dynamic African American–inspired force challenging and changing mainstream America. Like rock and roll would a generation later, swing drew young people powerfully, giving rise to a musical subculture. And swing affirmed the human spirit at a time when the country was still struggling to come out of the Great Depression.

Swing also provided a context for forward strides in race relations, contributing to the development of a more inclusive concept of American identity. Before the swing era, jazz reflected the nationwide racial divide between blacks and whites. When, in 1935, Benny Goodman established a racially mixed band, he made it safe for other bands to do so. Some swing bands became interracial institutions a decade before baseball and the armed forces were integrated.

Prior to the swing era, most white Americans had been only vaguely aware of black jazz musicians, whom the record companies relegated to the "race" catalogs marketed mainly to black buyers. In the 1930s, however, swing led jazz of all colors into the American mainstream.

instrumentation the array of instruments called for in a piece of music or provided by a band.

hi-hat cymbal a percussion instrument consisting of two facing cymbals on a stand operated with a foot pedal; pressing on the pedal brings the two cymbals together; functions as a time-keeping component of a drum set; can be played with a drumstick or brush in open and closed position.

snare drum narrow drum with a band of metal wires called "snares" stretched across the underside, which provide a distinctive rasp when the drum is struck on top with a drum stick; a central component of the rock, funk, and blues drum kit, where it typically supplies the backbeat; in bebop jazz it became used more for accenting.

tom-tom midrange drum used in the drum kit for sounds higher than a bass drum but lower than a snare drum; there are several sizes of tom-toms.

counterpoint interaction of two or more melodies. Music with counterpoint is characterized as having polyphony or being polyphonic.

fill an improvised phrase inserted between phrases of a main melody.

Jazz began as a local music, deeply rooted in African American musical traditions. Prior to the 1930s, most jazz and dance bands—whether headquartered in Atlanta, Kansas City, or Chicago—played in a limited region or territory (and thus were called "**territory bands**") and found limited access to radio and recording—the means of reaching greater numbers of listeners (see Chapter 4). But by the height of the swing era, jazz was dominated by national bands managed by white businessmen and marketed to a mass, predominantly white, nationwide audience.

Twelve national swing bands—some black and some white—stand out for their excellence, influence, and historical importance. None of these bands played jazz exclusively; surviving in the entertainment marketplace meant their **band books** had to include pop vocals and commercially oriented fare. But at their best, these groups produced jazz of enduring quality.

TAKE NOTE

- How did jazz become a "mass attraction" during the swing era?

The Great African American Bands

In the 1920s, Fletcher Henderson and his orchestra had served as a model for Duke Ellington and other bandleaders (see Chapter 4). Henderson was esteemed for his talented musicians—such as Louis Armstrong, cornetist Rex Stewart, and tenor saxophonist **Ben Webster**—and his pioneering arrangements, but he possessed neither business acumen nor a shrewd manager. In 1934, not long after recording two of his best compositions, *Down South Camp Meeting* and *Wrappin' It Up*, Henderson's band broke up. He went to work as an arranger for Benny Goodman, and when Goodman and swing became hugely popular, it

territory band in the 1920s and early 1930s, a jazz or dance band that played in a limited region or territory and found limited access to radio and recordings; some talented musicians, such as Harry James, rose from the ranks of territory bands to gain renown in national bands of the swing era.

band book a band's repertoire of tunes.

Fletcher Henderson's last push as a bandleader came in the mid-1930s when his outfit boasted Chu Berry (far left) and Roy Eldridge (foreground, leaning on piano). PHOTO COURTESY FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION.

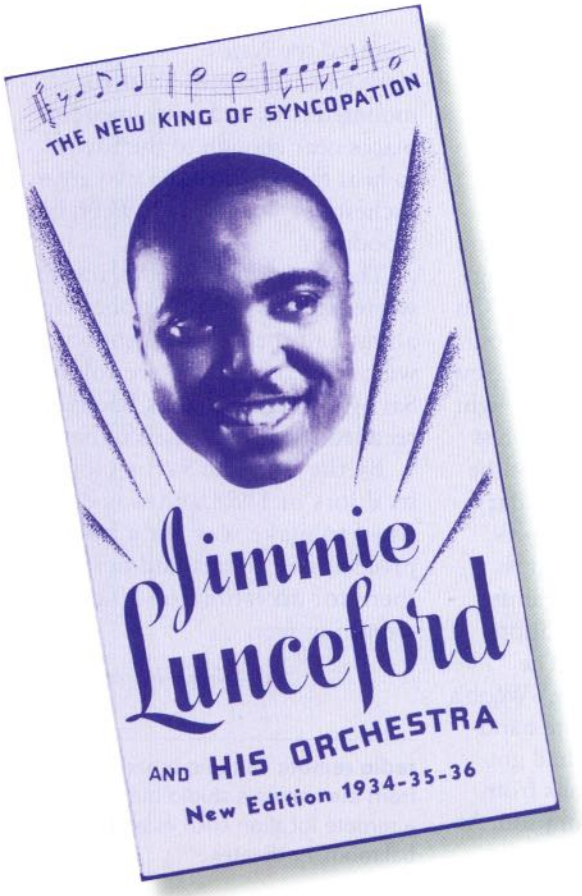
was, ironically, Henderson's arranging that provided the framework.

The short, hunchbacked Chick Webb may have lacked physical stature, but he made up for it in the respect he earned as a bandleader and drummer. His excellent control of dynamics, imaginative drum breaks and fills (abundantly displayed in *Stompin' at the Savoy* and *Blue Lou*, both from 1934, and *Harlem Congo* [JTSA Disc 1/Track 25] and *Liza* from 1938), and plucky personality won him many avid fans. Webb's band played at the Savoy Ballroom from 1927 on, and from 1931 to 1939 it served more or less as the house band; he routinely defeated other groups in band battles. In 1935, Webb hired Ella Fitzgerald as vocalist. Upon Webb's untimely death from tuberculosis in 1939 at the age of 30, Fitzgerald became the nominal leader of his group until it disbanded in 1942 and she went on as a solo singer.

Soon after attracting acclaim with his 1928 recordings with Louis Armstrong, pianist Earl "Fatha" Hines established a band at Chicago's posh Grand Terrace, where he would hold many residencies until 1940. Unlike Ellington or Basie, Hines never built a consistent sonic personality for his band, which nonetheless made a number of solid, impressive recordings, such as *Cavernism* (1933) and *Grand Terrace Shuffle* (1939). A great talent scout, in the 1940s Hines employed Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, who were on their way to developing an advanced style that would be dubbed bebop.

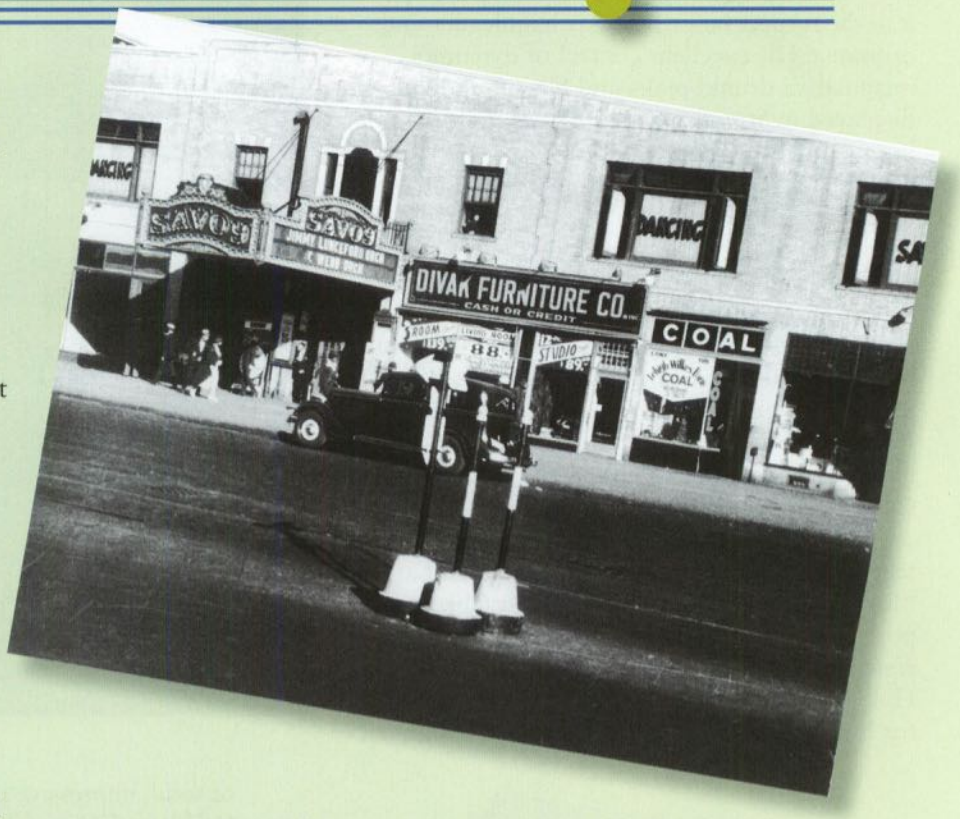
Ella Fitzgerald singing at New York's Downbeat club in September 1947, while Dizzy Gillespie looks on in admiration. PHOTO COURTESY WILLIAM P. GOTTLIEB/WILLIAM P. GOTTLIEB COLLECTION/ LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION.

Though Hines's orchestra lacked a consistent arranging style, the leader's forceful gifts as a pianist firmly marked the band's sound and propelled Hines into the jazz pantheon. Indeed, some jazz critics consider him the greatest of all jazz keyboard artists. With his linear lines, unpredictable phrasing, use of silence, razor-sharp inventiveness, and technical skills (for example, extending a tremolo for two minutes), he deeply influenced other pianists, notably **Teddy Wilson**. Hines's piano recordings spanned a half century; his swing era masterworks included the showpieces *Pianology* (1937), *Rosetta* (1939), and, taken at the dizzying tempo of 276 beats per minute, *Piano Man* (1939).



Jimmie Lunceford's orchestra was unmatched for its showmanship, which kept the band at the top of the swing scene for a decade starting in 1934. COURTESY FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION.

Watch the documentary on Ella Fitzgerald on **mymusiclab.com**



The unassuming marquee of the Savoy Ballroom belied the venue's reputation as a shrine of dancing and popular style.

PHOTO COURTESY FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION.

Stompin' at the Savoy

"Three nights a week, we were at the Savoy Ballroom," recalled the painter Romare Bearden. "The best dancing in the world was there, and the best music." Opened on March 12, 1926, in Harlem, the Savoy became famous for its hot jazz music, torrid dancing, and special events. Adroit showmanship and promotion helped make the Savoy the most talked-about ballroom in America, "the home of happy feet," as new dances originated there, songs were written about it (*Stompin' at the Savoy*, *Savoy*, and *House of Joy*), and **radio remotes** (live broadcasts made from the ballroom) sent the music coast to coast. Normally two bands were featured at a time, alternating sets between two bandstands, so the dance music never stopped.

Situated at 596 Lenox Avenue, it ran the length of the block between 140th and 141st streets. The Savoy boasted a spacious lobby, a marble staircase leading to the ballroom on the second floor, and a 50-by-200-foot polished-maple dance floor. Management billed it as "the world's most beautiful ballroom." The Savoy employed 120 people, including 15 bouncers to keep order, and its dress code required male customers to wear coats at all times.

Most of the important bands of the swing era played there, including those of Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Andy Kirk, Count Basie, Roy Eldridge, and **Benny Carter**. A shrine of public dancing and a center of popular style, the Savoy was not only a highly influential venue but also a demanding one for the bands. "If you didn't swing, you weren't there long," recalled trombonist Dicky Wells.

The Savoy hosted legendary band contests, positioning the contesting groups on adjoining bandstands. On May 15, 1927, the Savoy hired four bands and promoted a battle of New York versus Chicago, which brought out the riot squad. Another contest featured six bands in a battle of the North versus the South. Legendary battle royals pitted Chick Webb's band (the house favorite) against Count Basie's and Webb's against Duke Ellington's. Most sensationally, on May 11, 1937, in "The Music Battle of the Century," Webb's black band battled the white band of Benny Goodman, who had gotten several of his biggest hits from Webb's arranger Edgar Sampson. As the two bands competed heatedly, reported the *New York Age*, thousands "battled mounted cops and patrolmen for places near enough to the Savoy to hear the music of the two great orchestras." The verdict: Webb beat Goodman.

The Savoy welcomed black and white patrons alike. "At one stage, about half the people at the Savoy were white and half were colored," Savoy manager Charles Buchanan recalled. "The cops used to hate it."

By the time the Savoy closed its doors in 1958 and was demolished to make way for a housing project, 250 bands had performed there for an estimated 30 million stomping feet.

—John Edward Hasse

radio remote a radio broadcast not from the station's studio but rather from a remote location such as a nightclub, ballroom, or theater.

Like Paul Whiteman and Cab Calloway, **Jimmie Lunceford** stood in front of his band to conduct it. His band emphasized ensemble playing over solos, offered a joyous swing, and projected infectious enthusiasm in such numbers as *Organ Grinder's Swing* (1936), *For Dancers Only* (1937; *JTSA* Disc 1/Track 23), and *Margie* (1938); many were arranged by Sy Oliver, whose apparently simple arrangements often masked deep sophistication and offered imaginative contrasts in dynamics and **tone colors**.

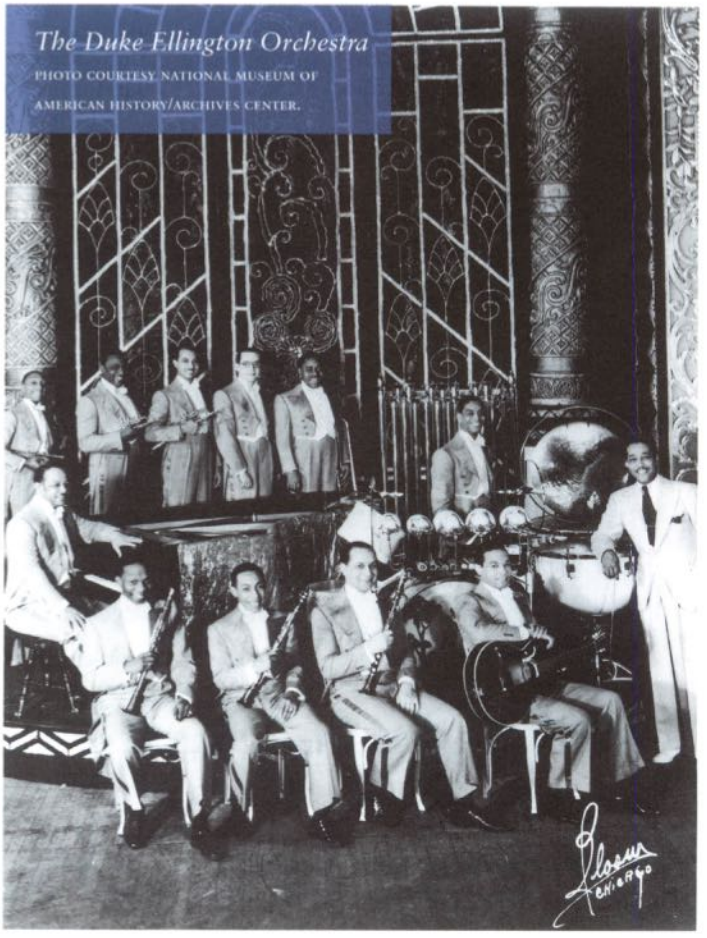
Lunceford's band established a strong reputation for its "three p's": precision, polish, and presentation. While other bands matched its musicianship, none matched its showmanship. His players always wore sharp outfits; the trombonists would point their slides skyward; the trumpeters would, in unison, toss their instruments into the air and catch them; and the audience could watch everyone in the band sharing a contagiously good time.

While swing bands typically followed the lead of Fletcher Henderson and voiced their instruments in discrete sections (sax section, trumpet section, trombone section), Duke Ellington often mixed instruments together in unusual ways, creating distinctive and unique tone colors—for example, pairing a tightly muted trumpet with a low-playing clarinet and a high-playing trombone in *Mood Indigo* (1930). In contrast to bandleaders Goodman, Basie, Lunceford, Webb, and Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Ellington was not merely a gifted instrumentalist and leader; he personally created most of the music played by his orchestra. Unlike many other bandleaders, Ellington wasn't interested primarily in establishing a good beat for dancing; he wanted to explore his musical imagination. Memories, sound colors, moods, emotions—these were his focal points, as you can hear in the astonishing train ride conveyed in *Daybreak Express* (1933), the quiet daydream of *Azure* (1937), the intense drama of *Ko-Ko* (1940), and the sexuality and sensuality of *Warm Valley* (1940).

Earl "Fatha" Hines, pianist and bandleader (ca. 1947). PHOTO COURTESY WILLIAM P. GOTTLIEB/WILLIAM P. GOTTLIEB COLLECTION/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION.

With musical insight and sensitivity, Ellington composed pieces with his players in mind—for example, *Concerto for Cootie*, *Cotton Tail*, and *Jack the Bear* (all 1940) were each written for a specific musician in his band (respectively, trumpeter Cootie Williams, tenor saxophonist Ben Webster, and bassist Jimmie Blanton)—and in so doing, lifted individuality within his band to an artistic zenith.

The scope of his musical interests—and his success in pursuing them—set Ellington apart from other leaders of big bands: historically, he ranks as the supreme composer and orchestrator for the medium of the jazz orchestra or big band.



The Duke Ellington Orchestra
PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY/ARCHIVES CENTER.

Watch the video of *It Don't Mean A Thing* by Duke Ellington on **mymusiclab.com**

tone color same as *timbre*.

Listening Guide

Listen to *Ko-Ko* by Duke Ellington and His Orchestra on **mymusiclab.com**
CD I, Track 15/Download Track 15

KO-KO • DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Music: Duke Ellington, 1940. Personnel: Rex Stewart (cornet); Cootie Williams, Wallace Jones (trumpet); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton, Juan Tizol, Lawrence Brown (trombone); Barney Bigard (clarinet, tenor sax); Johnny Hodges (alto sax); Otto Hardwick (alto sax, clarinet); Ben Webster (tenor sax); Harry Carney (baritone sax); Duke Ellington (piano, leader); Fred Guy (guitar); Jimmie Blanton (bass); Sonny Greer (drums). Recorded March 6, 1940, in Chicago. First issue: Victor 26577. Timing: 2:43.

Overview

From its opening tom-toms to its final crescendo, *Ko-Ko* fascinates with its drama, reportedly depicting slaves' frenetic dancing in New Orleans's legendary Congo Square. *Ko-Ko* includes memorable solos but it's the orchestral writing, especially, that makes it unique. Musically and harmonically sophisticated, emotional and intellectually stimulating, *Ko-Ko* ranks as one of Ellington's most esteemed recordings.

Key Features

- Blues: *Ko-Ko* is a sterling example of Ellington's use of the blues. Though it might not be obvious at first, the piece is a 12-bar blues.
- Form: An 8-bar introduction, seven blues choruses, and a 12-bar coda that begins with the repeat of the introduction.
- Instrumentation: Standard big band arrangement, with sections of trumpets, trombones, and saxophones, and a rhythm section of piano, bass, guitar, and drums.
- Melody: The melody (0:12) is in a minor key and is rendered in a call-and-response fashion: trombonist Juan Tizol states a four-note motif and the saxes play a seven-note answer.
- Harmony: The minor key and Ellington's orchestral writing imbue *Ko-Ko* with an exotic, almost unearthly, quality—somewhat dark and menacing. The piece is dramatic, eerie, and compelling.
- Stylistic variety: Ellington directed a jazz orchestra comprising highly individualistic voices, and you can hear four of them in *Ko-Ko*: valve trombonist Juan Tizol plays the melody in the first chorus (0:12), then slide trombonist Nanton comes in (0:31) with an entirely different trombone sound. Ellington's distinctive piano style is heard in the fourth chorus (1:07) and bassist Jimmie Blanton, with his outsized sound, in the sixth (1:43).
- Dynamics: Ellington was known for his sensitivity to dynamics, and you can hear how he builds each chorus in intensity and volume, as in a ***bolero***. The first chorus (0:12) is soft, and the last chorus (2:01) reaches a peak of volume.

—John Edward Hasse

TIME	FORM	MELODY	ACCOMPANIMENT
0:00	INTRODUCTION	Trombones play the eight-bar melody.	Baritone sax plays a **pedal point** (a single bass note).
0:12	CHORUS 1	Trombonist Juan Tizol states the four-note melody; saxes respond with a seven-note answer.	Call-and-response.
0:31	CHORUS 2	Trombonist Tricky Sam Nanton plays a solo. Listen for his unique *ya-ya* sound in contrast to Tizol's style, also on trombone.	
0:49	CHORUS 3	Nanton continues his solo, gaining volume and presence.	
1:07	CHORUS 4	Ellington plays a dissonant piano solo.	Sax riffs in background.
1:25	CHORUS 5	The muted trumpets play riffs and the saxes respond.	Call-and-response.
1:43	CHORUS 6	Bassist Jimmie Blanton and the band trade two-bar exchanges.	Call-and-response.
2:01	CHORUS 7	The entire band wails at full volume.	
2:20	CODA	Trombones play the 12-bar coda.	Baritone sax pedal points, then full orchestra.

bolero (Spanish) originally, a Spanish dance in $\frac{3}{4}$. In Cuba, it became a slow, romantic $\frac{4}{4}$ genre akin to jazz ballads.

pedal point held or repeated note of one pitch, typically in the bass; sometimes used to create contrast with simultaneous melodic motion in other instruments.

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COUNT BASIE AS A LEADER

William "Count" Basie formed his orchestra in Kansas City from former members of the Blue Devils and the Bennie Moten Orchestra, following Moten's passing. The bluesy and swinging feeling in the Blue Devils band became the model for Basie's sound. An empathetic relationship within Basie's rhythm section (nicknamed the "All American Rhythm Section") developed and their tightly knit interplay propelled the orchestra and its soloists in a new way.

THE BAND

The Basie band is pictured here at the Apollo Theater in 1940. Virtually all of its members became key figures in jazz.

—Jeff Rupert

Walter Page • Bass

Walter Page redefined bass playing in the jazz band. Basie had originally heard him with his own band, the Blue Devils. That occasion changed Basie's musical conception. The bluesy and swinging feeling in the Blue Devils became the model for Basie's sound. Page's concept of a walking bass line (playing on all four beats of the measure) was perhaps the main driving force behind the Basie band's swing feel, and ultimately the Kansas City sound of the late 1930s.

Freddie Green • Guitar

Freddie Green strummed his guitar on all four beats of the bar. (Strumming chords to keep time is known as rhythm guitar playing.) His unobtrusive yet deceptively important role within the rhythm section allowed for a crucial change; it freed up Basie from having to be a timekeeper. Because of Green's driving rhythm guitar, Basie was able to play light fills and seemingly float over the rest of the rhythm section. In short, Green enables Basie's light, refined style.

Trumpet Soloists

Buck Clayton and Harry "Sweets" Edison were two important soloists in the Basie band. Both had a tremendous impact on the band, and they ultimately had solo careers of their own.

PHOTO COURTESY FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION.

Count Basie • Piano

Basie's piano style emanated from the stride piano tradition, with strong influence from Fats Waller and James P. Johnson. But by the mid-1930s, Basie developed his own style—spare, drenched in riffs and blues—that embodied the Kansas City sound. For several years, Basie performed in Kansas City, whose style of jazz was built around the rhythm section.

Jo Jones • Drums

Jo Jones was an integral part of the Basie sound and jazz drumming. Jones was known for elegant solo fills and for his use of the hi-hat cymbal (pictured here to Jones's left) in a new way—utilizing it for syncopation and for keeping the swing feel, even on ballads or slow tempos. Prior to Jones, the jazz beat was kept on the bass drum, rather than cymbals. Jones played the bass drum at times softly on all four beats, but he began using it just for accents. Jo Jones's overall feel created a feeling of light, but driving, forward motion.

Other Soloists

High-note trumpet player Al Killian; trombonist Vic Dickenson. Tenor saxophonist Buddy Tate (third from left), while influenced by Lester Young, came into his own as a soloist.

Lester Young

Lester Young—nicknamed Pres (short for president) by vocalist Billie Holiday—was the premier soloist in the Basie band during the late 1930s and early 1940s. His light, floating style was the antithesis of his contemporaries, Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster, who both had deeper, huskier tones than Young. Young's approach contrasted with the driving aspect of the rhythm section; his round tone, swing feel, and melodic improvisations were light and unaffected. Together, Lester Young and the Basie rhythm section created a new sound in jazz. Note the characteristic way in which Pres holds his horn and twists his head.

Listening Guide

CD I, Track 12/Download Track 12

ONE O'CLOCK JUMP • COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Music: Count Basie. Personnel: Buck Clayton, Ed Lewis, Bobby Moore (trumpet); George Hunt, Dan Minor (trombone); Earle Warren (alto sax); Herschel Evans, Lester Young (tenor sax); Count Basie (piano); Freddie Green (guitar); Walter Page (bass); Jo Jones (drums). Recorded July 7, 1937, in New York. First issue: Decca 1363. Timing: 3:05.

Overview

This recording demonstrates why composer-author Gunther Schuller called the Basie band "the quintessence of swing." Basie's conception and execution of swing was exceptional, largely because of his stellar rhythm section, which maintained steady personnel from 1937 to 1947. Drummer Jones modernized jazz rhythm by moving the beat from the bass drum to the **ride cymbal** and hi-hat cymbals. Guitarist Green made his rhythmically precise downstroke slightly ahead of bass player Page's line. Jones, Green, and Page played four-beats-to-the-bar, accenting all four almost equally. The result was swing with a feeling of lightness, openness, and suppleness.

Basie's rhythm section combined the lightness of a balloon, the precise time-keeping of a Swiss watch, the forward propulsion of an express train, and the infectiousness of great big grin. Dancers found his beat irresistible.

This recording highlights the band's extraordinary swing, spirit, and ensemble style, not to mention a deceptively simple arrangement and several fine solos.

The Basie band originated this piece when it was playing at Kansas City's Reno Club, a small, gangster-run nightspot with a whites-only clientele, where the band performed in 1935–36 and where the band would stretch out this piece for as long as 30 minutes. There is conflicting evidence on who contributed what to the piece; saxophonist Buster Smith said in 1962 that he, Hot Lips Page, and Jack Washington each contributed elements before they left the Basie band in 1936, and that Basie and trombonist Dan Minor supplied others. Eddie Durham is also usually credited as an arranger. The piece was not written down originally, but was rather a head arrangement. Basie took formal credit as composer, but the piece is really a superb example of creative collaboration in music.

Originally titled *Blue Balls*, the off-color name was changed to the more polite *One O'Clock Jump* during a radio broadcast that took place at about 1 a.m.

His first hit, *One O'Clock Jump* became Basie's **theme song** and one of the most iconic anthems of the swing era. Best-selling recordings were made by Harry James and Benny Goodman. In 1957, the singing group Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross made a memorable **vocalese** (sung) version.

Key Features

- Form: This is a classic 12-bar blues. Within the form, there is also call-and-response, for example, between the trombone figure and trumpet answer in choruses 8 through 10.
- Tempo: Basie takes the piece at medium tempo—a very danceable 171 beats per measure.
- Riffs: This piece is a showcase for riffs—the arrangement employs eight different ones. From chorus 4 until the end, sections of the band play a succession of two-bar riffs. In the last three choruses, two riffs

But Ellington's work transcended jazz. Many consider him beyond category—a musician whose body of recordings ranks, as Gary Giddins has written, as "surely the finest representation of a composer's work since Edison invented the phonograph." More than just a snapshot of a particular musical style at a particular time, Ellington's music reflects, in the most sensuous terms, much of life in twentieth-century America—making him not only a quintessential jazz musician but one of the greatest composers, from any stylistic background, that America has produced.

In some obvious ways Ellington was part of swing: he shared with the swing bands a similar instrumentation, employed a singer, played pop songs and original instrumentals, and performed

ride cymbal one of several cymbals used in a drum set, providing a splashy metallic accompaniment that contrasts with the tight time-keeping of the hi-hat cymbal, the dramatic statements of the crash cymbal, and the more exotic effects of the sizzle cymbal.

theme song the song or tune with which a musician or band is most associated; also called a signature tune.

vocalese the application of lyrics to an existing instrumental solo; notable practitioners have included Eddie Jefferson; Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross; and the Manhattan Transfer.

are heard concurrently: the sax section's riff over the brass section's riff. The latter is actually a two-part call-and-response: the trombones play a held note and the trumpets play a three-note syncopated figure. The brass's rhythm remains constant throughout these three choruses, establishing a feeling of control against which the saxes roll out a variety of riffs. In subsequent recordings of the piece, the Basie band played some of the same riffs as heard here and introduced others—one could do a fascinating comparison of the riffs played in this piece over time.

- Melody: Encountering this recording, the listener may be wondering, "Where's the melody?" Like **Coleman Hawkins**'s *Body and Soul* (CD I, Track 14/ Download Track 14), *One O'Clock Jump* does not open with a recognizable melody or "head." If this piece has a melody, it is the sax riffs in chorus 9 and perhaps 10.
- Arrangement: In the choruses 3 through 6, the soloists alternate between saxes and brass instruments, and the accompanying riffs alternate as well: the brass riffs behind the sax soloists, and the saxes riff behind the brass soloists.
- Solos: Three solos stand out particularly: Herschel Evans's big-toned solo (0:45); Lester Young's (1:19), which begins by hitting a B-flat 24 times, and which was memorized by legions of tenor sax players; and Buck Clayton's estimable, well-shaped trumpet solo (1:36), replete with expressive bent notes.

—John Edward Hasse

TIME	SECTION	MELODY
0:00	INTRO	Basie and the rhythm section open with an eight-bar boogie-woogie piano introduction.
0:11	CHORUS 1	Basie improvises a single-note melody line, interspersed with spaces (rests).
0:28	CHORUS 2	Basie continues his solo, including some **octave tremolos**. He abruptly modulates from the key of F (his favorite) to that of D-flat.
0:45	CHORUS 3	Big-toned Herschel Evans (tenor sax) solos over muted five-note brass riffs.
1:02	CHORUS 4	George Hunt (trombone) solos over nine-note sax riffs.
1:19	CHORUS 5	Lester Young (tenor sax) solos over biting nine-note brass riffs.
1:36	CHORUS 6	Buck Clayton (trumpet) solos over six-note descending sax riffs.
1:53	CHORUS 7	Page prominently plays a walking bass line, punctuated by very spare right-hand jabs by Basie.
2:10	CHORUS 8	Saxes play a two-bar riff six times over the brass's call-and-response counter-riff.
2:27	CHORUS 9	Saxes play a different, longer (13-note, four-bar) riff three times. Most people consider this riff the piece's melody. Brass counter-riff continues.
2:43	CHORUS 10	Saxes play a descending four-note riff 10 times; brass counter-riff continues. Jones whacks the snare drum every two measures.

rhythmic music typically for dancing. But overall, Ellington operated in an artistic sphere different from swing's. His music expressed a greater range of emotions than did the swing bands, employed more sensitive dynamics and more of a sense of theater than most, featured the most distinctive players and most varied sounds, experimented and innovated more than any others, was less prone to fads, and presented more original (and challenging) pieces, particularly on records.

In a swing band, the drummer kept the time and drove the band—examples include the great Jo Jones in the Count Basie band, Chick Webb in his own orchestra, and **Gene Krupa** with Benny Goodman.

Watch the documentary on Count Basie on **mymusiclab.com**

Ellington's drummer Sonny Greer took a different course: he was less a driver of the band than a master colorist, with his subtle brush playing, tasteful stick work, and novel use of percussive effects (for example, on the evocative *Caravan,* 1937). Producer-entrepreneur **John Hammond** called Greer "the most intricate of all percussionists."

Even the best of the other big bands suffer a certain sameness if their recordings are listened to one after the other, but Ellington's recordings, taken together, offer variety, contrast, and even surprise. The Duke Ellington Orchestra predated the swing craze by a decade, helped in fact to foster it, popularized its catchphrase "It don't

octave tremolo a rapidly repeating oscillation between two notes that are one octave apart.

mean a thing if it ain't got that swing," and provided its highest benchmarks of originality.

Other than the Ellington aggregation, the greatest swing era ensemble was led by pianist and bandleader William "Count" Basie. His band, which he organized in Kansas City, was steeped in the blues and its traditions, from blues chord progressions and blue notes (certain "bent" notes) to bluesy riffs (short, repeated phrases often rendered behind soloists).

Soon after the band arrived in New York in 1936, it became champion of the hotly competitive Harlem ballrooms, edging out the orchestras of Ellington, Webb, and Lunceford. Basie's band became famous for its outstanding soloists and its peerless "rhythm section"—Basie on piano, Freddie Green on guitar, Walter Page on string bass, and Jo Jones on drums—whose light but relentlessly forward-moving propulsion, or swing, was the envy of many other bands. The Basie rhythm section influenced others to play more flexibly and more responsively to the horn players. In such recordings as *Taxi War Dance* (1939), Basie's rocking Kansas City rhythm proved irresistible to dancers. His use of freewheeling **"head"** (unwritten) **arrangements**, in which a player might blow for several choruses, made his performances even more exciting.

By 1939, the band comprised 15 instrumentalists and 2 singers, Helen Humes (who replaced Billie Holiday in 1938) and Jimmy Rushing. Basie's band was dominated by great soloists: tenor saxophonists Lester Young (*Lester Leaps In*, 1939) and Herschel Evans (*Doggin' Around*, 1938); trumpeters Buck Clayton (*One O'Clock Jump*, 1937) and Harry "Sweets" Edison (*Shorty George*, 1938); trombonist Dicky Wells (*Texas Shuffle*, 1938); and Basie himself (*Doggin' Around*). His own early playing followed the two-handed ragtime approach, but in the mid-1930s he switched to a relaxed, spare style—imbued with subtlety and wit—that led beautifully into his instrumentalists' solos. From the piano keyboard, Basie cued, directed, and "swung" the band.

From the 1950s on he chose a style rather different from his classic 1930s sound, but Basie's band remained an enduring musical institution.

TAKE NOTE

- What were the key African American bands of the swing era and why were they important?

Watch the video of *Basie's Boogie* by Count Basie on **mymusiclab.com**

head arrangement an arrangement worked out, usually collectively, on an impromptu basis and typically played from memory.

The Great White Bands

Established in Detroit in 1927 as the Orange Blossoms, the **Casa Loma Orchestra** became the first notable white swing band and a model for later bands. With such arrangements as *Casa Loma Stomp* and *San Sue Strut* (both 1930), arranger Gene Gifford transformed the Casa Loma Orchestra from a semi-hot dance band into a jazz outfit known for its precise ensemble playing, fast tempos, and rhythmic energy that could bring dancers to the floor and raise the temperature of any ballroom.

Their flashy uptempo numbers (up to 250 beats per minute) such as *White Jazz* (1931) required great teamwork. When asked later how the Casa Lomans managed to play such demanding charts, clarinetist Clarence Hutchenrider—the band's leading soloist—quipped, "We practiced hard between drinks." But the Casa Loma Orchestra balanced its repertory, mixing fast numbers with such slow-dance ballads as *Smoke Rings* (1932).

The band enjoyed its greatest popularity from 1930 to 1935. Its youthfulness and exuberance attracted followers on the college circuit, while it also performed for older dancers at plush hotels, including New York's Essex House, where it held a residency for nearly two years, in 1933–34.

When compared with music by the best black bands of the 1930s, the Casa Loma Orchestra's recordings reveal more technical virtuosity (some would say mechanical exactness) than soulfulness or creativity, and they lack the looseness evident in the best of swing. Nonetheless, the ensemble exerted a strong influence, even on black bands. (Eddie Barefield, who played and arranged for the Bennie Moten band in the early 1930s, recalled that "we all admired the Casa Loma band, and tried to ape them.") Its precise ensemble playing, well-crafted arrangements, and appeal to college students provided a model for Benny Goodman and other bandleaders.

Clarinetist and bandleader Benny Goodman played a key role in moving jazz from the margins of American culture to the mainstream. He boasted superb technique on his instrument, excellent control, and a clear, light tone. He led the most influential, for a time the most popular, and perhaps the most polished of the big bands of the period. They sent a ripple of excitement through the nation after wowing an audience at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles on August 21, 1935, and, for many who hadn't been paying close attention, seemed to launch the swing era. In 1937 his band attracted screaming bobby-soxers at the Paramount Theatre in New York City, and their performances often ignited audience passions to the point that fans rushed the stage to jitterbug to Goodman's music.

Watch the documentary on Benny Goodman on **mymusiclab.com**

Clarinetist Benny Goodman (front) came to prominence as a leader of a big band. Later, he established a trio, a quartet, and a sextet. His orchestra is shown here at Chicago's Congress Hotel shortly after a 1935 breakthrough engagement at the Palomar in Los Angeles. With him at the time were vocalist Helen Ward and drummer Gene Krupa. PHOTO COURTESY FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION.

A perfectionist and strict taskmaster, Goodman demanded a high level of musicianship from his players and became famous for his glare, dubbed "the ray." His band suffered legendary turnover; singer Helen Forrest said she left the band "to avoid having a nervous breakdown."

Like Louis Armstrong, but unlike Duke Ellington, Goodman took most of the band's solos himself. But it wasn't for lack of talent among his employees. Goodman's band boasted possibly the most esteemed trumpet section—Ziggy Elman and Harry James were key players—of any big band of the swing era. Trumpeter Bunny Berigan sparkled on Goodman's recordings of *King Porter Stomp* and *Sometimes I'm*

sweet bands a term, often used derogatorily in jazz, from the 1920s and 1930s to denote commercial dance bands that featured minimal improvisation—the opposite of hot bands.

Issues

The Commercial Success of White Swing Bands

Did white bands profit from swing music at the expense of the black musicians who created the style?

When Benny Goodman's band launched the swing era after appearing at Los Angeles's Palomar Ballroom, some black bandleaders groused that Goodman was profiting from a style that they had been performing—less successfully—for years. This was compounded by the fact that Goodman purchased arrangements from Fletcher Henderson, a leading black bandleader (see Chapter 4) whom many credit with creating big band swing style. Although Goodman led a racially integrated small group, many felt that the reason he was successful was because he and most of his band members were white, making them more acceptable to book at better hotels and clubs (and thus being able to command higher pay), for radio broadcast, and to appear in movies.

Some argued that while Goodman and some others truly captured the spirit of swing, other white bands just took some simple elements—such as the call-and-response between sections—and incorporated them into their more conservative style of playing. Many of the popular white bands were labeled "**sweet**" because they focused on pop tunes for dancing and weren't considered to be bona fide swing outfits.

The problem of untangling musical inspiration and separating that from mere imitation runs throughout the history of jazz—and popular music as a whole. Were blacks exploited? Did whites add something beyond mere imitation in popularizing swing music and thus deserve some credit for its success?

—Richard Carlin

Listening Guide

Listen to *Honeysuckle Rose* by Benny Goodman and His Orchestra on **mymusiclab.com**
CD I, Track 13/Download Track 13

HONEYSUCKLE ROSE • BENNY GOODMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Music: Fats Waller. Lyrics (not heard here): Andy Razaf, 1928. Personnel: Ziggy Elman, Jimmy Maxwell, Johnny Martel (trumpet); Red Ballard, Vernon Brown, Ted Vesely (trombone); Benny Goodman (clarinet); Toots Mondello, Buff Estes (alto saxophone); Jerry Jerome, Bus Bassey (tenor saxophone); Fletcher Henderson (piano, arranger); Charlie Christian (electric guitar); Artie Bernstein (bass); Nick Fatool (drums). Recorded November 22, 1939, in New York. First issue: Columbia 35319. Timing: 2:59.

Overview

Pianist Fats Waller composed *Honeysuckle Rose* in 1929 and it soon became a jazz perennial. At the time Goodman recorded it, there were 80 jazz recordings; by the 2010s, it had become one of the most-recorded jazz standards, with more than 1,200 versions. Waller's original song caught on with the public partly because his melody featured much repetition—which always makes tunes easier to remember. Waller's A section offers a phrase played three times, followed by second phrase played twice. The B section presents a slow-moving, ascending **scalar** melody, followed by a more active answering phrase; then this pattern is repeated a whole-step higher (an example of a musical **sequence**).

By the late 1930s, Benny Goodman had become the best-known and most popular jazz bandleader in America. In the period preceding this recording, Goodman's band had suffered high turnover in personnel, yet the band still boasted tight ensemble playing, superb solos, and swing perhaps unmatched by any band except Count Basie's.

The arrangement by Fletcher Henderson, one of more than 200 that he made for Goodman, showcases the former's well-vetted approach. Eschewing the verse of the popular song, Henderson's charts typically concentrate on the better-known chorus section, typically using the form AABA. After a brief introduction, the statement of the melody consumes the first chorus, with solos over riff ensemble passages, and a final chorus setting forth a riff-based variation on the original melody.

The 23-year-old guitarist Charlie Christian joined the Goodman band just a few months before this recording, and he quickly became the most prominent guitarist in jazz. While Goodman had previously assembled a racially integrated trio and quartet, this was among his first recordings boldly fielding an integrated big band: both Henderson and Christian were African American, while the rest of the band was white.

Key Features

- Melody: In the first chorus of this performance, Henderson's arrangement presents Waller's melody in a recognizable fashion while at the same time dressing it up with numerous embellishments and small variations. After the first chorus, the original melody is not repeated.
- Form and structure: As was typical by the 1930s, this jazz arrangement of a popular song omits the verse section, leaving the 32-bar AABA chorus as the architecture. The straightforward formal plan entails a four-bar introduction followed by five readings of the chorus.
- Improvisation: The arrangements that Goodman commissioned for his band always allowed room for improvisation. Goodman featured his own soloing on virtually every performance, typically giving some solo space to one or two of his musicians. Here guitarist Charlie Christian, trumpeter Ziggy Elman, and Goodman himself are each featured—Goodman twice.
- Tempo: As was typical for the time, this performance is taken at a brisk clip—220 beats per minute. "People used to dance fast in those days," recalled saxophonist Russell Procope, "in ballrooms, they were used to playing fast."
- Riffs: In the 1920s, Fletcher Henderson had done much to develop a widely adopted approach to big band arranging, pitting one section (saxes, trumpets, trombones) of the band against another, and using frequent riffs. Here he employs riffs in two different ways: as background under soloists (Goodman's first solo, as well as

Happy (both 1935). Drummer Gene Krupa swung *Sing, Sing, Sing* (1937). Goodman himself shone on *Riding High* (1937), *Blue Room* (1938), and *Mission to Moscow* (1942).

Prior to Goodman, there had been occasional interracial bands, but primarily at after-hours jam sessions or in recording studios. For example, the Creole pianist Jelly Roll Morton recorded with the white New Orleans Rhythm Kings (1923); black guitarist Lonnie Johnson recorded with white guitarist Eddie Lang (listen to *Handful of Riffs*, 1928, *JTSA* Disc 1/Track 14); and Louis Armstrong recorded with a range of white artists in the late 1920s, including trombonist Jack Teagarden, singer Hoagy Carmichael (1929), and country singer Jimmie

scalar related to a scale.

sequence a short melodic phrase repeated at different pitch levels.

Christian's and Elman's solo turns), and as replacements for the original melody, creating, in effect, two alternative melodies (one from 2:14 to 2:22, the other from 2:23 to 2:40 and 2:49 to 2:57). Introducing new melodies, instead of returning to the **head**, works in part because by 1939 *Honeysuckle Rose* was familiar to every jazz fan. Creating a new, riff-based melody set up, in the listener's head, an implied contrast between the original tune and Henderson's new melodic line.

- Voice, feel, and expression: Soloists Benny Goodman, Charlie Christian, and to a lesser extent Ziggy Elman all display their trademark playing styles, and Fletcher Henderson's arranging "voice" is very recognizable. This recording exudes a bright, cheerful kind of energy that motivated dancers to get out there and swing, swing, swing. And because of its high standard of virtuosity, artistry, variation, and contrast, it also works extremely well for listening and re-listening.

—John Edward Hasse

TIME	SECTION	FORM	MELODY
0:00	INTRODUCTION		The band plays a catchy four-bar introduction.
0:04	CHORUS 1	A	The band plays the song's melody. For the first four bars (0:04–0:08), the saxes render the melody as the brass comment with **staccato** punctuations. Then for the next four bars (0:08–0:13), the brass section plays the melody.
0:13		A	The preceding pattern is repeated: saxes take the melody for four bars (0:13 to 0:17), and then the brass play the melody for four bars (0:17–0:22).
0:22		B	Saxes continue the melody with brass punctuation.
0:32		A	Saxes continue playing the melody until the brass take over from 0:35 to 0:39.
0:40	CHORUS 2	AABA	Goodman plays a solo chorus, with artful mixing of fast passages, held notes, and rests. In the B section (starting at 0:58), Goodman interweaves his solo so tightly with the band it sounds like part of the arrangement, but it was improvised.
1:16	CHORUS 3	AABA	Charlie Christian takes an exceptional electric guitar solo in his influential style that used single-note lines rather than chords. Because his sound isn't as penetrating as either Goodman's clarinet or, in the next chorus, Elman's trumpet, arranger Henderson tones down the ensemble background so the guitar can be heard.
1:51	CHORUS 4	AA	Trumpeter Ziggy Elman improvises a well-crafted 16-bar solo, beginning with 10 D-flat notes. Note his effective use of a plunger mute at 1:54 and again at 2:03.
2:08		B	Goodman improvises a very active solo on the bridge, as the ensemble provides contrast by playing minimally: in succession, four notes, each held for two bars.
2:16		A	The saxes plays an eight-note riff, completely different from the original melody.
2:25	CHORUS 5	AA	The ensemble plays a different, rolling eight-note riff. To provide contrast, the band plays the first two statements of the riff (2:25–2:29) at lowered volume and the next two statements (2:29–2:33) at a higher volume. This happens in both statements of the A section here.
2:43		B	In the B section, the ensemble plays a stripped-down variation—two ascending scalar patterns—of the original B-section melody.
2:52		A	In the final A section, the ensemble returns to the second eight-note riff.

Rodgers (1930). But Goodman pioneered interracial bands playing *in public*: in 1935 Goodman formed a trio, with Gene Krupa on drums and Teddy Wilson on piano; the following year he added vibraphonist Lionel Hampton. His combos—later including the guitar virtuoso **Charlie Christian**—produced some of the most classic of small-group swing, exemplified by such performances as *After You've Gone* (the Benny Goodman Trio, 1935), *Avalon* (the Quartet, 1937), and *Breakfast Feud* (the Sextet, 1941).

Offering a cool contrast to the hot playing style of Goodman was fellow clarinetist Artie Shaw. From the first bars of his dark theme song, *Nightmare* (1938), one could tell that Shaw was a bandleader of a different order. After failing to win public

head in jazz, the main melody of a tune.

staccato played with shortened duration, detached from other notes in a phrase; not legato.

acceptance for a group based around a string quartet, he formed a conventional big band in 1937; in 1938 he enjoyed an enormous hit with the challenging 108-bar Cole Porter tune, *Begin the Beguine*. Propelled by this success, Shaw became a rival to Goodman, and even a matinee idol. But the introspective Shaw, conflicted about his huge celebrity and unhappy about playing the same hits over and over again, broke up his band in 1939. Thereafter his disbandings became almost as frequent as his marriages (eight, including those to glamorous actresses Lana Turner and Ava Gardner).

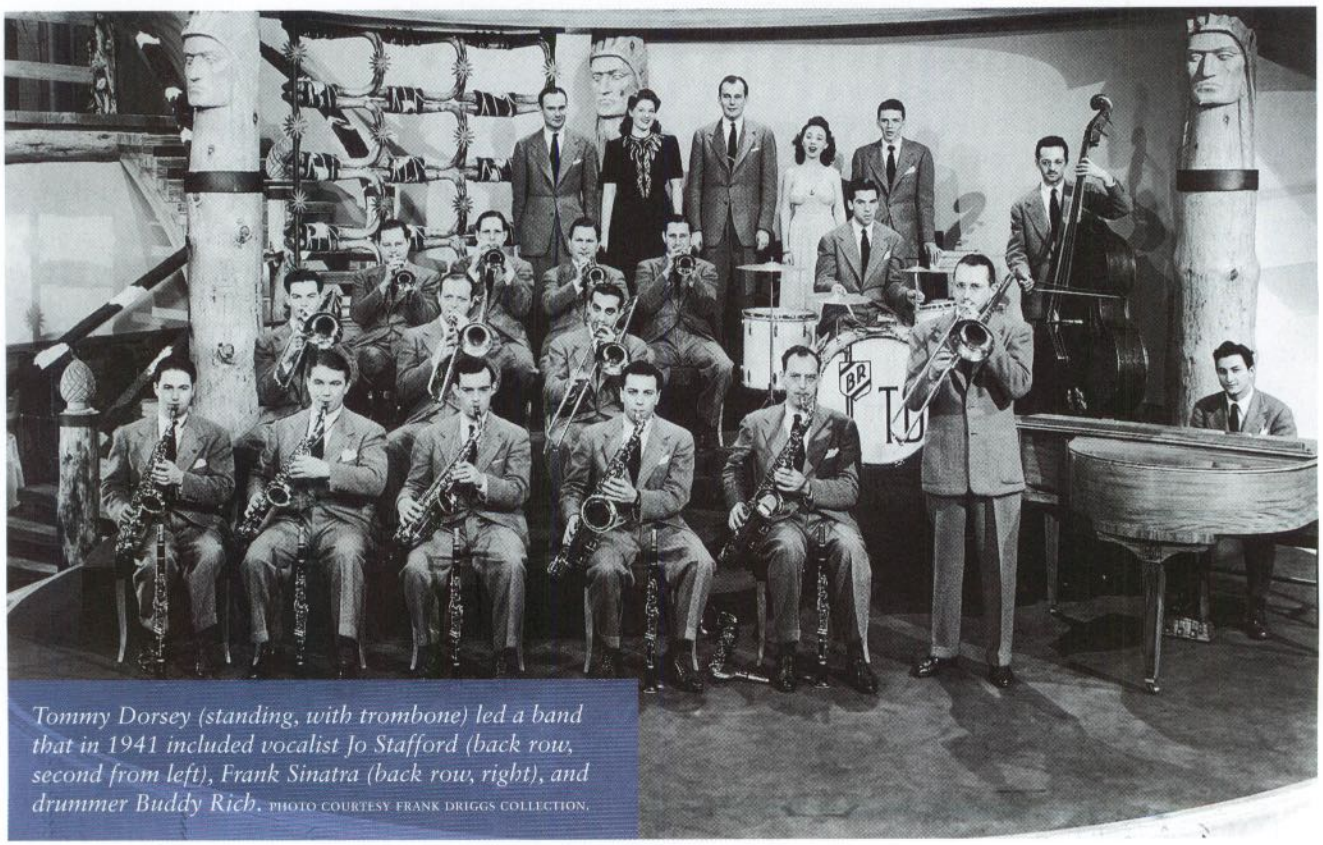
Between its hiatuses, however, the Shaw band produced some of the finest jazz of the era, such as *Traffic Jam* (1939) and *Lucky Number* (1945). With celebrated choruses by trumpeter Billy Butterfield, trombonist Jack Jenney and Shaw himself, the band's *Stardust* (1940; *JTSA* Disc 2/Track 10) ranks as a masterpiece of jazz, the quintessential big band recording of Hoagy Carmichael's perennial. Shaw assembled a small group called the Gramercy Five in 1940, 1945, and 1954 to make such memorable recordings as *Summit Ridge Drive* (1940), *Special Delivery Stomp* (1940), and *Yesterdays* (1954).

In 1939, the Shaw band made a short film called *Free Wheelin'*, which featured a medley of their well-known numbers, including their theme song *Nightmare* followed by *Table D'Hote*, composed by Shaw, and the pop song *I Have Eyes*. In the film's opening sequence, the makeup of a typical big band is illustrated, with the roles of each instrumental section demonstrated. Despite the somewhat dated dialogue, the film gives a good snapshot of the Shaw band at the height of its powers.

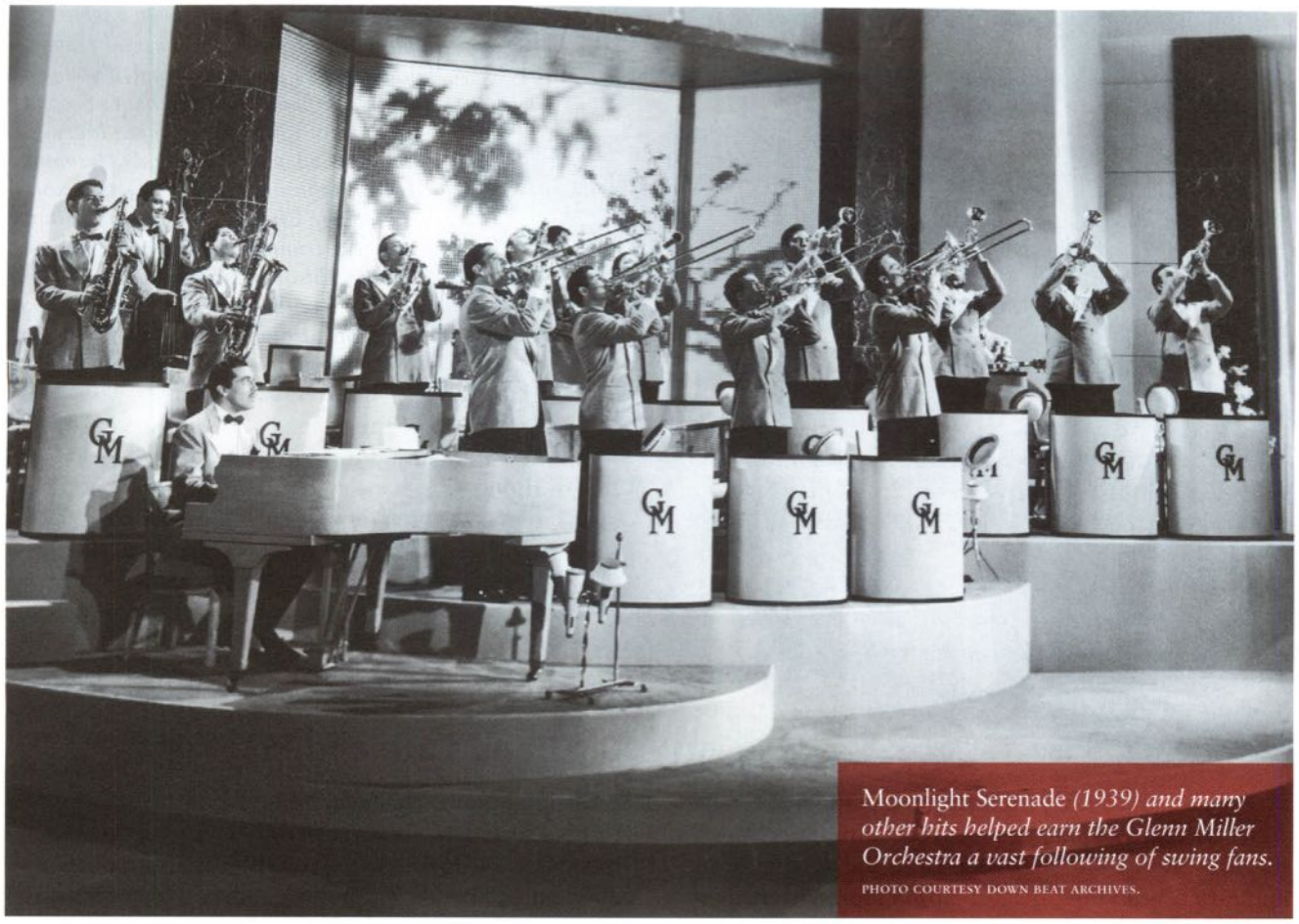
Trombonist **Tommy Dorsey** and his younger brother clarinetist Jimmy Dorsey formed the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra in 1934, but in 1935 Tommy Dorsey walked off the stage in a pique, his famous hot temper showing, and formed his own band. He turned heads with his silky-smooth, lyrical playing, especially on such ballads as *I'm Getting Sentimental over You* (1935). Many of the band's recordings were of novelty tunes and pop songs in uninspired arrangements, though his soloists (trumpeters Bunny Berigan and Yank Lawson, and drummer Buddy Rich) could sometimes transform this kind of mediocre material into an artistic creation: for example, Berigan's solo on Dorsey's *Marie* (1937) became one of his most polished, enduring statements.

Still, prior to 1939, Dorsey's dance band had little to do with jazz. Then when Dorsey hired Sy Oliver (who had been with the Jimmie Lunceford band) as his chief arranger in 1939, the bandleader finally

Watch the video *Free Wheelin'* by Artie Shaw on **mymusiclab.com**



Tommy Dorsey (standing, with trombone) led a band that in 1941 included vocalist Jo Stafford (back row, second from left), Frank Sinatra (back row, right), and drummer Buddy Rich. PHOTO COURTESY FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION.



Moonlight Serenade *(1939) and many other hits helped earn the Glenn Miller Orchestra a vast following of swing fans.*
PHOTO COURTESY DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

achieved something he had lacked: a swinging jazz sound and style, as Oliver's masterful *Well, Git It!* (1942) and *Opus One* (1943) so amply demonstrate. After Oliver's arrival, the band's repertory proceeded on two lines: the jazz-swing material and the romantic pop vocals sung by Jo Stafford, Frank Sinatra, and the Pied Pipers; the band reached its peak of popularity from 1940 to 1942.

Like Dorsey, his friend **Glenn Miller** was a bespectacled trombone player who emerged as a bandleader during the late 1930s, becoming a driving taskmaster and a successful musician-businessman. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Miller led the most popular swing band of its day. Never a remarkable trombone soloist, he left his mark as a band arranger, organizer, and especially leader. Miller's band was known not so much for its rhythmic drive or great improvisatory ability—it boasted only one important jazz soloist, Bobby Hackett—as for its precision and musicianship. The band's most characteristic sound featured a clarinet playing the melody an octave above four saxophones.

Miller organized his first band in 1937. He leaped to national fame in 1939 through live radio broadcasts from the Glen Island Casino and the Meadowbrook Ballroom and through his own *Moonlight Serenade* radio series.

In its brief four-year life, the Miller orchestra enjoyed many hit recordings, including pop ballads and novelties, but it's best remembered for riff-based instrumental pieces such as *In the Mood* (1939), *Tuxedo Junction* (1940), and *A String of Pearls* (1941). He disbanded his group in 1942 to join the U.S. Army Air Force and in the service organized a first-rate band, which entertained extensively in Britain. In December 1944, Miller's airplane disappeared over the English Channel; widely mourned, he was hailed as a war hero.

Woody Herman's band formed in 1936 when Isham Jones retired and six of his players decided to form a new group, electing clarinetist Herman as the front man. The new group became known as "the band that plays the blues," and with the million-selling head arrangement *Woodchopper's Ball* (1939), it attracted national attention.

By 1944, his band, now dubbed **Woody Herman's Herd**, featured such outsized personalities as tenorman Flip Phillips, trombonist Bill Harris, drummer Dave Tough, and bassist Chubby Jackson, as well as arrangers Neal Hefti and Ralph Burns. The Herd

Woody Herman's bands—which were numerous over his long career—became known as incubators of talented young players. Shown here is Herman's Second Herd. L to r: Fred Otis, piano; Mary Ann McCall, vocalist; Woody Herman; Harry Babasin, bass; Stan Getz, tenor sax; Serge Chaloff, baritone sax; Shorty Rogers, trumpet; Ernie Royal, trumpet; Ollie Wilson, trombone; Zoot Sims, tenor sax; Bernie Glow, trumpet; Earl Swope, trombone; Irving Markowitz, trumpet. COURTESY INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY.

built a reputation for its modern, progressive swing, as on such 1945 recordings as *Caldonia*, *Bijou*, and *Northwest Passage*, and the driving, stand-up-and-cheer exuberance of *Apple Honey* (based on *I Got Rhythm* chord changes). The band won numerous polls, a sign of the respect Herman commanded for the originality, force, and influence of his music. Two works from 1946 pushed the limits of the jazz-band repertoire: Ralph Burns's twelve-minute *Summer Sequence* and *Ebony Concerto*, which Igor Stravinsky wrote for Herman's band (augmented by harp and French horn) and which they premiered at Carnegie Hall.

Herman disbanded the Herd in 1946. A year later he formed his Second Herd, rooted in bebop, with a front line of saxophonists—Stan Getz, Serge Chaloff, Zoot Sims, and Herbie Steward—that became famous as the Four Brothers after being featured on a recording by that name (*JTSA* Disc 2/ Track 19). The Second Herd disbanded in 1949, but Herman continued to lead bands for the rest of his career. His greatest talent was for organizing and sustaining ensembles boasting exceptional arrangements and bright young musicians, and for balancing changing musical tastes with his fundamental musical integrity.

TAKE NOTE

- What were the main white bands of the swing era and why were they important?

Big Band Care and Maintenance

As swing became the rage, hundreds of bands were formed to satisfy young Americans' craving for the music. By 1939, there would be an estimated 200 "name" bands, employing some 3,000 musicians, playing swing across the United States.

The leaders of the big bands—from Charlie Barnet and Count Basie to Claude Thornhill and Chick Webb—received the most publicity and, generally, the greatest adulation. But they also endured the headaches of keeping a bunch of mostly single young men in line on the road, meeting a payroll, and dealing with booking agents and dance hall operators. Maintaining order and discipline was demanding, in part because most of the swing bandleaders of the 1930s were themselves relatively young men; most were in their 30s, and Goodman and Shaw were only in their 20s. Some leaders—Goodman and Lunceford, for example—were strict disciplinarians, while others, notably Ellington, took a laissez-faire attitude toward band-member behavior.

If leading a swing band presented many challenges, playing in the bands wasn't an easy job either. Apart from the demands of the leaders and audiences, the constant travel, and the late hours (no wonder the swing bands were composed mostly of young people), the musicians had to perform under great pressure, most of all in the recording studio. Whereas in later styles of jazz, musicians often soloed for a chorus or more, during the swing era the tight arrangements typically allowed soloists only six or eight bars in which to make a musical statement. You had to be concise,

Charlie Barnet (on sax) and his band going for a "keeper" with the tape rolling, 1949. The dark-shirted trumpet player (center), Doc Severinsen, would go on to lead the Tonight Show *Band during Johnny Carson's tenure as host of that long-running television program.* PHOTO COURTESY ZINN ARTHUR/DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

coherent, and consistently good; if you frequently flubbed your solo spot, you were out.

The constant travel was hard on both the leaders and the players; while many of the white bands had the luxury of playing in theaters, hotels, or ballrooms for extended stays, many of the black bands had to tour non-stop. For example, in 1942 Lunceford estimated that "we do a couple of hundred one-nighters a year, fifteen to twenty weeks of theaters, maybe one four-week location, and two weeks of vacation. All in all, we cover about forty thousand miles a year!" For the black bands, travel invariably meant bad hotel rooms (or splitting up to sleep in homes in black neighborhoods), spotty access to food, racial insults, and sometimes threats.

TAKE NOTE

- What were the challenges in keeping a band together and financially successful?

Conservatory trained Tommy Douglas (standing), one of Charlie Parker's musical influences, fit a large band into a small tour bus in 1938. PHOTO COURTESY FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION.

All-Women Bands

If black bands faced challenges, so did the "all-girl bands," whether black or white. Women musicians faced greater demands regarding their appearance. Sexism was open and rampant and took many forms: some men belittled women as not being able to swing or play jazz; jazz magazines objectified women, making musical expression always secondary to looks; and men in positions of power often demanded sexual favors from women in exchange for places in bands or on radio programs. A Connecticut law forbad women from working after 10 p.m., making it illegal for female musicians to perform typical nighttime engagements. Despite these and other obstacles, a number of all-female bands managed to survive and even, for a few years, thrive.

In addition to pianist Lil Hardin Armstrong's several female ensembles, African American "all-girl" big bands of the 1930s included the Dixie Rhythm Girls, the Harlem Playgirls, and the Dixie Sweethearts. The most popular white female band was Ina Rae Hutton and Her Melodears (1934–39). Hutton, a singer, was dubbed "The Blonde Bombshell of Rhythm," and in the words of *Variety* magazine, she "spelled box office forward and backward."

Foremost of the all-female bands was the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, which was formed at Piney Woods Country Life School in Mississippi, in 1939. The "International" in its name referred to the diversity of its members—women of black, white, Latina, and Chinese descent. Their ranks included such fine instrumentalists as drummer Pauline Braddy, tenor saxophonist Vi Burnside, and bassist Carline Ray. By 1941, they severed their ties with the Piney Woods School and toured to enthusiastic reception: at Washington, DC's Howard Theater, they set a new weekly record when 35,000 fans turned out for the show. They played the Apollo Theater through 1953, and, according to the Apollo's owner/manager Jack Schiffman, "Only the prevailing prejudices prevented the Sweethearts from becoming a major attraction."

During the 1940s, the black all-female Prairie View Co-Eds, college students at Texas's historically

The International Sweethearts of Rhythm.
PHOTO COURTESY FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION.

black Prairie View A&M College, toured during summers and also performed at Harlem's famed Apollo Theater. Eddie Durham's All-Stars was an all-girl band, which Durham provided arrangements for. They, too, played the Apollo in the 1940s, even backing Ella Fitzgerald.

Because of their visual appeal, women bands were captured more often on film than on recordings. Ina Rae Hutton and Her Melodears performed in *The Big Broadcast of 1936* (1935) and the film shorts *Accent on Girls* (1936) and *Swing, Hutton, Swing* (1937), while the International Sweethearts of Rhythm played in three short Soundie films from 1946: *Jump Children*, *She's Crazy with the Heat*, and *That Man of Mine*.

Some women became leaders of all-male bands: In the 1930s, singer Blanche Calloway, sister of bandleader-singer Cab Calloway, led a group that was popular at the Apollo Theater. After the death of bandleader-drummer Chick Webb in 1939, singer Ella Fitzgerald took over and "fronted" the band for three years. Pianist Mary Lou Williams led a number of small ensembles, and in the 1940s, Ina Rae Hutton led an all-male band.

TAKE NOTE

- Why did all-female bands arise during this period, and how did they help advance women's role in jazz?

Shapers of the Sound

To sonically fill the cavernous dance halls and theaters, and to create additional musical interest, the bands had been expanding their personnel. As larger bands became the norm in the late 1920s and the 1930s, they required more-skilled **orchestrations**. After all, even an aggregation of the best musicians will be severely limited without good material to play. Most of the famous bandleaders—Goodman, Dorsey, and Webb—possessed neither the skills, inclination, nor time to do their own arranging. Rather, they relied on the talents of behind-the-scenes orchestrator-arrangers who actually determined the characteristic style of a band more than did the soloists, singers, or bandleaders. In the hotly competitive environment of the swing era, with each band seeking its own sound, the arrangers—however invisible to the public—were crucial.

orchestration the assignment of instruments to the raw melodies and harmonies of a composition, affecting the color and texture of a performance.

Benny Carter, saxophonist, multi-instrumentalist, bandleader, sideman, and arranger, in 1944. PHOTO COURTESY GILLES PETARD/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES.

For his band's arrangements, Fletcher Henderson supplied his own while also turning to his brother Horace Henderson as well as to Don Redman and Benny Carter. Benny Goodman used arranger Fletcher Henderson, Edgar Sampson, Mel Powell, and Eddie Sauter. Glenn Miller was a good arranger, but he also employed Bill Finnegan, Jerry Gray, and Billy May to write his arrangements.

Some of the Count Basie band's pieces were head arrangements—made up collectively during rehearsals or recording dates, not credited to any one individual, and often not written down. Basie also secured written-out arrangements from Herschel Evans.

TAKE NOTE

- How did arrangers help create the successful big band sound?

What Does a Jazz Arranger Do?

Bandleaders hired arrangers to prepare **charts** of given pieces of music, specifying the parts to be played by each instrument in the band—in essence, turning a skeletal melody-and-chords composition into a fully orchestrated score customized to the band's sound and style.

In jazz, an arranger usually begins with certain specifications. Knowing which ensemble has commissioned the work, he or she will know the instrumentation and perhaps the players and the context (a dance piece? concert piece? record date? telecast?) and will have a general idea of the desired length.

During the big band era, some parameters were givens—especially duration and instrumentation. Until the advent of long-playing recordings in the 1950s, most arrangements were tailored to fit on a 10-inch 78-rpm record, which could hold three or four minutes of material. And big bands had a fairly standard instrumental lineup. In 1940, for example, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Artie Shaw each fielded a band of 15 instrumentalists, including themselves (all told, three trumpets, three trombones, five reeds, and a rhythm section of four).

But within these bounds, the arranger would have considerable leeway, deciding on the key; the general tempo (a ballad? a medium bounce? a "killer"?); the degree of reference to, or departure from, the original song or an earlier arrangement; the spirit and feel (sweet or sharp? droll or solemn? nostalgic or contemporary?); the overall architecture (include an altered verse or chorus? a new introduction and ending? a transitional passage?); the number of instruments that play at any given moment (should the trumpets drop out here?); which instruments state the melody and which take solos and at what points; changes in the original piece's harmony, melody, and rhythm; and specific instrumental voicings and tone colors.

Anatomy of an Arrangement

Much as different painters would render different still-life interpretations of the same assemblage of household objects, each arranger who tackled, say, *Mood Indigo* perceived its artistic possibilities in an individual way. When Ellington first arranged the composition (which he and his clarinetist Barney Bigard composed) for his band, the maestro voiced the main theme for tightly muted trumpet, trombone, and low-register clarinet, producing a brand-new tone color. By the early 1950s, he had rearranged the theme for two trombones and bass clarinet, and in 1966, for trumpet, flute, and bass clarinet.

Indeed, the Ellington musical archives at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History include no fewer than 10 different arrangements of *Mood Indigo*, which he reworked every few years to feature different players or to try a new sonic approach. His saxophonist, Russell Procope, commented that "a new arrangement would freshen [*Mood Indigo*] up, like you pour water on a flower, to keep it blooming. They'd all bloom—fresh, fresh arrangements."

Most of these were instrumental versions; however, four featured vocalists: Ivie Anderson (1940), Kay Davis in a wordless vocal (1945), Yvonne Lanauze (1950), and Rosemary Clooney (1956). The 1945 version, recorded for RCA Victor (reissued on the album *Black, Brown, and Beige*), features an outrageous series of key changes and dissonant chords. Billy Strayhorn's 1950 arrangement for the album *Masterpieces by Ellington* extends

Bandleader Artie Shaw (right) conferring with arranger Johnny Mandel.

PHOTO COURTESY DAVID B. HECHT/DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

the piece to 17 choruses and 15 minutes, through three keys and many contrasting sonorities, densities, and timbres.

Although Ellington "owned" the piece, a few other big bands recorded their own versions, among them Jimmie Lunceford (arrangement below by Willie Smith, 1934) and Hal McIntyre (arranged by Syd Schwartz, 1944).

These diagrams show that Ellington made varying decisions regarding instruments stating the melody, inclusion of the piece's second theme, the length of the arrangement, and other elements. While Ellington's arrangements maintained the dreamy mood of the original, Lunceford's version—with its punchy countermelodies—created an entirely different feeling.

—John Edward Hasse

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chart informal term for the notation of a tune; written music read by musicians.

Duke Ellington and His Orchestra (12 players total), recorded on December 10, 1930, for RCA Victor

16 bars	4 bars	16 bars	16 bars	16 bars
Theme A	Passage	Solo	Solo/Theme B	Theme A
trumpet, trombone, clarinet	piano	muted trumpet	clarinet with band	trumpet, trombone, clarinet

Duke Ellington and His Orchestra (15 players total), filmed on March 14, 1952, for Snader Telescriptions (for TV stations)

4 bars	16 bars	16 bars	16 bars	16 bars	16 bars	2 bars
Intro	Theme A	Solo	Solo	Solo	Theme A	Coda
piano	2 trombones + bass clarinet	clarinet	trumpet	piano	2 trombones + bass clarinet	band

Duke Ellington and His Orchestra (15 players total), recorded on May 11, 1966, for RCA Victor (*The Popular Duke Ellington*)

16 bars	16 bars	16 bars	16 bars	16 bars	4 bars	4 bars
Introduction (a rubato variation on Theme A)	Theme A	Solo (variation on Theme B)	Theme A	Solo (variation on Theme B)	Passage	Coda (Theme A)
piano	8 bars trumpet, flute, bass clarinet; 8 bars add tenor sax obbligato	piano	12 bars band + 4 bars band w/clarinet obbligato	clarinet	piano	band

Jimmie Lunceford and His Orchestra (13 players total), recorded on September 11, 1934, for Decca

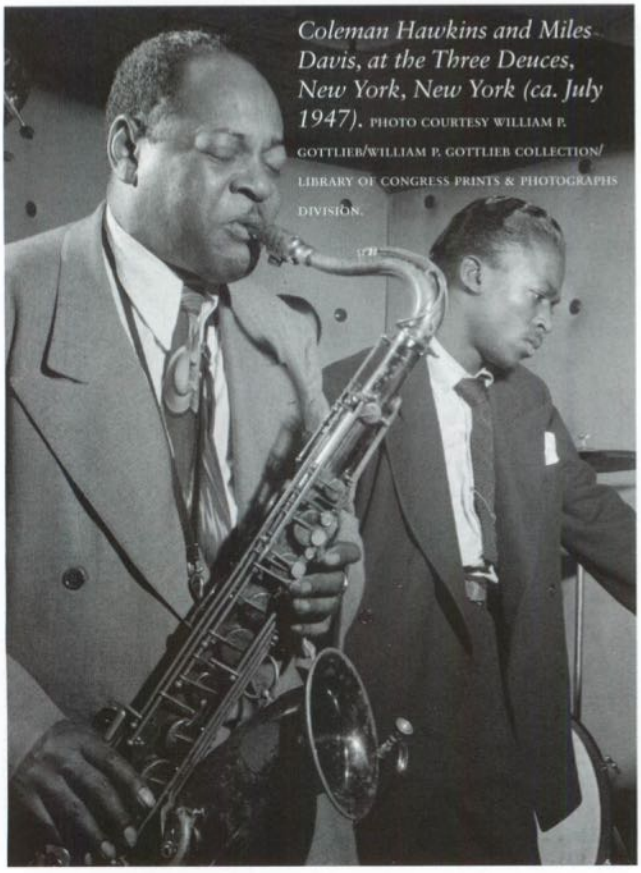
4 bars	16 bars	4 bars	16 bars	16 bars	16 bars	2 bars
Intro	Theme A	Passage	Solo	Theme A (embellished)	8 bars Theme A, 4 bars new material, 4 bars Theme A	Coda
band	muted brass (reeds play a punchy countermelody)	2 bars trumpet, 2 bars trombone	trumpet (band plays smooth background riffs, mostly based on Theme A)	muted trumpet (band plays staccato chords; piano, guitar, drums lay out)	8 bars trumpet, 4 bars sax tutti, 4 bars trumpet	band

Small Groups and Solo Artists

If the swing era remains for many people the time of the big bands, it should also be remembered for its classic small groups, engaging singers, and remarkable soloists.

Between 1935 and 1941, Ellington made 140 recordings with small groups, comprising 6 to 10 musicians drawn from his big band. These sessions yielded such enduring recordings as the mournful *Mobile Bay* (1940), released under the nominal leadership of cornetist Rex Stewart, and the exquisite *Passion Flower* (1941), under the name of Ellington's alto saxophone star Johnny Hodges. There were small groups within other big bands, too: the Count Basie Ensemble, the Benny Goodman Trio, Tommy Dorsey's Clambake Seven, Bob Crosby's Bob Cats, Chick Webb and His Little Chicks, Artie Shaw and His Gramercy Five, and Woody Herman's Woodchoppers.

In the 1920s, Louis Armstrong had emerged as the dominant soloist in jazz and as the individual who would, more than anyone else, take the role of soloist to new heights in American music. Now, in the 1930s, following in Armstrong's footsteps, soloists and singers emerged who boasted individual styles that clearly differentiated them from others and would project their voices well into the future.

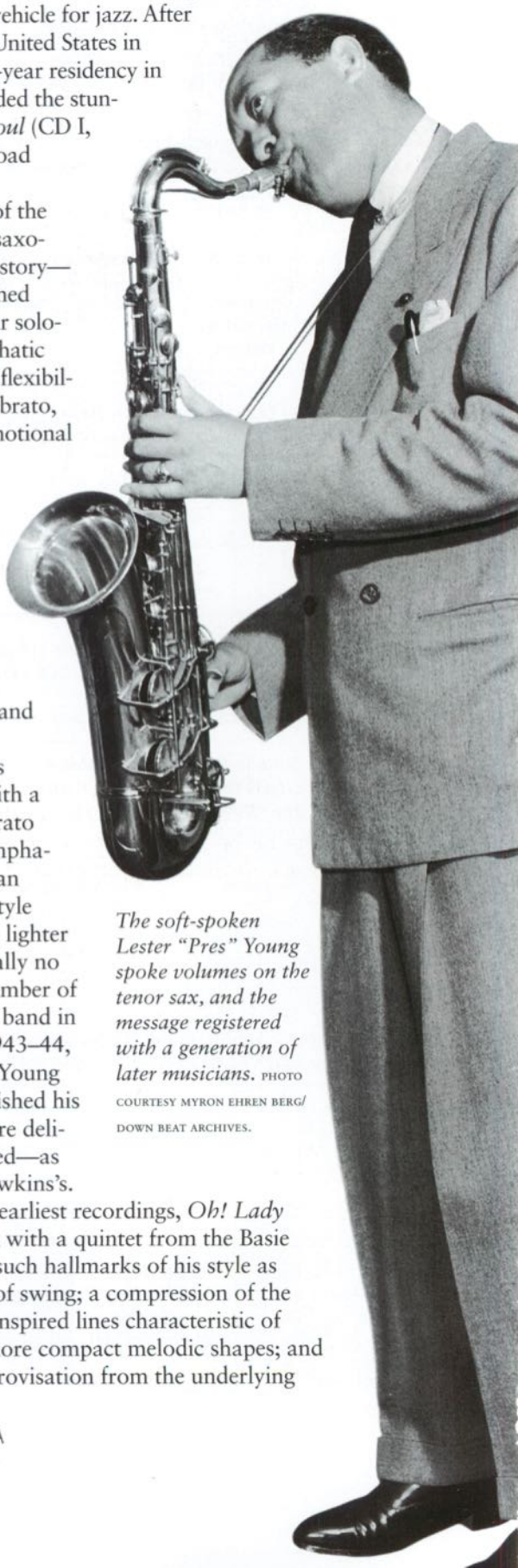


Coleman Hawkins and Miles Davis, at the Three Deuces, New York, New York (ca. July 1947). PHOTO COURTESY WILLIAM P. GOTTLIEB/WILLIAM P. GOTTLIEB COLLECTION/ LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION.

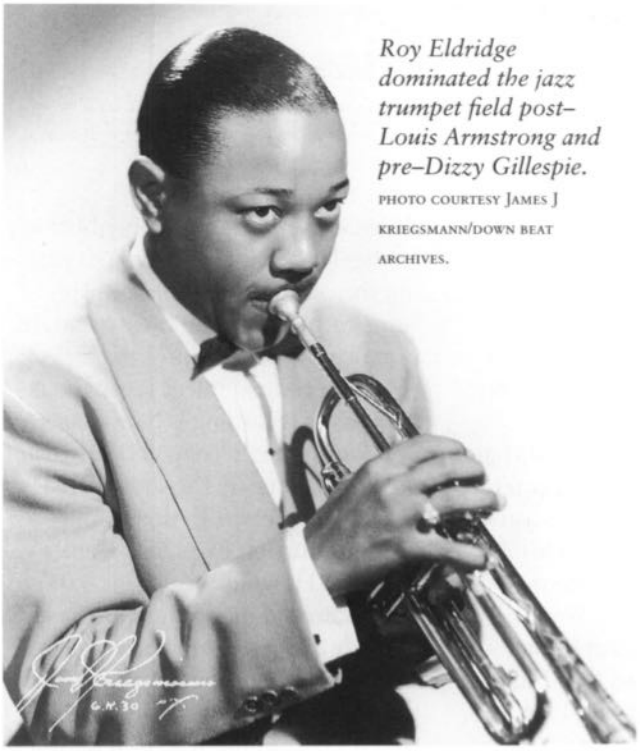
Solo Instrumentalists

Among the most radiant soloists was tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, who, during his tenure with Fletcher Henderson (1923–34), helped transform the saxophone from a novelty instrument into an expressive, recognized vehicle for jazz. After returning to the United States in 1939 from a five-year residency in Europe, he recorded the stunning *Body and Soul* (CD I, Track 14/Download Track 14). This recording—one of the most celebrated saxophone solos in history—instantly established Hawkins as a star soloist. With his emphatic attack, rhythmic flexibility, full-bodied vibrato, rich tone, and emotional conviction, he founded a whole school of tenor saxophone playing that would include Don Byas, Chu Berry, Herschel Evans, and Ben Webster.

If Hawkins's style was hot, with a pronounced vibrato and rhythmic emphasis, then tenorman Lester Young's style was cool, with a lighter swing and virtually no vibrato. As a member of the Count Basie band in 1936–40 and 1943–44, the soft-spoken Young gradually established his tenor style—more delicate and detached—as a counter to Hawkins's. One of Young's earliest recordings, *Oh! Lady Be Good* (1936, with a quintet from the Basie band), displays such hallmarks of his style as a relaxed sense of swing; a compression of the wide, arpeggio-inspired lines characteristic of Hawkins into more compact melodic shapes; and a freeing of improvisation from the underlying



The soft-spoken Lester "Pres" Young spoke volumes on the tenor sax, and the message registered with a generation of later musicians. PHOTO COURTESY MYRON EHREN BERG/ DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.



Roy Eldridge dominated the jazz trumpet field post–Louis Armstrong and pre–Dizzy Gillespie. PHOTO COURTESY JAMES J KRIEGSMANN/DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

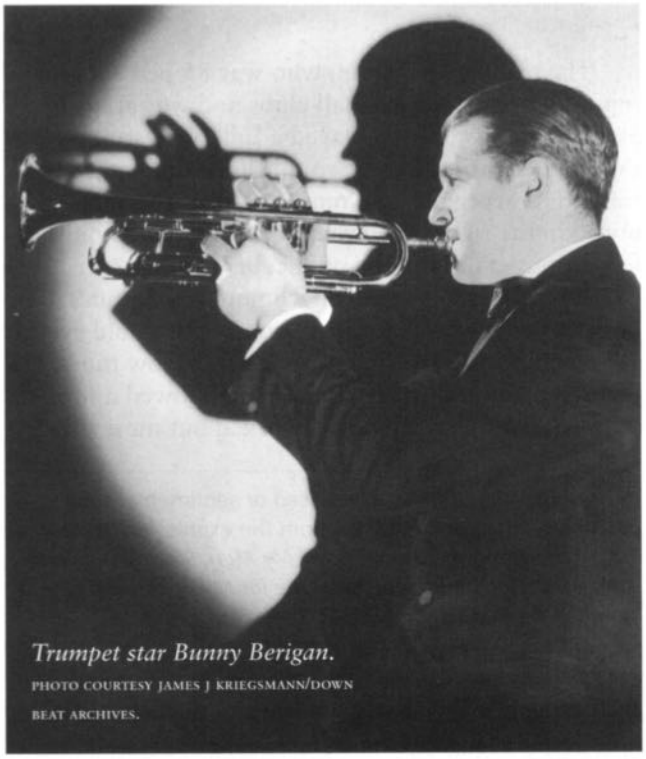
harmonic sequence. This latter innovation would have far-reaching consequences for jazz in the bebop era and beyond. Young's star vehicle, *Lester Leaps In* (1939, with a septet from the Basie band), showcases his superior choice of notes and interlinking melodic ideas. Young's new aesthetic, along with his long, flowing lines, made him the most influential musician in jazz between the rise of Louis Armstrong in the 1920s and that of Charlie Parker, beginning in the mid-1940s.

A focused pitch wasn't a priority for tenor saxophonist Ben Webster, who reveled in sheer sound and tone. With his breathy timbre and sensuality, Webster was a romantic of the highest order, spinning out eloquent solos on such ballads as *Stardust* and *All Too Soon* (both 1940 with the Ellington band). The fast and flashy *Cotton Tail* (also 1940) became a Webster trademark during his 1940–43 years with Ellington, but in fact Webster had a wide tonal and emotional range that encompassed the powerful, driving, and raspy as well as the warm, eloquent, and lyrical. These opposites led to the apt title for the biographical film *The Brute and the Beautiful* (1991).

After Armstrong, Roy Eldridge became the most original trumpeter in jazz until Dizzy Gillespie came to the fore in the 1940s. Taking his deep tone and arpeggio-laden style from Coleman Hawkins, Eldridge became a powerful, virtuosic player, boasting dexterity over a three-octave range, as on the dazzling *After You've Gone* (1937). With its ease, authority, shape, and skill, his *Rockin' Chair* (1941, with Gene Krupa's orchestra) ranks among the greatest recorded jazz solos. The exuberant, good-humored, and keenly competitive Eldridge loved jam sessions and cutting contests. He helped to dismantle the color barrier in jazz during his stints with the bands of Gene Krupa (1941–43) and Artie Shaw (1944–45). For an example of Eldridge's playing, listen to Gene Krupa's *Let Me Off Uptown* (*JTSA* Disc 2/Track 11).

Trumpeter Bunny Berigan combined influences of Louis Armstrong and Bix Beiderbecke into a personal voice noted for its tone, lyricism, technical assurance, power and projection, exploitation of the trumpet's low register, and clarity of structure. These trademarks can all be heard on his masterpiece (and hit recording), *I Can't Get Started* (1937). Like Beiderbecke, Berigan suffered from alcoholism; he died at the age of 33.

Following in the footsteps of his fellow New Orleans trumpeter Louis Armstrong, Henry "Red" Allen brandished a style brimming with energy and authority. Known for his daring, rhythmic freedom, and large arsenal of timbral devices (slurs, growls, **rips**, **trills**, and half-valve effects), Allen was an outstanding interpreter of the blues. Three of his best solos were made in 1933 with Fletcher Henderson's orchestra: *King Porter Stomp*, *Queer Notions*, and *Nagasaki.*



Trumpet star Bunny Berigan. PHOTO COURTESY JAMES J KRIEGSMANN/DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

rip a loud tonal slide (glissando) up to a note, often ending with a sharp accent; can be heard in the playing of trumpeters Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong, among many others.

trill for ornamentation, a rapidly repeating alternation of a note with its adjoining note.

Body and Soul by Coleman Hawkins

Johnny Green, the composer of *Body and Soul*, reported "that the question he most frequently heard was, 'When you were writing *Body and Soul*, did you realize that this was to be the most recorded **torch song** of all time?'" According to critic Will Friedwald, "Early on, he formulated a set response: 'No, all I knew was that it had to be finished by Wednesday.'" *Body and Soul* (CD I, Track 14/Download Track 14) is the best-known song written by Green, who, when he composed it in 1930, was a recent Harvard University economics graduate.

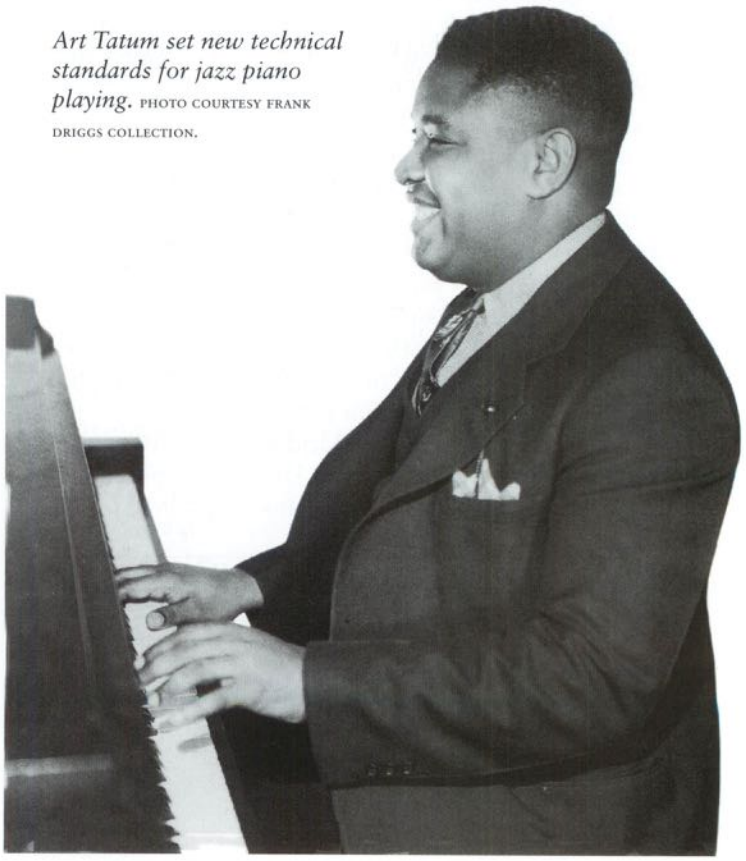
Body and Soul utilizes standard 32-bar AABA form. William Zinsser observed that the B section or **bridge** of *Body and Soul* is a gem of "unexpectedness. . . . a bridge unlike any other. The first four bars . . . are one-half-step above the home key of the song, while the next four bars . . . are one-half-step *below* the home key." This can make playing or singing the bridge tricky for veteran musicians, and perilous for beginners.

With its catchy melody and challenging harmonies, the song entered jazz tradition when Louis Armstrong recorded it in 1930, though his solo stuck fairly close to the melody. During that decade, Benny Goodman, Red Allen, **Art Tatum**, Django Reinhardt, and Roy Eldridge recorded it, but it was the 1939 version by tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins that immortalized *Body and Soul* among jazz lovers.

By the time of this recording, Hawkins had honed a style built on command of a wide range on his instrument and deep emotional conviction. *Body and Soul* demonstrates these qualities and showcases his biggest contribution to the development of jazz: exploring the outlines of chords for his solos rather than the then-standard practice of embellishing the melody.

The accompaniment throughout Hawkins's recording is bare-bones: even during the second chorus when the horns come in, the show belongs entirely to Hawkins. After a four-bar introduction by pianist Gene Rodgers, Hawkins begins (at 0:08) to both state and paraphrase the melody of *Body and Soul*. In the second A section (0:30), he departs more from the original melody, just hinting at Green's line. In the B section (0:50), which modulates from the key of D-flat major to the remote key of D major, Hawkins begins exploring a wider range on his instrument, incorporating notes that are higher and lower than previous ones. By the second chorus (1:30), Hawkins has completely abandoned Green's

The pianist Art Tatum, who was 85 percent blind, typically performed in small clubs and was at his best as a solo pianist, for he played a full, orchestral style that needed latitude so he could shape dramatic contrasts. His arpeggios and **runs** (fast-paced streams of notes) in the right (and even the left) hands astonished fellow musicians and the public; beneath his speed and dazzling, classically trained technique lay Tatum's daring and inventive reharmonizations—one could even say recompositions—of pop songs and show tunes. He favored formulas (many recordings followed a format of free/strict/free tempo) and worked out most solos



Art Tatum set new technical standards for jazz piano playing. PHOTO COURTESY FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION.

torch song in popular music, a sad or sentimental song describing an unrequited love; from the expression "to carry a torch" for someone. Examples are *My Man*, *Stormy Weather*, *Lover Man*, *Body and Soul*, and *One for My Baby (and One More for the Road)*.

bridge a segment of a tune, usually 8 or 16 bars, that departs from the main melody in order to provide contrast and development; the B in AABA form, for example.

run a rapid sequence of notes, ascending or descending.

melody and is playing on the chord changes. At 1:47, he renders several sequences. He continues to heighten the intensity, artfully saving his highest note of the solo (an F at 2:37) for the final A section. Throughout the 64 bars (two choruses), Hawkins builds to the climax, playing higher notes with louder volume, a more strident tone, and greater rhythmic intensity. He even nudges the tempo from an opening 95 beats per minute to 99 by song's end. Hawkins shapes his solo brilliantly; later, he would compare the arc of his solo to a love-making session.

Hawkins's approach on *Body and Soul*—making new melodies from the chords of an old piece—would become, in a few years, the new *modus operandi* of the beboppers. The recording represented the apotheosis of Hawkins's career and one of the most celebrated jazz improvisations ever recorded. Said pianist Randy Weston, "For me it's one of the greatest works of music of any kind from any era. When I first heard it I played it note for note on the piano . . . it was something that blew my mind."

In the 1940s and 1950s, *Body and Soul* became a test piece among tenor saxophonists from Lester Young to David Murray and a must-play piece for pianists—Nat "King" Cole, Art Tatum, Earl Hines, Thelonious Monk, Oscar Peterson, and Kenny Barron all recorded it.

Singers, too, took up *Body and Soul*. The somewhat awkward lyrics ("My life a wreck you're making") tell darkly of self-doubt, abandonment, weariness, and desperation ("It looks like the ending"). The sensual, sexual stance of offering both soul *and* body to the singer's ungrateful lover caused a sensation in the 1930s; some radio stations banned it from airplay.

For vocalists, the song posed not only challenging harmonic changes but the additional problem of a wide range: like *Stardust*, *Body and Soul* spans an octave and a fourth (only one whole step less than the devilishly difficult-to-sing *Star-Spangled Banner*).

Sarah Vaughan won an Amateur Night contest in 1942 at Harlem's famed Apollo Theater singing *Body and Soul*, thereby launching her career. Billie Holiday recorded it memorably, always changing the lyrics from "a wreck you're making" to the franker "a hell you're making." Several remakes of *Body and Soul* offered new sets of vocalese lyrics to Coleman Hawkins's improvised solo line: singer Eddie Jefferson's version and one by the vocal group Manhattan Transfer.

In 1973 the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences inducted Hawkins's 1939 recording into the Grammy Hall of Fame. In 2004, the Library of Congress added it to the National Recording Registry of significant sound recordings. *Body and Soul* is such a memorable song and romantic phrase that it's been used as the title for six movies, scores of CDs, and more than 50 books, including, in 1993, Frank Conroy's hauntingly musical novel. As of 2011, jazz musicians alone had made nearly 2,000 recordings of this classic American song, making it easily the most-recorded piece in the history of jazz.

—John Edward Hasse

in advance. One of his most famous solos was on the standard *Tiger Rag* (*JTSA* Disc 2/Track 6).

Though he came to prominence during the swing era, Tatum's playing was never really of that era, nor of bebop or modern jazz—rather it stood apart, like Ellington's, in a class of its own. Tatum's style continued to mature, as demonstrated by such later masterpiece recordings as *Willow Weep for Me* (1949) and *Sweet Lorraine* (1955), recorded the year before he died.

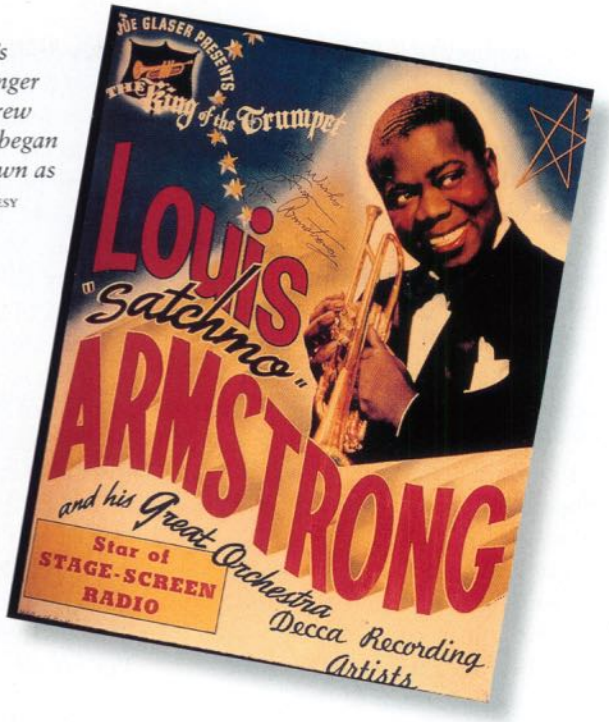
In contrast to Tatum, Teddy Wilson was very much of the swing era; he was, in fact, its most important pianist. His style combined elements of Earl Hines's and Tatum's piano styles into one tailored for playing in ensembles.

In comparison to Tatum's splash and unrelenting energy, Wilson—with his clean lines and light textures—sounded more legato, subtle, reserved. As his left hand rendered a series of tenths and his right executed brief melodic figures in octaves, Wilson would sit board-upright at the keyboard, the very model of poise and control. He was the perfect pianist to play the Benny Goodman Trio's kind of chamber jazz—notably on *After You've Gone* and *Body and Soul* (both 1935)—and to accompany Billie Holiday on *Mean To Me*, with Wilson's septet, (1937; *JTSA* Disc 1/Track 22).

What Coleman Hawkins did for the tenor saxophone, Red Norvo did for the xylophone: he took it out of vaudeville and put it firmly in the realm of jazz. Difficult to categorize, Norvo played with pre-swing, swing, and bebop musicians, first on the xylophone and later on the vibraphone as well. With his light sound, Norvo created a gentle sonic world of subtle surprises, swing, and imaginative solos, as on *In a Mist* (1933), *Dance of the Octopus* (1933), and *Remember* (1937).

The guitarist Charlie Christian was one of the first to amplify his instrument so that it could be heard among the winds and brass. His recording career lasted only from 1939 to 1941, his life cut short at age 25 by tuberculosis, but in those two years he set musicians and the public on their ears with his fluid and inventive single-line soloing, which for the first time gave the guitar the same kind of expressive power as the trumpet or saxophone. As a member of Benny Goodman's Sextet (*Breakfast Feud*, 1940 and 1941;

I Found a New Baby, 1941) and big band (*Honeysuckle Rose*, 1939 [*JTSA* Disc 2/ Track 5], and *Solo Flight*, 1941), Christian lifted his instrument to prominence in jazz and exerted an enormous influence on later guitarists from a wide range of musical styles.

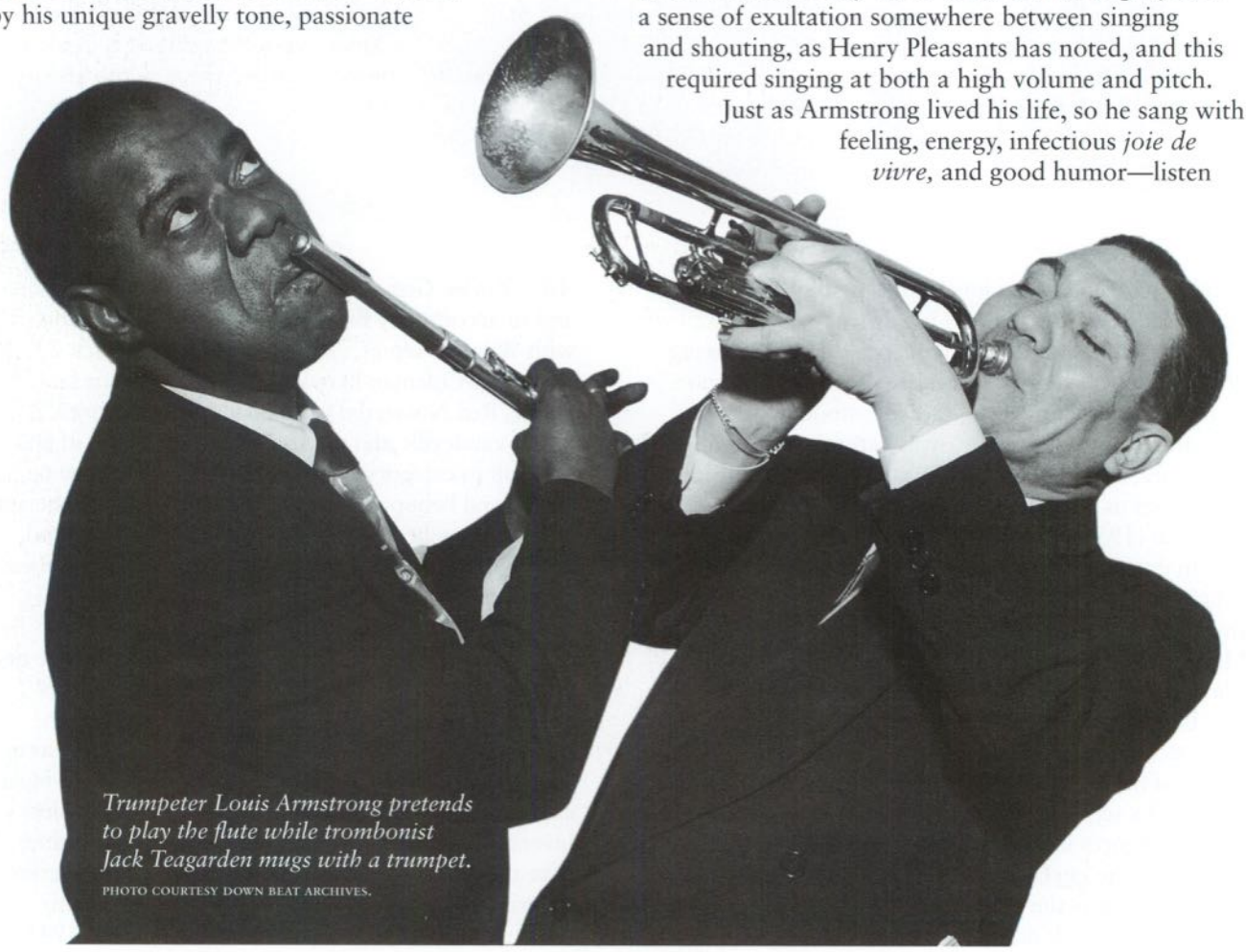


Louis Armstrong's reputation as a singer and entertainer grew in the 1930s and began eclipsing his renown as a trumpeter. COURTESY JOHN EDWARD HASSE.

Exposed as a Texas youth to African American spirituals at tent revival meetings, Jack Teagarden developed a deceptive ease of technique and forged a singing, lyrical, bluesy sound on the trombone (*Dinah*, with Red Nichols, 1929, and Jack *Hits the Road*, with Bud Freeman, 1940) and an equally personal, blues-drenched vocal style. Indeed, Gunther Schuller has called him "the finest white blues singer." Nowhere is his brilliance better demonstrated than on *St. James Infirmary* (with Louis Armstrong, 1947), which Teagarden transforms into a haunting masterpiece.

Singers

One of the greatest jazz singers of them all, Louis Armstrong, flowered in the 1930s, becoming a cultural hero of epic proportions, above all to musicians. He developed a vocal style—marked by his unique gravelly tone, passionate delivery, and superb vowel coloration—as distinctive as his seminal style on trumpet. On such recordings as *Stardust* and *Lazy River* (both 1931), he projected a sense of exultation somewhere between singing and shouting, as Henry Pleasants has noted, and this required singing at both a high volume and pitch. Just as Armstrong lived his life, so he sang with feeling, energy, infectious *joie de vivre*, and good humor—listen



Trumpeter Louis Armstrong pretends to play the flute while trombonist Jack Teagarden mugs with a trumpet. PHOTO COURTESY DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

John Hammond: Talent Scout, Jazz Catalyst

As a discoverer of talent, John Hammond had few if any peers. That's because many of the performers he helped lift from obscurity to the international spotlight went on to validate his sponsorship to a spectacular degree. Singer Billie Holiday, bandleader Count Basie, pianist Teddy Wilson, and guitarists Charlie Christian and George Benson—not to mention soul singer Aretha Franklin and the rock world's Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen—are just a few whom Hammond championed before they rose to the highest ranks of the twentieth century's popular artists.

Born in 1910 to a wealthy family (his grandfather was the railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt), Hammond became enamored of jazz as a teenager. He began his career as a disc jockey and producer of jazz stage shows, worked as a music critic for *Down Beat* and *Melody Maker* magazines, went on to serve as a talent scout and tour manager for Benny Goodman (his future brother-in-law), and spent a number of years as a record producer and executive, most notably at Columbia.

Using his inherited wealth, he financed jazz recording sessions at a time when record sales were in the Depression-era basement. During one week in November 1933, he supervised the last recordings of Bessie Smith and the first sessions of Billie Holiday. "She was 17," he later said of Holiday. "I never heard anyone sing like this—as if she was the most inspired improviser in the world." The music business types gave him a hard time, he recalled: "Scratchy, unmusical voice. Where was the tune?"

When Hammond heard the little-known Basie band over a car radio in 1936, the excited producer traveled to Kansas City to hear them in person. As he'd done with Holiday, Hammond brought the Basie band to the attention of his contacts in the music business and helped set the wheels in motion for the group's entry onto the national stage.

Others who benefited from Hammond's support included arranger Fletcher Henderson; trumpeter Bunny Berigan; xylophonist Red Norvo; and saxophonists Benny Carter, Chu Berry, and Lester Young.

But Hammond's impact went well beyond the careers of individual musicians. In 1938 and 1939 he organized two landmark Carnegie Hall concerts of African American music, "From Spirituals to Swing," that helped legitimize jazz. Through his association with Goodman he helped spearhead the swing era. He sparked public interest in boogie-woogie by promoting the careers of pianists Meade "Lux" Lewis, Albert Ammons, and Pete Johnson. And Hammond, who called himself "a social activist," served as an important catalyst for racial integration in jazz.

—Tad Lathrop

John Hammond at Columbia Records, 1939. PHOTO COURTESY FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION.

History & Culture

The New Orleans Revival

Swing music, whether played by big bands or small groups, was not all that was happening in jazz during the swing era.

At universities such as Yale and Princeton, young men were collecting "hot" records of the 1920s, encouraged by articles in the men's magazine *Esquire*. In 1935, from within his big band, Tommy Dorsey organized the Clambake Seven, an octet to play Dixieland jazz, an offshoot of New Orleans jazz, and was followed within two years by Bob Crosby and his Bob Cats.

In the 1930s, partly as a reaction against what some saw as the overly arranged and overly commercialized character of swing, some musicians began consciously reviving the older, uncluttered, small-group jazz styles from New Orleans and Chicago. Attention to these styles took a big step forward in 1938: the year saw the first "From Spirituals to Swing" concert at Carnegie Hall, which stimulated interest in the history of jazz; the establishment of two independent record labels—Commodore and H.R.S.—that issued pre-swing jazz; and renewed recording activity for the New Orleans pioneers Sidney Bechet, Johnny Dodds, and Jelly Roll Morton (whose recordings that year, made by Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress, rank among the great sound documents in American culture).

Nineteen thirty-nine was a milestone year, with cornetist Muggsy Spanier forming his so-called Ragtime Band and making a series of influential recordings that included *At the Jazz Band Ball* and *Riverboat Shuffle*. That same year, the landmark book *Jazzmen* was

to *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You* (1931), *Laughin' Louie* (1933), or *Swing That Music* (1936; *JTSA* Disc 1/Track 20) and you can't help smiling. He boasted an extraordinary ability to overcome commonplace material, often—with the force of his musical personality—transforming lackluster pop songs into enduring art (*Sweethearts on Parade*, 1930). And he set the standard for scat singing (*Basin Street Blues*, 1933), his example clarion and timeless. The title of Leslie Gourse's book on jazz singers—*Louis' Children*—is an apt reflection of Armstrong's profound influence on generations of jazz vocalists.

The novelist Ralph Ellison, who grew up in Oklahoma City listening to another local son, the big-voiced tenor Jimmy Rushing, wrote of that singer's "imposition of a romantic lyricism upon the blues . . . a romanticism which is not of the Deep South but the Southwest." The featured singer with Count Basie's band from 1935 to 1948, Rushing combined the sensitivity and precision of a ballad singer with the authority, earthiness, and robustness of a blues shouter, as on *Sent for You Yesterday* (1938), *Goin' to Chicago* (1941), *I'm Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town* (1942), and especially the mournful *I Left My Baby* (1939), all with Basie.

The **Boswell Sisters**, from New Orleans, achieved their peak of popularity and influence from 1931–35, becoming, in the estimation of Will Friedwald, "the greatest of all jazz vocal groups." The trio sang in beautifully blended three-part harmony, with a remarkable sense of rhythm. Connee Boswell did most of the group's imaginative arrangements, replete with reharmonizations, scat singing, the instrument-like use of their voices, frequent tempo changes, and other creative elements that typically recomposed the original material (*Roll On, Mississippi, Roll On*, 1931; *Charlie Two-Step*, 1932; and *Everybody Loves My Baby*, 1932 [*JTSA* Disc 1/Track 17]). Ella Fitzgerald cited Connee Boswell as among her main musical influences.

The Boswells and the plaintive-voiced Mildred Bailey were the first white singers to absorb and master the African American jazz idiom of the 1920s. Bailey boasted fine diction; a pure, warm, and beautiful natural tone; and an ability to project a song's lyrics and convey sweetness, sincerity, and conviction. She performed Hoagy Carmichael's *Rockin' Chair* (notably a classic version recorded in 1937) so definitively that she became known as "the Rockin' Chair Lady." Her art also sings on in such memorable sides as *A Porter's Love Song to a Chambermaid* (with husband Red Norvo's band, 1936) and *Darn That Dream* (with Benny Goodman's orchestra, 1939).

Billie Holiday ranks close to Louis Armstrong among the greatest jazz singers. Acknowledging great inspiration from him, she practiced an instrumental

issued, drawing attention to New Orleans jazz and notably to Morton and the forgotten trumpeter Bunk Johnson. Within months of the book's publication, Morton was rediscovered by RCA Victor, which began recording him again (it had dropped him in 1930). Morton's rejuvenation was short-lived, however; he died in 1941 following an illness, his dream of a major comeback unfulfilled. Another independent, Blue Note Records, emerged in 1939 and immediately recorded Sidney Bechet.

Also in 1939, trumpeter Lu Watters organized the Yerba Buena Jazz Band in the San Francisco Bay Area to revive small-group New Orleans music in the style of King Oliver. In 1941, his band began recording old rags (*Maple Leaf Rag* and *Black and White Rag*) and early jazz pieces (*Tiger Rag*, *Fidgety Feet*, and *Muskrat Ramble*) with the polyphony of interweaving clarinet, trumpet, and trombone lines harking back to the music's early years. The band helped spark an international revival of New Orleans and Chicago jazz.

In the early 1940s, a number of African American jazz musicians, some of them, like Kid Ory and Bunk Johnson, in retirement from jazz, were recorded by younger white enthusiasts, as small but influential jazz-specialist magazines—notably *The Record Changer* and *The Jazz Record*—published articles on early figures. In 1944 actor-director Orson Welles's CBS radio program put Kid Ory's band—with clarinetist Jimmie Noone and trumpeter Mutt Carey—on the national map. The traditional jazz revival built up steam after World War II, and in 1947, Louis Armstrong dropped his big band in favor of a small-group format, the All Stars, with a traditional New Orleans lineup.

The old styles and the new bebop appealed largely to different groups of listeners, and a war of words broke out between the modernists and the traditionalists, whom the former derisively labeled "moldy figs." Each camp carried a vision of one true jazz; the combatants failed to recognize that by the 1930s, jazz had become a music of multiple styles that could exist side by side. Increasingly jazz would become a music synonymous with variety and, like the American population, pluralism.

—John Edward Hasse

approach to singing as she ranged freely over the beat, flattened out the melodic contours of tunes, and, in effect, recomposed songs to suit her range, style, and artistic sensibilities. Her voice was physically limited, but she achieved shadings, nuances, color, and variety by sliding along the thin line separating speech and song. Her collaborations with Lester Young (*I Must Have That Man* and *Mean To Me*, *JTSA* Disc 1/ Track 22, both recorded with Teddy Wilson's group, 1937) are justifiably celebrated, as is her courageous recording of the harrowing anti-lynching song *Strange Fruit* (1939) and her haunting studio recording, with strings, of *Lover Man* (1944).

In 1957, jazz critic Nat Hentoff arranged for Holiday to be part of a television program on contemporary jazz. Although her powers were in decline, she sang a fine version of *Fine and Mellow* which featured Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, and Lester Young (her old compatriot) on alto saxes. Holiday's voice is huskier than in her youth, but she displays strongly her talent for elevating a contemporary popular song into majestic and tragic grandeur.

After recording the memorable *All or Nothing at All* in 1939 with Harry James's band, Frank Sinatra joined the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and, with his new kind of natural phrasing, rich baritone, jazzy inflections, and depth of feeling, helped lead the band to its greatest acclaim with such recordings as *Everything Happens to Me* (1941). Not one to improvise, his singing nonetheless was influenced by—and in turn

Billie Holiday—Lady Day—the most hauntingly distinctive of jazz vocalists.
PHOTO COURTESY JAMES J KRIEGSMANN/DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

Watch the video of *Fine and Mellow* by Billie Holiday on **mymusiclab.com**

much admired by—jazz musicians. By the 1950s, he had become the quintessential American pop singer through his gift for conveying lyrics and ability to take a three-minute song and transform it into a virtual three-act play (*One for My Baby,* 1958).

TAKE NOTE

- What roles did smaller ensembles, instrumental soloists, and singers play during this era?

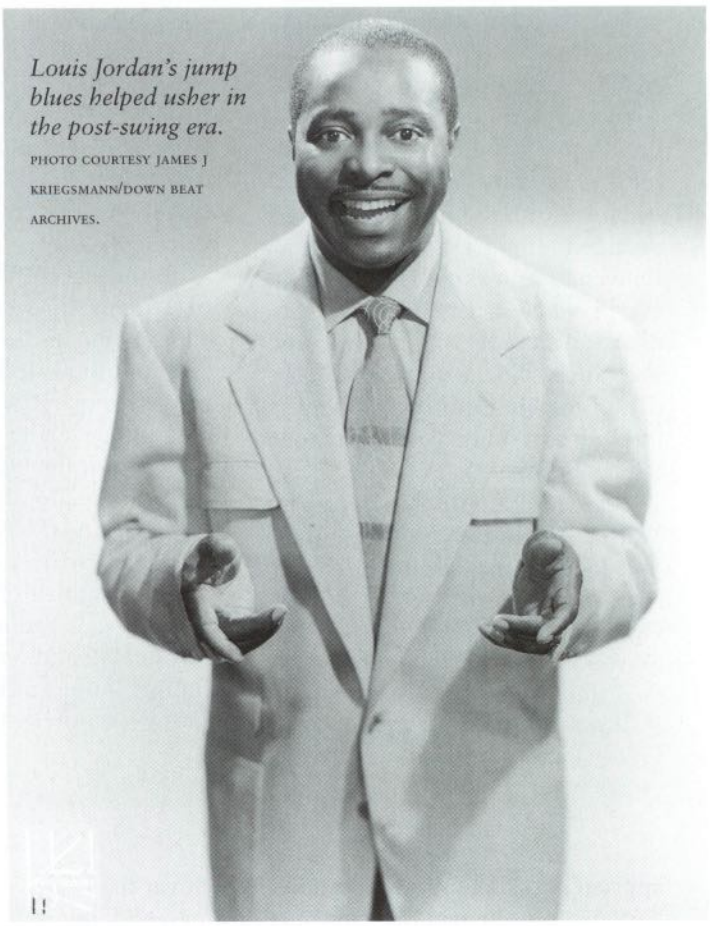
The End of the Swing Era

A major rupture in the swing era came on August 1, 1942, when the American Federation of Musicians, ruled by union boss James Petrillo, ordered its musicians to cease recording for record companies. At issue was the companies' refusal to contribute a payment per recording to the union's pension fund. In response, musicians were forced to stop making records for sale to the public indefinitely, with the exception of a few **transcription recordings** intended exclusively for radio stations. It took Victor and Columbia, the two largest companies, until November 1944 to finally cave in to the musicians' union.

During the recording ban of 1942–44, a group of young players had been experimenting in Harlem, and in 1945 they made their first important recordings. Employing heightened melodic and rhythmic complexity, they introduced a music that was intended far less for dancing than for listening in small clubs. Initially known onomatopoeically as "rebop" or "bebop," it finally took the shortened label "bop."

The bebop musicians worked outside previously standard career paths that required being entertainers or dance musicians; they relied for their livelihoods on an intense circle of jazz fans to an extent that a musician of the swing era generation would have found uncomfortable. Now, led by African American musicians searching for their own music not co-opted by the white-controlled music industry, many younger jazz players found swing too highly arranged, too formulaic, and too commercial and took up the new, startlingly different bop.

The musical developments occurred partly as a result of historical events. World War II brought more than a million blacks into uniform, and fighting abroad for freedom raised the expectations of returning servicemen. Hundreds of thousands of blacks moved north and west to work in war plants, and they helped support a style of black popular music that would in 1949 be dubbed "**rhythm and blues" (R&B)**. What became known as R&B was really a diverse group of styles. Sung by the likes of singer-saxophonist **Louis Jordan** and his Tympany Five, Wynonie Harris, Big Joe Turner, and Ruth Brown and accompanied by guitar, piano, bass, drums, and saxophone, R&B offered accessible songs, a strong dance beat, and a fresh sound.



Louis Jordan's jump blues helped usher in the post-swing era.
PHOTO COURTESY JAMES J KRIEGSMANN/DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES.

The pop music world was changing markedly. Exempt from the 1942–44 recording ban, many singers, despite the wartime shortage of shellac used on records, were continuing to make them and were gaining in popularity. This development, combined with an increase in the number of singers leaving their big band employers and striking out on their own (Frank Sinatra and Perry Como in 1942, Dick Haymes in 1943, and Jo Stafford and Peggy Lee in 1944) helped create an era of the "big singer."

The increasing popularity of singers and such emerging styles as R&B and bebop combined with other factors to push the big bands into a sharp decline, effectively ending the big band era. In November and December 1946, eight of the bands disbanded either

transcription recordings disc recordings made, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, exclusively for broadcast on radio stations; from the phrase "broadcast transcription."

rhythm and blues (R&B) style of popular music forged in the 1940s as an offshoot of urban blues; a precursor of rock and roll, soul music, funk, and hip-hop.

Boogie-Woogie

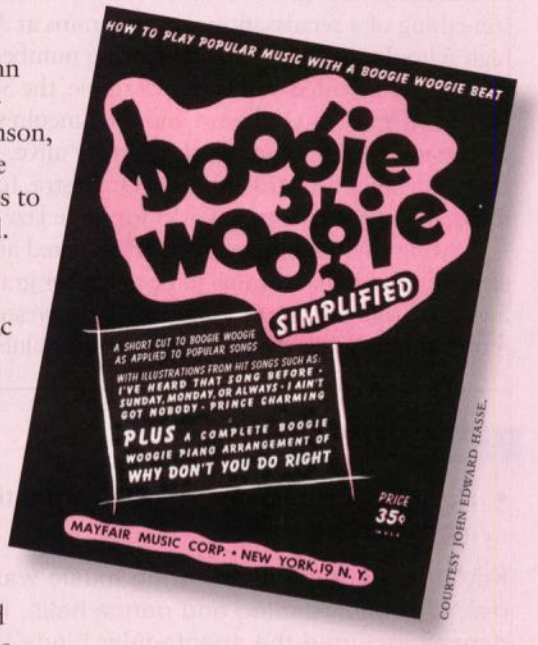
Swinging, eight-to-the-bar figures rumbling way down in the piano bass, meshing with bluesy, complex patterns higher up; a pianist, close to the audience, working the keyboard so powerfully that the piano and the floor could literally rock—this was **boogie-woogie**.

Jelly Roll Morton and W.C. Handy recalled hearing boogie-woogie in the South during the first decade of the twentieth century, and ragtime sheet music of that time began to hint at it. Taking its name from a dance step developed in the South by African Americans, boogie-woogie piano playing went north with the great black migration after World War I; St. Louis and Chicago became hotbeds. Pianists played boogie-woogie in barrelhouses, saloons, juke joints, honky-tonks, and rent parties, where its loud, rolling sound cut through the din, dominating the atmosphere and providing an all-but-irresistible call to the dance floor.

By the mid-1920s, boogie began to appear on "race records"—for example, Clay Custer's *The Rocks* (1923), Jimmy Blythe's *Chicago Stomp* (1924), and Pine Top Smith's *Pine Top's Boogie Woogie* (1928, with Smith shouting out dance instructions).

The general public "discovered" the style in 1938, after John Hammond presented three masters—Albert Ammons, Pete Johnson, and Meade "Lux" Lewis—in the landmark From "From Spirituals to Swing" concert at Carnegie Hall. A vogue for boogie then ensued during the late 1930s and the World War II years: the authentic boogie pianists such as Jimmy Yancey were widely recorded, and publishers put out method books for the masses of amateur pianists. There were big band versions (Count Basie's *Boogie Woogie [I May Be Wrong]*, 1936, and Benny Goodman's *Roll 'Em*, 1937) and pop songs hopping on the boogie bandwagon (*Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy [of Company B]*, 1941); but the music was quintessentially a piano style.

As with ragtime, the tension between the right and left hands' opposing roles made boogie-woogie at once discordant and appealing. Its expressive range was limited and its format highly stylized (almost entirely 8- and 12-bar blues progressions with a repetitive bass, typically fast and percussive). But within these limitations, the music's complex figures and powerful cross-rhythms could be insistent, hypnotic, and exciting. The style was virtuosic in its way and took great endurance.



COURTESY JOHN EDWARD HASSE.

Lewis ranks as the most stylistically advanced of the boogie artists. His masterpiece was *Honky-Tonk Train Blues* (JTSA Disc 1, Track 21), a colorful evocation of a train in motion, which he recorded 11 times between 1927 and 1961. Observers recall that he could improvise on this tune for 30 minutes, his fingers cascading over the keys, relentlessly rolling out the rhythms, dazzling everyone within earshot.

—John Edward Hasse

permanently or temporarily, including those of Benny Goodman, Harry James, Woody Herman, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Carter, and Les Brown. Additional reasons were higher costs, a short-lived postwar boom in movie-going, and preoccupation among returning servicemen with settling down and starting families. A new, suburban lifestyle, along with the imminent advent of network television, would create serious adjustments in social habits. Most younger listeners, some of whom in previous years would have become big band fans, were attracted to more accessible vocal sounds or fresher and newer styles of music. "After the war," bandleader Les Brown recalled, "families settled down and the ballrooms went to hell. Before the war every town with 20,000 people had a ballroom, and my band could spend a month just doing one-nighters in Texas."

boogie-woogie a form of blues, often for the piano, with a repeating or ostinato left hand or bass pattern.

But if the era when big bands predominated came to an end in the mid-1940s, the bands themselves never completely disappeared. Indeed, Duke Ellington kept his band together—and made many important recordings—up until his death in 1974. And in the decades after Ellington's death, big bands enjoyed something of a renaissance: jazz programs at American high schools and colleges and growing numbers of historically-oriented bands (for example, the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra) kept the canonical repertory alive, while others (the Muhal Richards Abrams Orchestra, for example) focused on newly written works for large jazz ensembles.

Swing rhythm became such an accepted and expected element of jazz that it came to be taken for granted. Swing rhythm also spread into R&B, the western swing music of Bob Wills, the propulsive beat of bluegrass, and into kinds of pop music. Beginning in the late twentieth century and continuing to today, North America has seen a revival of swing dancing among young people, and new retro pop bands—the Squirrel Nut Zippers, the Brian Setzer Orchestra, and the Royal Crown Revue—attracted younger fans by playing a revved up, edgy kind of swing. Reinventing itself in the grand tradition of American music, and adapting itself to changing musical times, swing continues to capture the ears of new generations.

TAKE NOTE

- Why did the big bands decline at the end of World War II?

Explore Jazz Classics and Key Recordings on **mymusiclab.com**

TAKE NOTE

- How did jazz become a "mass attraction" during the swing era?

Key to the popularity of swing music was the rise of public dancing and dance halls. Popular dances included the spectacular Lindy Hop, the Big Apple, and the Shim-Sham-Shimmy. The demand for music to accompany these dances formed a strong base for the big bands that traveled the country playing for dancers.

- What were the key African American bands of the swing era and why were they important?

The key African American bands of the period included the orchestras of Duke Ellington and Count Basie. In his work, Ellington brought a new level of instrumental sophistication and composition. He had the luxury of composing for the specific talents of his band members, many of whom remained with the band over several years (if not decades). Basie was responsible for popularizing Kansas City style jazz. His band was steeped in the blues and its traditions, from blues chord progressions and blue notes (certain "bent" notes) to bluesy riffs—short, repeated phrases often played by the band behind soloists.

- What were the main white bands of the swing era and why were they important?

The leading white bands of the period included those led by Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, the Dorsey Brothers, and Glenn Miller. Goodman led the most influential, for a time the most popular, and perhaps the most polished of the big bands of the period. The Goodman and Shaw bands featured more jazz soloists than the Dorsey and Miller bands, which were more commercial.

- What were the challenges in keeping a band together and financially successful?

The physical strain of moving large groups of people—mostly young, single men—and their instruments around the country was one of the most daunting of all the challenges a big band faced. Personnel problems, discipline, and general management issues beset all the bands. Traveling constantly to play a series of one-night stands across the country took its toll on musicians and the bands' finances.

- Why did all-female bands arise during this period, and how did they help advance women's role in jazz?

Sexism in the music business was rampant, and it was hard for women to find acceptance as performing musicians. Nonetheless, several all-female bands were able to achieve commercial and popular success during the swing era, if only for their novelty value. Among the best-known were the International Sweethearts of Rhythm. Bands like this lay the groundwork for the gradual increasing acceptance of women as jazz performers.

- How did arrangers help create the successful big band sound?

Big bands required talented arrangers to create the complex scores for their musicians. While Count Basie relied on "head arrangements"—arrangements worked out on the fly by the band

in rehearsal—most bands employed professional arrangers to create unique scores for them to perform. The arranger could be more important than the bandleader himself in creating an identity for a band.

- What roles did smaller ensembles, instrumental soloists, and singers play during this era?

Small ensembles—often made up of subgroups within the popular big bands—were popular during this era, as were talented solo instrumentalists and vocalists. Instrumental virtuosos, like saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, were able to establish themselves as major stars through their solo work. Singing groups, like the popular Boswell Sisters, and individual vocalists—often employed by big bands as an "added attraction"—were also very popular during the swing era.

- Why did the big bands decline at the end of World War II?

The recording ban during the war years and the loss of personnel to the war effort weakened the bands, and many had folded at least temporarily. After World War II, big bands declined in popularity, due to the increasing popularity of smaller ensembles (including R&B and bop groups) and the cost of keeping a big band afloat.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the impact of the Great Depression on popular entertainment of the 1930s?
2. Describe some of the key elements that contributed to the popularity of swing music and the big bands that played it.
3. How would you describe the sound of swing and big bands to someone who has never heard it?
4. What is a "section" in a big band? What instruments constitute a "rhythm section"?
5. Name the two figures most responsible for swing and briefly identify the role that each played in the development of swing.
6. Discuss several soloists who came to the fore during this period and what their contributions were to swing music.
7. What happened to American race relations during the swing era?
8. Describe what an arranger does. Identify three of the factors that an arranger considers when making an arrangement of a piece.
9. What were some of the factors that led to big bands losing popularity?

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