

**Jazz at Lincoln Center Library**

# **Sultry Sunset**

COMPOSED BY DUKE ELLINGTON

TRANSCRIBED BY DAVID BERGER FOR JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

**FULL SCORE**

This transcription was made especially for *Essentially Ellington* 2002:  
the Seventh Annual Jazz at Lincoln Center High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival.

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Annual High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival



Jazz at Lincoln Center

## NOTES ON PLAYING ELLINGTON

At least 95% of modern-day large ensemble jazz playing comes out of three traditions: Count Basie's band, Duke Ellington's band, and the orchestrations of small groups. Those young players interested in jazz will be drawn to small groups for the opportunity to improvise and for practical reasons (it is much easier to organize four or five people than it is 15). Schools have taken over the task (formerly performed by dance bands) of training musicians to be ensemble players. Due to the Basie Band's popularity and its simplicity of style and emphasis on blues and swing, the better educators have almost exclusively adopted this tradition for teaching jazz ensemble playing. As wonderful as Count Basie's style is, it doesn't address many of the important styles developed under the great musical umbrella we call jazz. Duke Ellington's comprehensive and eclectic approach to music offers an alternative.

The stylistic richness of Ellington's music presents a great challenge to educators and performers alike. In Basie's music, the conventions are very nearly consistent. In Ellington's, there are many more exceptions to the rules. This calls for greater knowledge of the language of jazz. Clark Terry, who left Count Basie's band to join Duke Ellington, said, "Count Basie was college, but Duke Ellington was graduate school." Knowledge of Ellington's music prepares you to play any big band music.

The following is a list of performance conventions for the great majority of Ellington's music. Any deviations or additions will be spelled out in the individual performance notes that follow.

1. Listen carefully many times to the Ellington recording of these pieces. There are many subtleties that will elude even the most sophisticated listener at first. Although it was never Ellington's wish to have his recordings imitated, knowledge of these definitive versions will lead musicians to make more educated choices when creating new performances. Ellington's music, though written for specific individuals, is designed to inspire all musicians to express themselves. In addition, you will hear slight note differences in the recording and the transcriptions. This is intentional because there are mistakes and alterations from the original intent of the music in the recording. You should have your players play what's in the score.
2. General use of swing phrasing: The triplet feel prevails except for ballads or where notations such as even eighths or Latin appear. In these cases, eighth notes are given equal value.
3. There is a chain of command in ensemble playing. The lead players in each section determine the phrasing and volume for their own section, and their section-mates must conform to the lead. When the saxes and/or trombones play with the trumpets, the lead trumpet is the boss. The lead alto and trombone must listen to the first trumpet and follow her. In turn, the other saxes and trombones must follow their lead players. When the clarinet leads the brass section, the brass should not overblow him. That means that the first trumpet is actually playing "second." If this is done effectively, there will be very little balancing work left for the conductor.
4. In Ellington's music, each player should express the individuality of his own line. He must find a musical balance of supporting and following the section leader and bringing out the character of the underpart. Each player should be encouraged to express his or her personality through the music. In this music, the underparts are played at the same volume and with the same conviction as the lead.
5. Blues inflection should permeate all parts at all times, not just when these opportunities occur in the lead.
6. Vibrato is used quite a bit to warm up the sound. Saxes (who most frequently represent the sensual side of things) usually employ a heavy vibrato on harmonized passages and a slight vibrato on unisons. Trumpets (who very often are used for heat and power) use a little vibrato on harmonized passages and no vibrato on unisons. Trombones (who are usually noble) do not use slide vibrato. A little lip vibrato is good at times. Try to match the speed of vibrato. Unisons are played with no vibrato.
7. Crescendo as you ascend and diminuendo as you descend. The upper notes of phrases receive a natural accent, and the lower notes are ghosted. Alto and tenor saxophones need to use subtone in the lower part of their range in order to blend properly with the rest of the section. This music was originally written with no dynamics. It pretty much follows the natural tendencies of the instruments; play loudly in the loud part of the instrument and softly in the soft part of the instrument. For instance, a high C for a trumpet will be loud, and a low C will be soft.
8. Quarter notes are generally played short unless otherwise notated. Long marks above or below a pitch indicate full value: not just long, but full value. Eighth notes are played full value except when followed by a rest or otherwise notated. All notes longer than a quarter note are played full value, which means if it is followed by a rest, release the note where the rest appears. For example, a half note occurring on beat 1 of a measure would be released on beat 3.
9. Unless they are part of a legato background figure, long notes should be played somewhat *fp*, accent and then diminish the volume. This is important so that the moving parts can be heard over the sustained notes. Don't just hold out the long notes, but give them life and personality: that is, vibrato, inflection, crescendo, or diminuendo. There is a great deal of inflection in this music, and much of this is highly interpretive. Straight or curved lines imply non-pitched glisses, and wavy lines mean scalar (chromatic or diatonic) glisses. In general, all rhythmic figures need to be accented. Accents give the music life and swing. This is very important.
10. Ellington's music is about individuality: one person per part—do not double up because you have extra players or need more strength. More than one on a part makes it sound more like a concert band and less like a jazz band.
11. This is acoustic music. Keep amplification to an absolute minimum; in the best halls, almost no amplification should be necessary. Everyone needs to develop a big sound. It is the conductor's job to balance the band. When a guitar is used, it should be a hollow-body, unamplified rhythm guitar. Simple three-note voicings should be used throughout. An acoustic string bass is a must. In mediocre or poorly designed halls, the bass and piano may need a bit of a boost. I recommend miking them and putting them through the house sound system. This should provide a much better tone than an amplifier. Keep in mind that the rhythm section's primary function is to accompany. The bass should not be as loud as a trumpet. That is unnatural and leads to overamplification, bad tone, and limited dynamics. Stay away from monitors. They provide a false sense of balance.
12. Solos and rhythm section parts without chord changes should be played as is or with a little embellishment. Solos and rhythm section parts with chord changes should be improvised. However, written passages should be learned because they are an important part of our jazz heritage and help the player understand the function of his particular solo or accompaniment. Soloists should learn the chord changes. Solos should not be approached as opportunities to show off technique, range, or volume, but should be looked at as a great opportunity to further develop the interesting thematic material that Ellington has provided.
13. The notation of plungers for the brass means a rubber toilet plunger bought in a hardware store. Kirkhill is a very good brand (especially if you can find one of their old rubber ones, like the one I loaned Wynton and he lost). Trumpets use 5" diameter and trombones use 6" diameter. Where Plunger/Mute is notated, insert a pixie mute in the bell and use the plunger over the mute. Pixies are available from Humes & Berg in Chicago. Tricky Sam Nanton and his successors in the Ellington plunger trombone chair did not use pixies. Rather, each of them employed a Nonpareil (that's the brand name) trumpet straight mute. Nonpareil has gone out of business, but the Tom Crown Nonpareil trumpet straight mute is very close to the same thing. These mutes create a wonderful sound (very close to the human voice), but they also create some intonation problems that must be corrected by the lip only. It would be easier to move the tuning slide, but part of the sound is in the struggle to correct the pitch. If this proves too much, stick with the pixie—it's pretty close.

14. The drummer is the de facto leader of the band. He establishes the beat and controls the volume of the ensemble. For big band playing, the drummer needs to use a larger bass drum than he would for small group drumming. A 22" is preferred. The bass drum is played softly (nearly inaudible) on each beat. This is called feathering the bass drum. It provides a very important bottom to the band. The bass drum sound is not a boom and not a thud—it's in between. The larger size drum is necessary for the kicks; a smaller drum just won't be heard. The key to this style is just to keep time. A rim knock on two and four (chopping wood) is used to lock in the swing. When it comes to playing fills, the fewer, the better.
15. The horn players should stand for their solos and solis. Brass players should come down front for moderate to long solos, surrounding rests permitting. The same applies to the pep section (two trumpets and one trombone in plunger/mutes).
16. Horns should pay close attention to attacks and releases. Everyone should hit together and end together.
17. Brass must be very precise when playing short notes. Notes must be stopped with the tongue, à la Louis Armstrong!
18. Above all, everyone's focus should remain at all times on the swing. As the great bassist Chuck Israels says, "The three most important things in jazz are rhythm, rhythm, and rhythm, in that order." Or as Bubber Miley (Ellington's first star trumpeter) said, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing."

## GLOSSARY

The following are terms that describe conventions of jazz performance, from traditional New Orleans to the present avant garde.

- Break** — within the context of an ongoing time feel, the rhythm section stops for one, two, or four bars. Very often a soloist will improvise during a break.
- Call-and-response** — repetitive pattern of contrasting exchanges (derived from the church procedure of the minister making a statement and the congregation answering with "amen"). Call-and-response patterns usually pit one group of instruments against another. Sometimes we call this "trading fours," "trading twos," etc., especially when it involves improvisation. The numbers denote the amount of measures each soloist or group plays. Another term frequently used is "swapping fours."
- Coda** — also known as the "outro." "Tags" or "tag endings" are outgrowths of vaudeville bows that are frequently used as codas. They most often use deceptive cadences that finally resolve to the tonic, or they go from the tonic to the sub-dominant and cycle back to the tonic: I V/IV IV #IV I (second inversion) V/II V/V V I.
- Comp** — improvise accompaniment (for piano or guitar).
- Groove** — the composite rhythm. This generally refers to the combined repetitive rhythmic patterns of the drums, bass, piano, and guitar but may also include repetitive patterns in the horns. Some grooves are standard (i.e., swing, bossa nova, samba) while others are manufactured (original combinations of rhythms).
- Head** — melody chorus.
- Interlude** — a different form (of relatively short length) sandwiched between two chorus forms. Interludes that set up a key change are simply called modulations.
- Intro** — short for introduction.
- Ride pattern** — the most common repetitive figure played by the drummer's right hand on the ride cymbal or hi-hat.



- Riff** — a repeated melodic figure. Very often, riffs repeat verbatim or with slight alterations while the harmonies change underneath them.
- Shout chorus** — also known as the "out chorus," the "sock chorus," or sometimes shortened to just "the shout." It is the final ensemble passage of most big band charts and where the climax most often happens.
- Soli** — a harmonized passage for two or more instruments playing the same rhythm. It is customary for horn players to stand up or even move in front of the band when playing these passages. This is done so that the audience can hear them better and to provide the audience with some visual interest. A soli sound particular to Ellington's music combines two trumpets and a trombone in plungers/mutes in triadic harmony. This is called the pep section.
- Stop time** — a regular pattern of short breaks (usually filled in by a soloist).
- Swing** — the perfect confluence of rhythmic tension and relaxation in music creating a feeling of euphoria and characterized by accented weak beats (a democratization of the beat) and eighth notes that are played as the first and third eighth notes of an eighth-note triplet. Duke Ellington's definition of swing: when the music feels like it is getting faster, but it isn't.
- Vamp** — a repeated two- or four-bar chord progression. Very often, there may be a riff or riffs played on the vamp.
- Voicing** — the specific spacing, inversion, and choice of notes that make up a chord. For instance, two voicings for G7 could be:



Note that the first voicing includes a 9th and the second voicing includes a b9 and a 13. The addition of 9ths, 11ths, 13ths, and alterations are up to the discretion of the pianist and soloist.

## THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

The following are placed in their order of importance in jazz. We should never lose perspective on this order of priority.

- RHYTHM** — meter, tempo, groove, and form, including both melodic rhythm and harmonic rhythm (the speed and regularity of the chord changes).
- MELODY** — what players play: a tune or series of notes.
- HARMONY** — chords and voicings.
- ORCHESTRATION** — instrumentation and tone colors.

— David Berger

*Special thanks to Andrew Homzy for editing.*



# SULTRY SUNSET

## INSTRUMENTATION:

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

## ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION:

**Sultry Sunset** by Duke Ellington (3:06)

Recorded 11/25/46, New York City

*Duke Ellington: Happy-Go-Lucky Local* (Musicraft MVSCD-52)

Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, Al Sears, Harry Carney, reeds; Cat Anderson, Shelton Hemphill, Shorty Baker, Taft Jordan, Francis Williams, Ray Nance, trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Wilbur DeParis, Claude Jones, trombones; Duke Ellington, piano; Fred Guy, guitar; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Sonny Greer, drums.

Additional Recordings:

*Duke Ellington: Happy-Go-Lucky Local*, Discovery 70052; *1946 Classics* 1015

## REHEARSAL NOTES:

- This little-known ballad was written as a feature for alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges, perhaps the finest balladeer in all jazz. It's not so much what Hodges does, but how he does it. As in so many other ballads he recorded, Hodges' performance is excruciatingly romantic without being sappy. Quite a trick. The key is in the minutiae of nuance. Every note has a subtle shift of color, rhythm, or pitch to it, but never so much as to draw attention away from the beauty of the line.
- Following a four-bar piano introduction, there is a standard 32-bar AABA chorus, an eight-bar interlude (played in time with a quasi-cadenza feel), a recap of the original eight-bar A section of the head and a four-bar tag.
- Since the alto is featured throughout, I recommend that he or she stand up or, better yet, memorize the part and move in front of the band for the entire number. This helps focus the audience and creates a visual rapport between the soloist and the audience.
- Remember that with the exception of the interlude at **E**, this is a simple melody that needs to be sung. Two things should be kept in mind: 1) the call-and-response relationship between the solo and the trombones at **A**, **B**, **D**, and **F** (the saxophone holds while the bones move; the saxophone moves while the bones rest—simple counterpoint) 2) the longer note values on the melody (a good time to concentrate on tone) that are contrasted with the more ornate interlude at **E**.
- Although this is a ballad, a swing feel is used throughout. This includes the usual short quarter notes, swinging legato eighths, and accents.

- The subtle use of vibrato by the saxes and trumpets on longer notes (a half note or longer) will warm up the sound of the band, adding to the desired mood.

- If a guitar is used, it should be an unamplified hollow-body rhythm guitar. Short quarters should be strummed on each beat as indicated by the slashes.

- The piano comping should remain sparse throughout so as not to interrupt the legato mood being set by the horns. There is beauty in the sparseness.

- This is a soft, sensitive piece. Overplaying the dynamics and overamplification will destroy this sunset.

— David Berger

## COMMENTS FROM WYNTON MARSALIS:

- This is an extremely sensual piece. Every part of this arrangement should be lyrical, singing, and swinging. The alto part must drip with soul and sweetness. This is an excellent opportunity for our alto saxophonists to work on the quality of their sound.
- The trombone parts should be personalized and conversational at letter **A**, providing a vocal response to the alto solo. Also emphasize the importance of the saxophone entrance on the downbeat of four at two measures before **B**. The saxophones need melodic direction when playing a background harmonic pad; one such passage occurs at letter **C**.
- Also pay attention to figures shared by the bass and trombone, like at **D6**, because they require much coordination.
- Though the trumpet part two before **E** is extremely difficult, the horn players must maintain the sensuality of the line. The passage from **E** to **F** is extremely tricky. It's important for the band to understand that both the saxophones and trumpets are playing a basic harmonic pad. The trombones give this entire passage shape and direction, with the alto solo fluttering like a butterfly on top of the harmonies. Here the drums need to provide tension and coloring with the cymbals, snapping back into the groove only at letter **F**.
- To get a feel for the two-beat ballad, I suggest listening to a wide range of music—Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, any of the great balladeers.

CONDUCTOR

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**SULTRY SUNSET**

Composed by Duke Ellington  
Transcribed by David Berger

Walking ballad ♩ = 72 (Swing 8th notes)

Reeds 1  
Alto Sax  
Alto Sax  
Tenor Sax.  
Tenor Sax  
Bari Sax

Trumpets 1  
2  
3  
4

Trombones 1  
2  
3

Guitar  
Piano  
Bass  
Drums

A Solo mf

Solo mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

D<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b+</sup> G<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup>7+5 D<sup>b</sup>7

Swing

Brushes mp

Sultry Sunset

B

The musical score for 'Sultry Sunset' is arranged for a large ensemble. It includes parts for Alto (two staves), Tenor (two staves), Bari (one staff), Tpt. 1-4 (four staves), Tbn. 1-3 (three staves), Gtr. (one staff with chord diagrams), Pno. (two staves), Bass (one staff), and Dr. (one staff). The Alto part features a melodic line with triplets and a slur. The Tenor and Bari parts have a simple harmonic accompaniment. The Tpt. and Tbn. parts have more complex lines with slurs and dynamics. The Gtr. part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with various chords. The Pno. part has a simple accompaniment. The Bass and Dr. parts provide a steady bass line and drum accompaniment. The score is marked with dynamics such as *mf* and *mp*. A large red watermark 'Preview Only - Legal Use Requires Purchase' is overlaid on the score.

Sultry Sunset

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The top staff is for Alto, followed by two Tenor staves, a Bari staff, and four Trumpet (Tpt.) staves numbered 1 through 4. Below these are three Trombone (Tbn.) staves numbered 1 through 3. The guitar (Gtr.) staff includes a chord progression: D<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>7+5, D<sup>b</sup>7, G<sup>b</sup>, F7, E7, E<sup>b</sup>7, B<sup>b</sup>7, E<sup>b</sup>7, A<sup>b</sup>7, D<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>7+5, and D<sup>b</sup>7. The piano (Pno.) staff is split into two systems. The bass (Bass) and drums (Dr.) staves complete the ensemble. A large red watermark is overlaid diagonally across the page, reading "Legal Use Only" and "Requires Purchase".



Sultry Sunset

Alto

Alto *pp*

Tenor *pp*

Tenor *pp*

Bari *pp*

Tpt. 1

2

3

4

Tbn. 1

2

3

Gtr. *E7m7* *E7m7-5/A* *E9* *A9-9* *D9* *B7m7* *E9* *A9*

Pno.

Bass

Dr. *mp* metal ring





Sultry Sunset

**D**

The musical score for "Sultry Sunset" on page 5 features the following parts and markings:

- Vocals:** Alto (with a melodic line starting on a note marked 'D'), Tenor, and Bari parts are present but mostly silent.
- Brass:** Trumpets 1-4 and Trombones 1-3. Trumpets 1-3 play a melodic line starting at *mf* and ending at *f*. Trombones 1-3 play a rhythmic accompaniment, also starting at *mf* and ending at *f*.
- Guitar:** Chord progression:  $D^{\flat}$ ,  $D^{\flat}+$ ,  $G^{\flat}$ ,  $D^{\flat}$ ,  $A^{\flat}7+5$ ,  $D^{\flat}7$ ,  $G^{\flat}$ ,  $G^{\flat}7$ ,  $F7$ ,  $E7$ ,  $E^{\flat}7$ ,  $B^{\flat}7$ ,  $E^{\flat}7$ ,  $A^{\flat}7$ ,  $D^{\flat}$ .
- Piano:** Pno. part is present but mostly silent.
- Bass:** Bass line with a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure.
- Drums:** Dr. part with a consistent rhythmic pattern.

# Sultry Sunset

**E** **A7** **D7** **Em7-5**

Alto *pp*

Tenor *pp*

Bari *pp*

Tpt. 1 *pp*

2 *pp*

3 *pp*

4 *pp*

Tbn. 1 *mp*

2 *mp*

3 *mp*

Gtr. **G<sup>b</sup>** **C7** **F7** **Gm7-5**

Pno. *arco* **15<sup>ma</sup>** **15<sup>ma</sup>**

Bass *arco*

Dr. Normal **metal ring**

Sultry Sunset

The musical score for "Sultry Sunset" is arranged for a jazz ensemble. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The score includes parts for Alto, Tenor, Bari, Tpt. 1-4, Tbn. 1-3, Gtr., Pno., Bass, and Dr. The Alto part features a melodic line with triplets and slurs. The Tenor and Bari parts provide harmonic support. The Tpt. 1-4 parts play sustained notes. The Tbn. 1-3 parts play a rhythmic pattern with triplets and slurs. The Gtr. part plays chords: D<sup>b</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>9, E<sup>b</sup>7, and D7+5. The Pno. part has a few notes. The Bass part has a few notes, including a pizzicato marking. The Dr. part has a "normal" marking and a rhythmic pattern. A large red watermark "Legal Use Requires Purchase" is overlaid on the score.

Sultry Sunset

**F**

Alto  
Alto  
Tenor  
Tenor  
Bari  
Tpt. 1  
2  
3  
4  
Tbn. 1  
2  
3  
Gtr.  
Pno.  
Bass  
Dr.

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

D<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup>+ G<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup>7+5 D<sup>b</sup>7 G<sup>b</sup> F7 E7 E<sup>b</sup>7 B<sup>b</sup>7 E<sup>b</sup>7 A<sup>b</sup>7



Sultry Sunset

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The top section includes vocal parts for Alto, Tenor, and Bari, with dynamic markings such as *mf* and *f*. Below these are four trumpet parts (Tpt. 1-4) and three trombone parts (Tbn. 1-3). The guitar part (Gtr.) is shown with a series of chords: D $\flat$ , C7, B7, Fm7-5, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$ 7, D7, D $\flat$ , G $\flat$ , Gm7-5, A $\flat$ 7, and D $\flat$ . The piano part (Pno.) includes markings for *g<sup>tr.</sup>* and *loco*. The bass part (Bass) features an *arco* marking. The drum part (Dr.) shows a rhythmic pattern with various notes and rests. A large, diagonal red watermark reading "Legal Use Requires Purchase Only" is overlaid across the entire score.

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