

# Swinging The Blues: 1930-1939

Featuring: Lester Young,  
Buck Clayton, Herschel  
Evans, Dickie Wells, Harry  
"Sweets" Edison, Jimmy  
Rushing and more!



# Count Basie



# Count Basie

Although Count Basie did not arrive on the national jazz stage until after Benny Goodman had launched the swing era, his band soon became regarded as the definitive swing orchestra, and Basie himself became regarded as the definitive big band pianist. On this exciting anthology, hear the legendary early cuts from Basie and his great tenors, Lester Young and Herschel Evans, as they exploded into fame out of the booming Kansas City jazz scene, brought together on a single CD for the very first time, with remastered sound, detailed notes by Scott Yanow and rare historic photos.

1. Somebody Stole My Gal	Oct. 31, 1930	3:06
2. Moten Swing	Dec. 13, 1932	3:21
3. Boogie Woogie	Oct. 9, 1936	3:17
4. Roseland Shuffle	Jan. 21, 1937	2:34
5. One O'Clock Jump	July 7, 1937	3:03
6. John's Idea	July 7, 1937	2:56
7. Good Morning Blues	Aug. 9, 1937	3:14
8. Topsy	Aug. 9, 1937	3:07
9. Out The Window	Oct. 13, 1937	2:47
10. Every Tub	Feb. 16, 1938	3:17
11. Swinging The Blues	Feb. 16, 1938	2:44
12. Blue And Sentimental	June 6, 1938	3:11
13. Doggin' Around	June 6, 1938	3:00
14. Texas Shuffle	Aug. 22, 1938	3:04
15. Jumpin' At The Woodside	Aug. 22, 1938	3:05
16. How Long Blues	Nov. 9, 1938	2:57
17. Red Wagon	Jan. 26, 1939	2:46
18. Jive At Five	Feb. 4, 1939	2:46
19. Rock-A-Bye Basie	Mar. 19, 1939	3:02
20. Don't Worry 'Bout Me	Mar. 20, 1939	2:48
21. Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie	Aug. 4, 1939	2:28

total time: 62:43

JAZ 1016




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One O'Clock Jump

JAZZ legends

A high-angle, sepia-toned photograph capturing a large, dense crowd of people, likely at a jazz event. The individuals are dressed in formal attire of the late 1930s, including suits, ties, and hats. The crowd is packed closely together, with many people looking towards the camera or slightly away. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of a lively, crowded atmosphere. The overall tone is historical and nostalgic.

Count Basie Orchestra  
at the Savoy Ballroom, 1939

## Count Basie - *Swinging The Blues*: 1930-1939

In a word association game, the name Count Basie would immediately elicit "swing" as the response, and vice versa. Although Basie did not arrive on the major league jazz scene until more than a year after Benny Goodman had launched the swing era, his big band came to be regarded as the definitive swing orchestra, and Basie as the perfect band pianist.

Bill Basie was born August 21, 1904 in Red Bank, New Jersey. His first musical experience was playing drums in a kids' band but he soon switched to piano. His main inspiration was Fats Waller, particularly after Waller encouraged him in the early 1920s. Basie gigged in New Jersey and New York for a time, including work with the bands of June Clark and Elmer Snowden, and spent several years touring with revues.

After spending two years with *The Gonzelle White Show*, the revue folded while in Kansas City in 1927, leaving Basie stranded. He found a job accompanying silent pictures and decided to stay in Kansas City, enjoying the nightly after-hours jam sessions and the very fertile music scene. In 1928 Basie joined Walter Page's Blue Devils and the following year became a member of Bennie Moten's Orchestra, the top territory big band of the Midwest. It was an unusual situation since Moten was a pianist himself, but he was so impressed with Basie's playing that except for a few numbers a night he had the young pianist take his spot not only during live performances but on the band's recordings. "Somebody Stole My Gal," from 1930, is particularly unique, because in addition to fine solos from Basie, trumpeter Hot Lips Page, baritonist Jack Washington, and Woody Walder on tenor, it has Basie featured on a scat vocal, the only one he ever took.

With the deepening of the Depression, work became scarce for the Moten band. On December 13, 1932 it had its final record date, an intriguing session in which the ensemble sounds surprisingly close to how Basie's band would sound in a few years; four of the musicians (plus the pianist) would be in Basie's orchestra in 1937. "Moten Swing" has spots for Basie, Eddie Durham on guitar, altoist Eddie Barefield, Hot Lips Page and future tenor great Ben Webster.

It would be nearly four years before Basie recorded again and much happened in the interim. In early 1934 he broke away to form his own group, but after a few months he rejoined Moten. On April 2, 1935 Bennie Moten died from the results of a botched tonsillectomy. His brother, accordionist Buster Moten, took over the band and Basie went out on his own again. At first he led a trio and then was co-leader of the Barons of Rhythm with altoist Buster Smith before becoming its sole leader. He was dubbed "Count" by a radio announcer who figured that there was already a Duke Ellington, Earl Hines and King Oliver.

The Basie band differed from its contemporaries in its light rhythm section, distinctive soloists, and ability to create riff-filled "head" arrangements on the spot. Basie greatly lightened his touch on the piano, and instead of "striding" back and forth to keep the rhythm with his left hand (as was the custom of most pianists of the era), he became a master at utilizing space and making every note count. The timekeeping role was given to bassist Walter Page, while drummer Jo Jones put much more of an emphasis on cymbals rather than emphasizing the bass drum. The result was that the rhythm section floated while swinging hard. During this period, Basie began featuring two very different tenor players. While Herschel Evans had a hard sound and a style influenced by Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young's lighter-than-air tone and relaxed approach were unprecedented, sometimes almost sounding like an alto. Hot Lips Page was originally the band's trumpet soloist, but when he was lured to New York, Buck Clayton proved to be his perfect replacement. And with Jimmy Rushing contributing blues and swing vocals, the Basie band was the talk of Kansas City.

One fateful night Basie's group was heard on the radio by producer John Hammond in Chicago and soon Hammond had arranged for the musicians to travel east. Since the Basie band was only nine pieces, it took a little time for the orchestra to be expanded and for arrangements to be written. On October 9, 1936, a record date featured a contingent from the orchestra. "Boogie Woogie" is notable for the riffing of the two horns, some fine Lester Young tenor, and a swinging vocal from Jimmy Rushing.

After a bit of struggle and some turnover, the Basie band caught on in 1937. "Roseland Shuffle" is from the orchestra's initial record date, introducing the Basie rhythm section and featuring a fine Lester Young solo. The original version of Basie's permanent theme song "One O'Clock Jump" is a classic. The solos of Evans, Clayton and Young each became quite famous. By then Freddie Green was the band's rhythm guitarist (his four-to-the-bar chordal playing solidified the rhythm section) and Earl Warren led the saxes on alto. From the same date, "John's Idea" (named after John Hammond) has an excellent spot from Evans, with Young featured at the tune's conclusion.

While most male singers featured with big bands during the swing era generally stuck to pop ballads, Jimmy Rushing was a major exception. His phrasing, blues feeling and sense of swing made him a huge asset, a singer whose vocals were really an extension of the Basie sound as can be heard on "Good Morning Blues." "Topsy" has Clayton utilizing a cup mute in his trumpet (which became his signature sound) and has spots for Washington (the top baritonist of the swing era next to Duke Ellington's Harry Carney) and Evans. "Out The Window," "Every Tub" and the perfectly-titled "Swinging The Blues" are three of the many classic early charts written for the band by the versatile Eddie Durham. "Out The Window" has Basie recalling Fats Waller in his piano solo and features strong spots by trombonist Benny Morton, Lester Young and (in his greatest recorded solo) trumpeter Bobby Moore. By the time the band



Count Basie Orchestra with Lester Young (far right)

recorded “Every Tub” on February 16, 1938, Harry “Sweets” Edison (who would stay with Basie for over a decade) was in Moore’s place. Young, Basie, Edison and Evans are the soloists on this memorable romp while the basic but effective “Swinging The Blues” features Morton, Young, Clayton, Evans and Edison.

Most of the more famous Basie recordings of this period were either stomps or blues. “Blue And Sentimental” was a rarity for this ballad showcases Herschel Evans at his most expressive. “Doggin’ Around” from the same date also has solid contributions from Evans (who closes the tune on clarinet), with Clayton, Washington and Young. Conversely “Texas Shuffle,” in addition to Edison, Wells and both

tenors, closes with Young on clarinet. Next to “One O’Clock Jump,” the most popular Basie recording of the late 1930s was “Jumpin’ At The Woodside,” a tune that would always be a showcase for Basie’s tenor-saxophonists, although on this version (after spots for Warren, Clayton and Young) Evans is once again on clarinet.

Count Basie, who was always modest about his own piano playing, was persuaded on a few occasions to record with just his rhythm section. “How Long Blues” and “Red Wagon” shows how fine a blues pianist he could be, never wasting a note.

A long stint at the Famous Door (from July 1938 to January 1939) solidified the Basie band, as did a six-month stay in Chicago, and as 1939 started it was considered the top swing band among musicians. The death of Herschel Evans due to a weak heart in February 1939 was a major loss, but his place was soon taken by Buddy Tate (who had a similar style) and the band’s momentum continued. “Jive At Five” became a Basie standard and “Rock-A-Bye Basie” helped to introduce Tate to Basie fans. Billie Holiday had been the band’s regular vocalist during part of 1937 but unfortunately, due to being signed to a different label than Basie, she was not able to make commercial recordings with the orchestra. Her successor Helen Humes was one of the best singers around, although underutilized with Basie since Jimmy Rushing was given most of the best blues and standards to sing. An exception was her version of “Don’t Worry ‘Bout Me,” her top recording with Basie. “Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie” (highlighted by a classic Young solo) brings this look at the best of early Basie to a rousing conclusion.

Although the Count Basie band had already recorded more than its share of gems, it was just getting going. Basie kept the orchestra together for another decade of swinging and then, after two reluctant years off when he led a septet, in 1952 he re-emerged with a new orchestra that was so mighty that it survived his death in 1984 and is still traveling the globe. *Swinging The Blues* shows how the Count Basie Orchestra sounded at its beginning.

**Scott Yanow,**

Author of *Swing, Bebop, Afro-Cuban Jazz,*  
*Classic Jazz* and *Trumpet Kings*

**Count Basie - Swinging The Blues: 1930-1939**

**1. Somebody Stole My Gal - Oct. 31, 1930**

Bennie Moten's Kansas City Orchestra – Count Basie - piano, vocal; Ed Lewis, Booker Washington - cornet; Hot Lips Page - trumpet; Thamon Hayes - trombone; Eddie Durham - trombone, guitar; Harlan Leonard - clarinet, soprano, alto; Jack Washington - baritone, clarinet, alto; Woody Walder - clarinet, tenor; Buster Moten - accordion; Leroy Berry - banjo; Vernon Page - tuba; Willie McWashington - drums

**2. Moten Swing - Dec. 13, 1932**

Bennie Moten's Kansas City Orchestra – Count Basie - piano; Hot Lips Page, Joe Keyes, Dee Stewart - trumpet; Dan Minor - trombone; Eddie Durham - trombone, guitar; Eddie Barefield - clarinet, alto; Ben Webster - tenor; Jack Washington - baritone, alto; Leroy Berry - guitar; Walter Page - bass; Willie McWashington - drums

**3. Boogie Woogie - Oct. 9, 1936**

Jones-Smith Inc. – Count Basie - piano; Carl "Tatti" Smith - trumpet; Lester Young - tenor; Walter Page - bass; Jo Jones - drums; Jimmy Rushing - vocals

**4. Roseland Shuffle - Jan. 21, 1937**

Count Basie Orchestra – Count Basie - piano; Buck Clayton, Joe Keyes, Carl "Tatti" Smith - trumpet; George Hunt, Dan Minor - trombone; Caughey Roberts - alto; Lester Young, Herschel Evans - tenor; Jack Washington - baritone, alto; Claude Williams - guitar; Walter Page - bass; Jo Jones - drums

**5. One O'Clock Jump - July 7, 1937**

**6. John's Idea - July 7, 1937**

Count Basie - piano; Buck Clayton, Ed Lewis, Bobby Moore - trumpet; George Hunt, Dan Minor - trombone; Earl Warren - alto; Lester Young, Herschel Evans - tenor; Jack Washington - baritone, alto; Freddie Green - guitar; Walter Page - bass; Jo Jones - drums

**7. Good Morning Blues - Aug. 9, 1937**

**8. Topsy - Aug. 9, 1937**

**9. Out The Window - Oct. 13, 1937**

Count Basie - piano; Buck Clayton, Ed Lewis, Bobby Moore - trumpet; Benny Morton, Dan Minor - trombone; Eddie Durham - trombone, guitar; Earl Warren - alto; Lester Young, Herschel Evans - tenor; Jack Washington - baritone, alto; Freddie Green - guitar; Walter Page - bass; Jo Jones - drums; Jimmy Rushing (tr. 7) - vocals

**10. Every Tub - Feb. 16, 1938**

**11. Swinging The Blues - Feb. 16, 1938**

**12. Blue And Sentimental - June 6, 1938**

**13. Doggin' Around - June 6, 1938**

Count Basie - piano; Buck Clayton, Ed Lewis, Harry "Sweets" Edison - trumpet; Benny Morton, Dan Minor - trombone; Eddie Durham - trombone, guitar; Earl Warren - alto; Lester Young, Herschel Evans - tenor; Jack Washington - baritone, alto; Freddie Green - guitar; Walter Page - bass; Jo Jones - drums

**14. Texas Shuffle - Aug. 22, 1938**

**15. Jumpin' At The Woodside - Aug. 22, 1938**

Count Basie - piano; Buck Clayton, Ed Lewis, Harry "Sweets" Edison - trumpet; Benny Morton, Dan Minor, Dickie Wells - trombone; Earl Warren - alto; Lester Young, Herschel Evans - tenor; Jack Washington - baritone, alto; Freddie Green - guitar; Walter Page - bass; Jo Jones - drums

**16. How Long Blues - Nov. 9, 1938**

**17. Red Wagon - Jan. 26, 1939**

Count Basie - piano; Freddie Green - guitar; Walter Page - bass; Jo Jones - drums

**18. Jive At Five - Feb. 4, 1939**

**19. Rock-A-Bye Basie - Mar. 19, 1939**

**20. Don't Worry 'Bout Me - Mar. 20, 1939**

**21. Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie - Aug. 4, 1939**

Count Basie - piano; Buck Clayton, Ed Lewis, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Shad Collins - trumpet; Dickie Wells, Benny Morton, Dan Minor - trombone; Earl Warren - alto; Lester Young, Chu Berry (tr. 18), Buddy Tate (tr. 19-21) - tenor; Jack Washington - baritone, alto; Freddie Green - guitar; Walter Page - bass; Jo Jones - drums; Helen Humes (tr. 20 & 21) - vocals

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