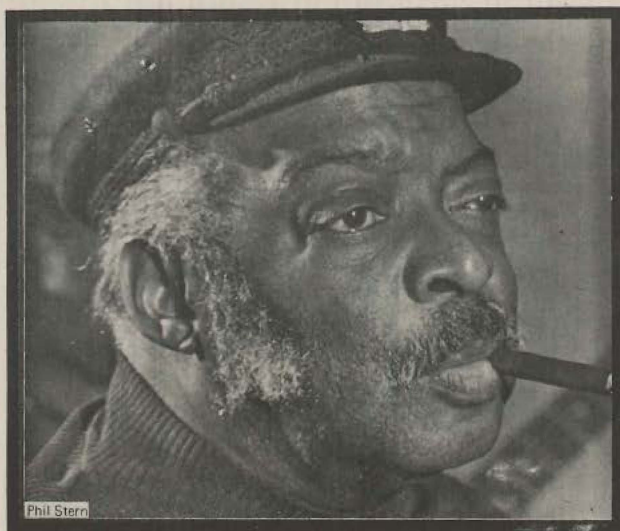


NEW YORK JAZZ MUSEUM

COUNT BASIE
and
HIS BANDS



Phil Stern

COUNT BASIE and HIS BANDS

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WILLIAM "COUNT" BASIE
A PROFILE OF
HIS LIFE & MUSIC

- 1904 Born, August 21, at Red Bank, N.J.
- 1917 Starts as a drummer, switches to piano.
- 1919-20 Plays in local bands and stage shows in N.Y. and N.J. Takes lessons from Fats Waller.
- 1925-27 Tours theaters accompanying variety acts: Kate Crippen and Her Kids, Sonny Thompson Band, Gonzelle White Vaudevillians; first hears Kansas City style music in Tulsa, Walter Page Blue Devils; Gonzelle White Show folds in Kansas City; Accompanies Whitman Sisters in Kansas City.
- 1928 Joins Blue Devils in Dallas, Texas in July.
- 1929 Plays briefly with Elmer Payne and his Ten Royal Americans (summer).
- 1930 Basie and members of the Blue Devils join Benny Moten's band.
- 1934 Leaves Moten early in year to lead own band (under Moten's auspices) in Little Rock, Arkansas, then rejoins Moten.
- 1935 Death of Moten breaks up the famous Kansas City unit, after working a short time under Moten's brother Buster's leadership; returning to Kansas City, works as a single, then with own trio before jointly leading "Barons of Rhythm" with altoist, Buster Smith.
- 1936 Broadcasts over Station WIXBY and is heard by John Hammond, famed jazz buff and sponsor, who initiates the band's first national tour; plays at Grand Terrace in Chicago — not a rousing success — then the Vendome Hotel in Buffalo, N.Y.; (Oct. 9) first records for Columbia, with small group featuring Lester Young; (December) opens at Roseland Ballroom in N.Y. opposite Woody Herman's band.

- 1937 (January 22) First full band recording date for Decca Records; band reshuffled and tours for most of year.
- 1938 (January) Successful stay at Savoy Ballroom. (July) Band makes a hit at New York's Famous Door — held over until January, 1939.
- 1939-40 First cross-country trip, including six months in Chicago; records with Benny Goodman Sextet.
- 1941 Records with Metronome All Star Band for Victor.
- 1942 The Count takes a wife, the former Catherine Morgan, who, incidentally, once sang with Jimmie Lunceford's band. (The Basies have one daughter, Diane.)
- 1945 Wins Esquire Magazine's Silver Award.
- 1950 (January) Basie disbands; (April) forms a septet.
- 1952 Basie asks Marshall Royal to help him reform big band.
- 1954 First of many tours overseas (Sweden).
- 1956 Starts to win Downbeat and Metronome Readers Polls and Critics Awards; tours European continent.
- 1957 Plays Waldorf-Astoria (first black jazz artists to do so) — held over for 13 weeks; tours Great Britain twice (April and December) — first American band to play a Royal Command Performance for the Queen.
- 1958 Named to Downbeat's Jazz Hall of Fame.
- 1963 Tours Japan.
- 1964-74 Tours and records with following vocalists: Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Sammy Davis, Jr., the Mills Brothers, Bing Crosby, Kay Starr, Teresa Brewer, Lena Horne; numerous films and T.V. appearances; (1974) Negro College Fund pays tribute to Count Basie's 70th birthday with \$100 a plate dinner at Grand Ballroom of Waldorf-Astoria.

THE MUSICAL LIFE OF COUNT BASIE

Childhood Years

Born William Basie August 21, 1904 in Red Bank, New Jersey. Studied with his mother, a pianist and teacher. First played drums, but moved to piano after hearing a neighbor, Sonny Greer. Also studied regularly with a local teacher, Mrs. Holloway, "a grand lady."

Musical Adolescence

Trips to New York's Harlem blended in with work in New Jersey and New York City as combo pianist, accompanist, and the man at the keyboard for silent movies. In Harlem, met James P. Johnson and Fats Waller and got some Waller pointers on organ. Replaced Fats as accompanist for Kate Krippin and Her Kids, top-rated variety act, and also toured with the "Hippity Hop" Show and with the Sonny Thompson band on the Keith Orpheum Circuit. Worked summers at Asbury Park; also played at Le Roy's in New York City, and briefly with Elmer Snowden and June Clark.

Basie Goes West

After two years with the Gonzelle White Vaudeville Show, Basie left it in Kansas City in 1927 and joined Walter Page's Blue Devils after time off for a serious illness and work in a silent movie house and as accompanist to the Whitman Sisters.

Basie stayed with Walter Page until 1929, worked briefly with Elmer Payne and the Ten Royal Americans, then joined the famous Kansas City band of Bennie Moten, which included many graduates of the Walter Page band, such as Page himself, singer Jimmy Rushing, and by 1932, Ben Webster and Hot Lips Page.

Basie's First Band

After the death of Bennie Moten in 1935 Basie is asked by the Reno Club to bring in a band. His nine-piece unit included Buster Smith and Slim Freeman, saxes; Dee Steward, Joe Keyes and Carl (Tatti) Smith, trumpets; Walter Page, bass and Willie (Mac) Washington, Drums. Salary? \$21 for Basie and co-leader Buster Smith, \$18 for the sidemen, equal share of tips. Hours? From dusk to dawn.

Enter John Hammond

While driving through the midwest, jazz enthusiast John Hammond has his car radio tuned to experimental station W9XBY, a shortwave transmitter. Basie's Reno Club band—by now with Lester Young on tenor, Jo Jones on drums, and Hot Lips Page on trumpet and as front man—is on the air, and Hammond is deeply impressed. He rushes to Kansas City and begins to help the band. He arranges a tour; first stop is Chicago's Grand Terrace, where Basie is not successful. Then, Hammond gets Basie a date at New York's Roseland Ballroom in December 1936, after a stopover in Buffalo. (At Roseland, the band appears opposite another new unit, Woody Herman's first band.) Herschel Evans has joined on tenor sax, Buck Clayton on trumpet, Jimmy Rushing is the vocalist, and the band makes its first full record date. (Basie had recorded with a Quintet including Lester Young on Oct. 9, 1936 in Chicago as "Smith-Jones, Inc.") The band gains steadily in stature and scope, and soon takes its place among the leading bands of the Swing Era.

A Short Detour

The 1940's opened with big bands flourishing and closed with big bands folding. Basie, retaining many of his key men, but also enlarging the band and spotting such new talent as Don Byas, Illinois Jacquet, J.J. Johnson and Joe Newman, stayed in the game until economics forced him to break up in January, 1950. In April of that year, he formed a Septet featuring Clark Terry, Buddy De Franco and Wardell Gray, but asks Reedman Marshall Royal who has replaced De Franco, to help him re-form a big band. The men are brought to New York, where the new band debuts in early 1952.

Basie Rides Again

With established veterans and zestful newcomers on board, Basie's band of the 1950's gains worldwide fame. Arrangements by Ernie Wilkins, Neal Hefti, Frank Foster, Frank Wess, Thad Jones, Quincy Jones and Benny Carter, among others, stamp the band as "The Big Swing Machine," a flawless, rocking, swinging organization. Today, forty years after the Reno club, Basie continues to set the pace for swinging big band jazz.

Honors, Homages and Such

It is impossible to list all the tributes paid Basie. He is in *Down Beat's* Hall of Fame, won *Esquire's* Silver Award in 1945, and as both individual musician and band leader has won a host of awards from the world's leading music magazines (*Down Beat*, *Metronome*, *Melody Maker*) and the music polls of *Playboy* and *Esquire*. In 1957, Basie's became the first American band to play a command performance for the Queen of England. In the same year, as the first black band to play the Waldorf-Astoria, Basie set a record by being held over for 13 weeks. He has toured and recorded with many show business stars, notably Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis, Jr., and tours widely here and abroad. Other big bands have come and gone, but Basie rolls on.

Basie at Home

Basie was married in 1942 to the former Catherine Morgan, who incidentally once sang with Jimmie Lunceford. The Basies have a daughter, Diane, and now live in Freeport, B.W.I., after having made their home in St. Albans, N.Y. for many years. When he isn't at the piano or on the road, Basie enjoys a ballgame or a visit to the track.

BASIE SPEAKING.

* "My biggest thrill as a listener," Basie said, "came one night back in, I think it was, 1951.

"The so-called progressive jazz was going big then, and here comes *Duke Ellington* on opening night at Birdland. He had just revamped his band, and no one knew just what he'd have. We all dropped in to catch him — and what we heard! What a thrill that was!

"THE *DUKE* WAS swinging. All this 'progressive' talk, and the *Duke* played the old swing. He scared a lot of people that night. It was just wonderful. Of course, the *Duke* has always had the greatest band at all times. There's never been any other band for me, year in and year out. . .

"I mean that *Duke Ellington* is the greatest of them all."

* * *

* "I'll tell you another listening thrill. Back in the '30s, no matter where we were every Saturday night, we'd have to hear *Benny Goodman's* band on the old *Camel Caravan*. That was a wonderful band."

* * *

* "Anything that the 'Boss' — that's *Art Tatum* — would play anytime or anywhere was a thrill for me."

* * *

* "And *Pops*, too — I can listen to *Louis* play or sing or talk or anything. . ."

* * *

* "And another is *Tommy Dorsey's* band. If I'm in town — and the *Dorseys* are there — I won't miss 'em because they got a fine, swinging band, too. *Tommy* is a remarkable musician — remarkable."

* * *

"I think all the guys like *Bird* and *Dizzy* contributed so much to making the steps of progress of modern music. It was the finest thing in the world that could happen because everything has to change. Those guys have wonderful minds. It must have been wonderful to be pioneers like they are, and that's exactly what they are. And the funny thing is that it used to be that fifteen out of twenty people couldn't understand their music and didn't like it. Now, if people don't hear it, they wonder what's wrong."

* * *

"My piano? Well, I don't want to 'run it in the ground,' as they say. I love to play, but this idea of one man taking one chorus after another is not wise, in my opinion. Therefore, I fed dancers my own piano in short doses, and when I came in for a solo, I did it unexpectedly, using a strong rhythm background behind me. That way, we figured, the Count's piano wasn't going to become monotonous."

* * *

Basie: As far as I'm concerned, I only have one book of things to play. I don't have anything arranged for concerts. I play the same type things for dances as I do for concerts . . . Now *Ellington* and these guys have really got concert bands. They play wonderfully for dancing too. But we — the guys will say, "Well, look, Basie, what are you gonna play?" and I say, "The same old beef stew."

* * *

"I am sure that the rhythm section was right. It's the one section that gave us no trouble at any time.

* * *

"I wanted my fifteen-piece band to work together just like those nine pieces did. I wanted fifteen men to think and play the same way. I wanted those four trumpets and three trombones to bite with real guts. BUT I wanted that bite to be just as tasty and subtle as if it were the three brass I used to use."

* * *

"I, of course, wanted to play real jazz. When we played pop tunes, and naturally we had to, I wanted those pops to kick! Not loud and fast, understand, but smoothly and with a definite punch.

"As for vocals, *Jimmy Rushing* and *Helen Humes* were handling them the way we felt they could best be handled."

* * *

"Jazz is an art of the young, and it is a young art in itself. The progressive force of change will always fall chiefly into the hands of the young in mind and body. But as long as a true disciple of jazz remains young at heart, he will have a following and will, through his story and his art, carve his own initials onto the magic musical tree in the forest of life."

* * *

x "I'll never forget when I was about fourteen I was fascinated by the organ playing of *Fats Waller*, and watched him intently until one day *Waller* turned to me and asked if I'd like to learn the instrument. 'I'd give my right arm!' I sat on the floor watching his feet work the pedals, later working them with my hands while *Waller* played. Before my interest waned I had learned the keyboard and was accompanying films in a Harlem movie house! I've used the organ occasionally on records since 1939, mostly for slow blues and moody effects. Yes, man, we all help each other."

* * *

+ "I've always always built my band from the rhythm section to the tenors, then on to the rest, for the living pulse of a band is naturally the rhythm section. The piano can create a mood, but it can also join forces with the guitar, bass and drums to become a power unit that drives and motivates the entire outfit. The result should be "solid" but also flexible; there must be control that is not confined."

* * *

+ "Will the jazz of today show greater durability and be just as enjoyable to the next generation? I think so! And, if Cinderella's good Fairy Godmother will grant me just one more wish, I will be around to enjoy it, too!"

* * *

Sidemen

Buck Clayton: (b. 1912). Started on piano at 6, to trumpet in early teens, taking lessons from his father. Moved from Kansas to California and worked with many bands in Los Angeles before taking leadership of Earl Dancer's band in '34; spent two years in Shanghai with this and a smaller band. Led own "The 14 Gentlemen from Harlem" in L.A. in '36; in fall of that year, while en route to New York to join Willie Bryant, stopped in Kansas City and was persuaded by Basie to take Hot Lips Page's vacated chair in band. With Basie until drafted in '43; played with all-star service bands. In '46, participated in first national Jazz at the Philharmonic tour. Has since mainly led own groups, but also gigged with Benny Goodman, Jimmy Rushing, Joe Bushkin, Mezz Mezzrow, Sidney Bechet and Eddie Condon. Toured widely in Europe, Australia, Far East. Has been inactive as a player since 1970, but continues to arrange and compose. Contributed many arrangements to Basie book 1936-49; also wrote for Goodman, Harry James, Duke Ellington, Hot Lips Page, and for the famous Buck Clayton *Jam Sessions* recorded by Columbia.

Henry Coker: (b. 1919) After working with the bands of Nat Towles, Benny Carter, Illinois Jacquet and Eddie Heywood, he joined Basie in 1952, staying through 1963. Was showcased on "Yesterdays." Later worked with Ray Charles' big bands and freelanced in New York.

Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis: (b. 1921). Native New Yorker; early experience with Cootie Williams, Lucky Millinder, Andy Kirk, Louis Armstrong. Had house band at Minton's in late '40s and early '50s; joined Basie 1952-53, then led own group; back with Basie '57 and on and off (mostly on) since then, with time out for own groups (very successful trio with Shirley Scott in late '50s; co-led quintet with Johnny Griffin early '60s) and also for stint as booking agent. When with band, after Marshall Royal's departure, acts as straw boss/road manager.

Harry "Sweets" Edison: (b. 1915). Trumpet at 12, first big job with Alphonse Trent, joined Jeter-Pillars' band in St. Louis 1933 for 3 years. To New York with Lucky Millinder in early '37; joined Basie in June '38 and stayed until 1950. Toured with Jimmy Rushing, Jazz at the Philharmonic and Buddy Rich (1951-53), then settled on West Coast for studio work; was on many Frank Sinatra recordings. To New York '58; formed own group and con-

tinued freelancing. Returned to California, doing studio work, leading own group regularly at Memory Lane and often gigging with Louis Bellson. Has participated in many reunions with Basie, also playing regularly in the band for brief spells (European tour '70).

Herschel Evans: (1909-39). Texas-born, did early work with Alphonse Trent's No. 2 Band, then with Edgar Battle, Terrence Holder, and for two years with Troy Floyd (1929-'31). With Bennie Moten and Hot Lips Page in Kansas City until '35; in Chicago with Dave Peyton, then settled in Los Angeles, working with Lionel Hampton and Buck Clayton. Joined Basie fall '36, remaining until fatal heart condition felled him. Most famous solo with Basie: *Blue and Sentimental*. Arrangements for band include *Texas Shuffle* and *Doggin' Around*. Plays clarinet on *Jumpin' at the Woodside*.

Frank Foster: (b. 1928) Early experience in Detroit. Joined Basie in 1953 and remained eleven years as featured tenor saxophonist and arranger. His many charts include "Blues Backstage", "The Comeback", "Lady in Lace", and "Shiny Stockings", the latter one of Basie's biggest hits. Has led own bands and combos since. Also prominent on soprano sax. Active as teacher (Jazz Interaction Workshop Orchestra).

Charley Fowlkes: (b. 1916) With Tiny Bradshaw, Lionel Hampton and Arnett Cobb before joining Basie in 1953, anchoring the reed section with his big baritone sound until 1970. Rarely solos, but was featured on Night Time and Misty. Now free-lancing in New York.

Freddie Green: (b. 1911). Guitar from age 12; moved to New York from native Charleston, S.C. to finish schooling. Heard playing at Black Cat Cafe by John Hammond, who recommended him to Basie; he joined the band in March '37 and has been with Basie ever since. Aside from his inimitable work with the band, he has participated in hundreds of recording sessions by other artists. Though he hardly ever solos, he can be heard in a half-chorus on *Who* by Glenn Hardman's Organ Five (on the Basie collation *Super Chief*).

Al Grey: (b. 1925) "The last of the big plungers" as Thad Jones dubbed him, joined Basie in 1957, leaving in 1961 to co-lead a group with Billy Mitchell. He has frequently made return engagements with the band since then, some of them extensive, notably during 1964-66. Also featured with Sammy Davis, Jr. Prior to joining Basie he worked with Benny Carter, Lionel Hampton, Jimmie Lunceford, Lucky Millinder and Dizzy Gillespie. As his nickname implies, he is a master of the plunger-mute tradition, but also solos well on open horn.

Neal Hefti: (b. 1922) Started as a trumpet player; soon added arranging (for Nat Towles, Charlie Barnet, Earl Hines) and especially Woody Herman. Wrote for Basie before the famous "ATOMIC MR. BASIE" album established him as one of the band's leading arrangers. The hits that followed included "Li'l Darlin'", "Basie Plays Hefti" and "Cute". Much work for television and film ("Batman"; "Sex and the Single Girl" — in which the Basie band appeared).

Helen Humes: (b. 1913) Made recording debut in Louisville 1927. Joined Basie in 1938 and was the band's most popular female vocalist, staying until 1941. Worked as a single mainly on the West Coast; had hit recording in 1946 of "Million Dollar Secret." Toured with Red Norvo in the late 50's. Visited Europe in 1959 and again in 1973; Appeared at NEWport-New York '73 and '74.

Jo Jones: (b. 1911) Played trumpet, piano and sax from age 10. Left home to work in traveling shows, sometimes as dancer and singer. With many mid-western bands from late '20s on, including Grant Moore, Jap Allen, Bennie Moten, Lloyd Hunter's Serenaders (with whom he made recording debut '33), Tommy Douglas; briefly with Basie '34, then to Minneapolis, back with Basie in Topeka, to St. Louis with Jeter-Pillar's and finally to Basie for good in autumn of '36. Remained until drafted Oct. '44; back in band April '46 - Feb. '48. Toured with Jazz at the Philharmonic, then with Illinois Jacquet, own trio, Lester Young, JATP, and for two years with Joey Bushkin. Freelance work in N.Y. throughout '50s and '60s, and tours with JATP, Teddy Wilson and regularly in Europe with Milt Buckner and Illinois Jacquet, as well as many festival appearances here and abroad.

Quincy Jones: (b. 1933) Started on trumpet, playing with Lionel Hampton before turning to full-time composing, arranging, band-leading and producing. His many works for Basie include "For Lena and Lennie", "Rat Race", "Quince", "Jessica's Day", "The Midnight Sun Never Sets" and the outstanding L.P. "Li'l Ole Groovemaker". Also wrote the "This Time By Basie" series on Reprise and conducted and arranged for the second Sinatra/Basie collaboration which eventually led to a nationwide tour and a best-selling album. Moved to Hollywood in the mid-sixties, doing film and T.V. work with great success. Recovered from brain surgery in 1974.

Thad Jones: (b. 1923) Brother of pianist Hank and drummer Elvin. His reputation was established with Basie from 1954 to '63. In 1965, he and drummer Mel Lewis formed the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, which became the leading big jazz band of the past decade. One of the most original and gifted arranger-composers for big bands, he also contributed to the libraries of Basie and Harry James. Has played and recorded with Charles Mingus, George Russell, Thelonius Monk and many others.

Dan Miner: (b. 1909) Lead trombonist with Basie from 1936 to '41, he also had worked with Count in Little Rock ('34) and Kansas City. Worked with Walter Page's Blue Devils, Alphonse Trent and Bennie Moten before his Basie stint, and with Buddy Johnson, Cab Calloway and Mercer Ellington (among others) after. Solos on *Gone With What Wind*.

Billy Mitchell (b. 1926) Replaced Lockjaw Davis in the solo tenor chair with Basie in 1957, right after a stint with Dizzy Gillespie's big band. Earlier had worked with Milt Jackson and Thad Jones in his native Detroit, also touring with the bands of Nat Towles, Lionel Hampton, Gil Fuller, Woody Herman and Milt Buckner. Left Basie in 1961 to co-lead group with Al Grey; subsequently free-lanced in New York.

Joe Newman: (b. 1922) Born in New Orleans, he first attracted attention with Lionel Hampton's big band in 1941. He joined Basie in '43 and was with the band off and on until '46. Worked with J.J. Johnson; rejoined Basie in '52 and stayed for nine years. Since then, he's been leading his own group and free-lancing successfully in New York, also appearing at many jazz festivals. Is founder and president of Jazz Interactions.

Jimmy Nottingham: (b. 1925) "Sir James" gigged in his native Brooklyn with Cecil Payne and Max Roach before going on tour with Willie Smith (1944), Lionel Hampton, Charlie Barnett, Lucky Millinder, and finally Count Basie from 1948 to '50. Specialized in high note and lead work and has been a prolific studio musician for the past 25 years, also working short stints with the bands of Stan Kenton, Dizzy Gillespie and Thad Jones/Mel Lewis. Owns "Sir James'" Pub on Long Island.

Walter Page: (1900-57). Tuba and bass drum were first instruments; taught string bass in high school. Began professional career in music while studying education at Kansas Univ., working with Bennie Moten in early '20s. Joined Billy King's road show '23; when show broke up, took nucleus of band and formed his Blue Devils in '25, leading band until '31, when he turned it over to trumpeter James Simpson and went to work for Bennie Moten, remaining until '34 and then working in Basie's first band. With Jeter-Pillar's in St. Louis, then rejoined Basie in early '36, remaining until Sept. '42. Toured with Nat Towles and Jesse Price, returning to Basie from summer '46 to spring '49. After stints with Hot Lips Page (no relation) and Jimmy Rushing, began freelancing in New York, often playing at Eddie Condon's club. Last job was rehearsal for CBS' famous "The Sound of Jazz" TV show. Freddie Green, Jo Jones, Basie and Page formed the famous ALL AMERICAN RHYTHM SECTION, still the epitome of swing. Was one of first bassists to play in even 4/4 time.

Sonny Payne: (b. 1926) Son of drummer Chris Columbus, student of Vic Berton. With "Hot Lips" Page, the Bascomb Brothers, Earl Bostic, Tiny Grimes and Erskine Hawkins prior to joining Basie in 1955. His showmanship was a big asset to the band. He left in 1965, and has since worked mainly with Harry James.

Benny Powell: (b. 1930). Native of New Orleans; started on drums, to trombone at 12. Turned pro in middle teens, touring with King Kolax '46 and Ernie Fields '47; with Lionel Hampton '48-'51, joined Basie in '51 and stayed 12 years. Since then, led own group in New York, then moved to West Coast for studio work; member of Merv Griffin Show band.

Paul Quinichette: (b. 1921). Started on clarinet and alto. With Nat Towles, Shorty Sherock; joined Jay McShann in summer '42, then with Johnny Otis, Louis Jordan, Lucky Millinder, Milt Buckner, J.C. Heard. Breakthrough with

Hot Lips Page '50; with Basie '51-53, then led own groups (also with Benny Goodman '55 and others). Returned to full-time music after long absence in '73, freelancing in New York. Dubbed "Vice Prez" but has unmistakably own style.

Marshall Royal: (b. 1912) Worked with many bands on the West Coast including Curtis Mosby, Les Hite, Lionel Hampton, Duke Ellington (subbed briefly for Otto Hardwicke), Jack McVea, Art Tatum and Eddie Heywood. Was member of Basie's septet in '51 and then helped Count reorganize the big band. He acted as lead alto saxophonist, musical director, straw boss, etc., and was occasionally featured in melodic solos ("The Midnight Sun Never Sets"). His sound gave the Basie reed section its character. Left in 1970 to do studio work in California.

Jimmy Rushing (1903-1972) The Oklahoma-born singer worked extensively in the Midwest before joining Walter Page's Blue Devils in 1928. He then worked with Bennie Moten before joining Basie in 1935. Stayed with the band for fifteen years, then briefly left to form his own group. Free-lanced extensively, also touring with Benny Goodman, Buck Clayton, Eddie Condon and others. Was featured in the 1969 film "The Learning Tree". Most famous for his inimitable blues style, he was also an accomplished all-around jazz singer and his recordings with Basie include many pop tunes and jazz standards.

Buddy Tate: (b. 1914). Early work with Gene Coy, Terrance Holder; with Andy Kirk 1934-35, then with Nat Towles. Joined Basie in spring '39, taking Herschel Evans' tenor chair and staying for 10 years. After work with Hot Lips Page, Jimmy Rushing and Lucky Millinder, formed own band in '53 which worked regularly at Celebrity Club in Harlem for nearly 20 years. Toured Europe with Buck Clayton All Stars 1959 and '61 and many times since with own groups, including Celebrity Club Band in '68; also featured in Basie reunions, Newport All Stars, and with The Saints and Sinners. Is accomplished clarinetist and flutist and plays all the saxophones. Favorite solo with Basie: *Super Chief*.

Jack Washington: (1912-1964) Kansas City-born, he did his first professional work with Bennie Moten right after leaving school, then worked with Paul Banks and Jesse Stone until rejoining Moten in 1927, staying aboard when Basie took over the band. With Basie until drafted in '43; back with band from

early '46 until it disbanded, then settled in Oklahoma City and left full-time music. Washington was one of the leading baritone sax stylists of the Swing Era (he also doubled alto with Basie). Solos include *Doggin' Around*, *Somebody Stole My Gal* and *The Jitters*.

Dickie Wells: (b. 1909). Raised in Louisville; to New York in 1926 with Lloyd Scott's band, remaining with it until '30 (it was taken over by Lloyd's brother Cecil), then with Elmer Snowden, Benny Carter, Charlie Johnson, Fletcher Henderson (1933), Chick Webb and Carter again. With Teddy Hill 1934-37, including European tour. Joined Basie July '38 at Famous Door on 52nd St., remaining until early '46. Rejoined next year, after gigs with Sy Oliver and others, and remained until '50, then with Jimmy Rushing, and in Europe with Bill Coleman. Back in U.S. '53; briefly with Earl Hines, since then freelance work, mainly in New York, but joined Ray Charles' big band for 18 months in Nov. '61. Regularly in Apollo Theater houseband until it was dissolved. Toured with Buck Clayton in Europe '59 and '61, with Buddy Tate '68. Published book "The Night People" (with Stanley Dance) '71. Is skilled arranger; wrote for Basie in '40s.

Frank Wess (b. 1922) Kansas City born, Wess grew up in Washington, D.C. and worked with Blanche Calloway before entering the army in 1942. After discharge, worked with Billy Eckstein, Eddie Heywood, Lucky Millinder, and Bull Moose Jackson before joining Basie in 1953. Was featured on tenor (often in battles with Frank Foster) and in particular on flute, which he made into an accepted jazz instrument. Also occasionally subbed as lead altoist, and wrote many excellent arrangements for the band ("Basie Goes West"; "Segue In 'C'"). Left Basie in '64 to free-lance in New York; with Billy Taylor's David Frost Show band.

Ernie Wilkins: (b. 1922) Worked in his native St. Louis with Clark Terry, then with Earl Hines. Joined Basie in 1951 as arranger and alto and tenor saxophonist, staying until 1955 but continuing to write for the band. Also arranged for Tommy Dorsey and Harry James. Was largely responsible for setting the ensemble style of the post-fifties Basie band. Frequently works with Clark Terry (big band and combo) on tenor; active as free-lance arranger and A&R man.

Joe Williams: (b. 1918) Basie's most popular singer since Jimmy Rushing, he made his debut in Chicago with Jimmie Noone in 1937. First worked with

Basie in the 1950 septet, joining the big band in 1954. He deserves much of the credit for the commercial success of the band in the 50's. His recording of "Every Day" was a big hit. It was due to Williams that the band appeared in the Alan Freed rock 'n roll shows. Other hits included "Alright, O.K., You Win", "Smack Dab In The Middle", and "The Comeback". Left the band in 1960 and has become a successful single with a repertoire of ballads as well as blues.

Lester Young: (1909-59). Family was musical; settled in New Orleans in Lester's infancy. Was taught trumpet, alto sax, violin and drums by father and began playing drums in family band in 1920; by then, home base was Minneapolis. Left at 17, began playing tenor and baritone with Art Bronson's Bostonians, staying for a year, then returning to family band but rejoining Bronson in '30. With various groups in Minneapolis, also doubling alto. Joined Original Blue Devils '32, touring extensively; left in late '33 to join Bennie Moten in Kansas City. Toured briefly with King Oliver and joined Count Basie's first band in '34 in Little Rock, leaving to take Coleman Hawkins' Chair in Fletcher Henderson's band, quitting after four months. With Andy Kirk and other Kansas City and Minneapolis groups until '36, when he joined Basie at Reno Club, staying until Dec. 1940. During this period also made many records with Billie Holiday, who dubbed him "Prez". Own band on 52nd St., then to California to co-lead combo with his brother, drummer Lee Young, which played Cafe Society in '42. With Al Sears' big band in N.Y. and later on experiences in Army included surgery and detention; discharged in late summer '45. Toured with Jazz at the Philharmonic through '40s and early '50s, also leading his own groups. Toured Europe with Birdland Show '56; reunion with Basie at Newport Festival '57. Often in poor health in later years, he died within 24 hours of his return from an engagement at the Blue Note in Paris. Was sometimes featured on clarinet with Basie. Compositions for Basie include *Tickle Toe, Jive at Five, Rockabye Basie*.

Snooky Young: (b. 1919) Established his reputation with the Jimmie Lunceford band in 1939. Subsequently worked with Lionel Hampton, Les Hite and Benny Carter before joining Basie in 1942. He was with the band on and off through 1947 and again from 1957 through 1962. One of jazz's top lead trumpeters and also an accomplished soloist, he has since worked with Benny Goodman, Charlie Mingus, Gerald Wilson, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis and others, and has long been on the staff of NBC's Tonight Show band.

SELECTED SONGS COMPOSED BY COUNT BASIE

Blue and Sentimental
Shout And Feel It
Way Black Blues
Jumping At The Woodside
The King
One O'Clock Jump
Back To The Apple
Panassie Stomp
Blues in The Dark
Roseland Shuffle
Don't You Miss Your Baby
Evil Blues
Bugle Blues
Rat Race
Lopin'

Basie's Basement
Backstage At Stuff's
St. Louis Boogie
Riff Interlude
Ham 'n Eggs
Hollywood Jump
Jump For Me
Swing At The Daisy Chain
Basie's Jingle Bells
Lonesome Miss Pretty
Volcano
San Jose
B Flat Blues
Cafe Society Blues
Way Back Blues

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Duke Ellington & Basie — First Time. Columbia C5 8515
Super Chief (2 records). Columbia G-31224
One O'Clock Jump. Columbia Special Products. JCC 997
Best (2 records). Decca DXS — 7170 E
Kansas City 7. Impulse S-15
The Bosses — Basie & Joe Turner — Pablo 2310 709
The Count Basie Trio — For the First Time. Pablo 2310 712
Jazz At The Santa Monica Civic — '72 (3 record box set). Pablo 2660-106
With Bennie Moten — In Kansas City. RCA LPV-514
The Best of Count Basie (2 records). Roulette RE 118
The Kid From Red Bank. Roulette SR 42015
Lester Young — Master's Touch. Savoy 12071
Spirituals To Swing — 1937/38 (2 records). Vanguard 4748
Basie. Verve 68783
April In Paris. Verve 8012
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Note: At the time of publication the above records were available

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Basie Basie. Hentoff. *HIFI Review*, December, 1959

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Rediscovering Basie. Leonard Feather. *Melody Maker*, September 14, 1968

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Negro Univ. Press (Reprint), Westport, Ct.

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1971

Basie talks to Merv Acheson (interview). *Music Maker*, March, 1971

1974

Simplicity. Balliett. *New Yorker*, March 25, 1974

COUNT BASIE and HIS BANDS

The exhibit, *Count Basie & His Bands*, was presented at the N.Y. Jazz Museum from November 12, 1974 to February 28, 1975. It featured photographs, artwork, posters, sheet music & memorabilia. Films of the Count & his great musicians were shown & an audio tape of his music played continuously over the Museum's sound system.

A Count Basie poster designed especially for the exhibit by David Stone Martin is available for sale at the Museum's Jazz Store.

The exhibit is available for touring to educational institutions, museums, jazz festivals, community organizations, etc.

For information contact Howard E. Fischer at the Museum, (212) 765-2150.

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Films — on a regular basis featuring the top jazz artists.

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The Jazz Store — featuring “hard-to-find” jazz records, books, periodicals and novelty items.

Jazz Touring Program — available to colleges, schools, community organizations, etc.

Membership — open to people of all ages who are interested in JAZZ, its history, heritage and performance. Includes many special privileges and monthly issues of “HOT NOTES,” the Jazz newsletter.

Jazz Puppet Show — available for touring.