

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER LIBRARY — BLUE ENGINE RECORDS

MERRY CHRISTMAS, BABY

FROM BIG BAND HOLIDAYS (2015)

Johnny Dudley Moore & Lou Baxter
Arranged by Sherman Irby
Full Score



JAZZ  LINCOLN CENTER

MERRY CHRISTMAS, BABY • INSTRUMENTATION

Vocal

Reed 1 – Alto Sax

Reed 2 – Alto Sax

Reed 3 – Tenor Sax

Reed 4 – Tenor Sax

Reed 5 – Baritone Sax

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

Trumpet 3

Trumpet 4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Trombone 3

Piano

Bass

Drums

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION

Composer • Johnny Dudley Moore & Lou Baxter

Arranger • Sherman Irby

Recorded • December 7, 2012 at Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Frederick P. Rose Hall

Original issue • Blue Engine Records BE0003

Currently available on CD, LP, and digital download

Personnel • Sherman Irby, Ted Nash (alto sax), Victor Goines, Walter Blanding (tenor sax), Paul Nedzela (baritone sax), Ryan Kisor, Kenny Rampton, Marcus Printup, Wynton Marsalis (trumpet), Vincent Gardner, Chris Crenshaw, Elliot Mason (trombone), Dan Nimmer (piano), Carlos Henriquez (bass), Ali Jackson (drums), Gregory Porter (vocals)

Soloists • Gregory Porter (vocals), Sherman Irby (alto sax)

GENERAL PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

1. Rhythm Section and Balance • The rhythm section determines the style, groove, and feel of each piece. It is the section that can comfortably play alone, and regularly does. In a typical 3-piece rhythm section, there is one string instrument (bass), and two percussion instruments (piano and drums); in a 4-piece section (with the addition of guitar), there are two string and two percussion instruments. In order for the rhythm section to achieve a swinging balance, it is crucial that the string instruments are clearly audible. The voices of these instruments must be respected by the two percussionists.

The drummer acts as the ‘President’ of the group, with the quick power to make dramatic and definitive changes to every aspect of the music.

The bass is the ‘Judiciary,’ holding the responsibility of constraining the volume and power of the drums. Their second responsibility is to play the mobile, lower melody that defines the integrity of the rhythm/harmony progression.

The piano is the ‘Congress,’ and has the ability to function as drummer, bassist, soloist, and accompanist; weaving in, out, and in between all of these roles to represent the widest range of voices and possibilities.

In a 4-piece section, the guitar acts as the ‘conscience’ or integrity of the rhythm and volume of the entire ensemble. They prevent the drummer and bassist from rushing or dragging and forces them to play softer and listen more closely.

The members of the rhythm section should know exactly what the names of grooves mean: *boogaloo*, *12/8 shuffle*, *bossa nova*, *2/3 clave*, etc. Every groove has a detailed function and definition. The top and bottom parts of the groove (drums and bass) must work together; at the same time, the interlocking rhythms of the piano and guitar must cooperate, honoring the context of the groove while also not interfering with each other.

When improvising with the rest of the band, the rhythm section should create a clear, basic, and danceable groove. They should also feel a sense of accomplishment from swinging with consistency and emotion.

When accompanying, the rhythm section should not feel compelled to have a constant stream of dialogue with the band; just like a friendly conversation, the dynamic should feel natural, with give and take. The goal is not to create constant “chatter.” Be proud of accompanying and swinging—they remain essential elements to any successful performance.

Members of the rhythm section must remain conscious of constraining power. For balance to be maintained, one must give up their desire to play louder than the other members of the section. As in any relationship, it is the constraint of power that creates the equilibrium within the section.

On the bandstand, each musician should be aware of balance at all times. This requires constant adjustment. The most important relationship is the drums and bass. If they are out of balance, the band does not sound or feel good. Do not let the PA system become your default ‘balance’ position.

Like a good democracy, the big band functions best when adhering to a system of checks and balances. Ultimately, the band should balance to the dynamic of the bass (as the softest acoustic instrument). Each section in the big band should both follow and play under their respective lead player.

2. Improvisation • A solo is an opportunity to express your personality and to exert tremendous influence on the success of a performance.

Responsibilities of the soloist:

1. Know the melody.
2. Understand the rhythm in relation to the groove.
3. Understand the harmonic progression.
4. Solo with emotional commitment and try to develop thematic material or musical ideas that relate to some aspect of the song.
5. Understand the function of background or accompanying parts.
6. Create your solo inside, outside, and alongside the arranged parts.
7. Create an ending for your solo that either leads into the next written part, hands off something good for the next soloist to play, or finishes with the right mood.
8. Do your absolute thing!

3. Follow the Lead • Within each section, know who has the lead (it isn’t always in the “first” part) and always play under that part. Do not assume that the lead player can tell if you are too loud; constantly re-assess within your section, in relation to other sections, and across sections if you are under the lead. Follow their phrasing, style, articulations, dynamics, and breathing. Lead players: you have a greater responsibility than others—be definitive in your concept, but not dogmatic. You must know the arrangement, including how your part fits into the overall dramatic and thematic objectives of the piece. You have to make musical decisions that help your colleagues follow you.

4. Personalize Your Parts • When referring to the performance of parts, clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton once said, “This is Duke Ellington’s music; it’s not written in stone. Duke always told us, ‘Personalize your parts.’” When done tastefully, all of the various vocal expressions that we can muster (i.e. vibrato, bends, swoops, shakes, moans, and vocal effects) will create a warmer and more human performance. Your parts should be played with the feeling and vocal expression of an improvised solo. These elements allow an audience to feel your humanity, and also welcomes them into nuances of your feeling. (You can do this while also following the lead).

5. Internalize the Form • Form is your defense against chaos. Every member of the ensemble has a responsibility to understand the architecture of each piece they play. Ask yourself, *Is it a blues? AABA form? An extended form? Where is the coda?* Be aware of entrances, repeats, and endings in relation to the form of the piece. *Is this an interlude or a shout chorus?* Sections often hand off phrases to other sections with an almost psychic level of awareness and nuance. At the very first rehearsal, begin figuring out how the piece is structured to achieve the composer's goals. Focus on understanding the total architecture and the function of your individual part within the context of the piece. Remember, everyone in the ensemble has the responsibility of understanding and fulfilling both the most complex and most basic requirements of the arrangement.

6. Have Integrity When Rehearsing • *Your time is too valuable to waste.* Always be professional. Arrive on time and pay attention to everything—whether it's a general concept or the most minute details. Take yourself and the music seriously at all times, and you'll be shocked to see how much better you get just by changing your attitude in rehearsal. Be conscientious about playing better each day, and over time the improvement will be exponential.

7. Listen to Jazz • Go to every conceivable performance of jazz possible—whether you like it or not—so that you can develop both a feeling and understanding of the music. There is an almost infinite amount of diverse and high-quality recordings of jazz at your disposal, which create a sonic history of the music that can inform, enlighten, and inspire you. The more music you know, the more you will enjoy.

To listen to the recording from Blue Engine Records, please visit jazz.org/bbh.

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Shuffle ♩ = 75

The musical score is arranged for a jazz ensemble. It includes parts for Vocal, Reeds (Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax), Trumpets (1-4), Trombones (1-3), Piano, Bass, and Drums. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Shuffle' with a quarter note equal to 75 beats per minute. The score is divided into four measures, with measure numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 indicated at the bottom. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The piano part includes chord symbols: F°, F9, B°, Bb13, F7(b9), and F7(b9)/Eb. The drum part features a shuffle rhythm with triplet patterns.

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