POP GOES THE WEASEL

FROM JAZZ FOR KIDS (2019)

Traditional
Arranged by Wynton Marsalis
Full Score

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BLUE ENGINE RECORDS

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

POP GOES THE WEASEL • INSTRUMENTATION

Solo Alto Sax

Reed 1 – Alto Sax/Flute

Reed 2 – Alto Sax/Piccolo/Soprano Sax

Reed 3 – Tenor Sax/Clarinet

Reed 4 – Tenor Sax/Flute/Soprano Sax

Reed 5 – Baritone Sax/Clarinet

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

Trumpet 3

Trumpet 4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Trombone 3

Piano

Bass

Drums

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION

Composer • Traditional

Arranger • Wynton Marsalis

Recorded • May 8–9, 2011 and October 17–19, 2011 at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall

Original issue • Blue Engine Records BE0021

Currently available as digital download

Personnel • Sherman Irby, Ted Nash (alto sax), Victor Goines, Walter Blanding (tenor sax), Joe Temperley (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)
Special Guests - Hoda Kotb (vocals), Jonathan Russell (violin)

Soloists • Ted Nash (alto saxophone), Elliot Mason (trombone)

JAZZ FOR KIDS NOTES

"'Man, you have GOT to check out that version of 'Baa Baa Black Sheep!'"

Now there's a sentence I never anticipated writing.

I laughed out loud listening to this album seven times within just the first three songs. This music is hilarious, adventurous, and playful. The arrangements are creative and clever, and listening to it is fun.

I knew I was in for a treat within the first seconds of the first song, when I realized that, while it sounded like a brass section was introducing "Baa Baa Black Sheep," what we're really hearing is a bleating herd of sheep.

As soon as the bass enters and settles into its steady, mysterious strut, I found myself, as I never had before, actually interested in that 17th-century English nursery rhyme. Just how did those three bags of wool get full?

While "Baa Baa Black Sheep" sounded life-like, "Old MacDonald" (1925) and "Pop Goes the Weasel" (1852) bring to life the uniquely ebullient, driving feeling that can only be brought to a melody through jazz.

It's a refreshing reminder to hear how these arrangements can turn a seemingly plain, ordinary, and extremely familiar melody into a surprising, joyous, uplifting delight.

I love that my first reaction to "Itsy Bitsy Spider" was not a technical analysis of the alternating intervals shared by the bass clarinet and flute, but rather, a very real image of a kid—think Eddie Murphy in Delirious—taunting his buddy at the ice cream truck. That struggle to make it up the water spout? It's real. In fact, when first published in 1910, the words "blooming" and "bloody" took the place of "itsy" and "bitsy."

1939's "The Wheels on the Bus" becomes much more than a simple children's singalong for bus rides, as its composer, Verna Hills, intended. Both sophisticated and fun, "The Wheels on the Bus" becomes both an epic reflection of and metaphor for the unlimited possibilities within reach—in music and in life—if we keep an open mind. And practice.

The uplifting swing of "I Like to Take My Time" reminds me of that which originally made me fall in love with jazz: the irresistible ways in which melodies I already knew could be interpreted.

As I finished listening to this arrangement of the Fred Rogers classic, I was left wondering, for the very first time, why this song wasn't considered a standard...

...Two Muppets songs serve as reminders that unique musicians and good music are timeless. "Mah Na Mah Na" becomes a swinging nod to the late, great Slam Stewart, who often hummed along to his own basslines. And Ernie's nod to his favorite toy, "Rubber Duckie," becomes our tour guide of sorts through jazz history, from the speakeasy to the supper club to the concert hall and back.

Elsewhere, the joyful, celebratory samba treatment given to "La Cucaracha" belies the political weight the song carried during the Mexican Revolution. The song becomes a tribute to that great Johnny Griffin adage, "Jazz is music made by and for people who have chosen to feel good in spite of conditions."

Jazz for Kids is a perfect representation of another timeless adage: "jazz is life." There is seriousness in the fun, and there is joy in the seriousness. Music is at its most powerful when it makes one feel connected with the past, and *Jazz for Kids* breathes new life into songs we think we've known forever. It shows how jazz can elevate even the most minuscule events in life. *Jazz for Kids* takes simple folk songs and nursery rhymes and turns them into something that you never saw coming.

—*Jazz for Kids* adapted liner notes by Joe Alterman

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/jazzforkids.

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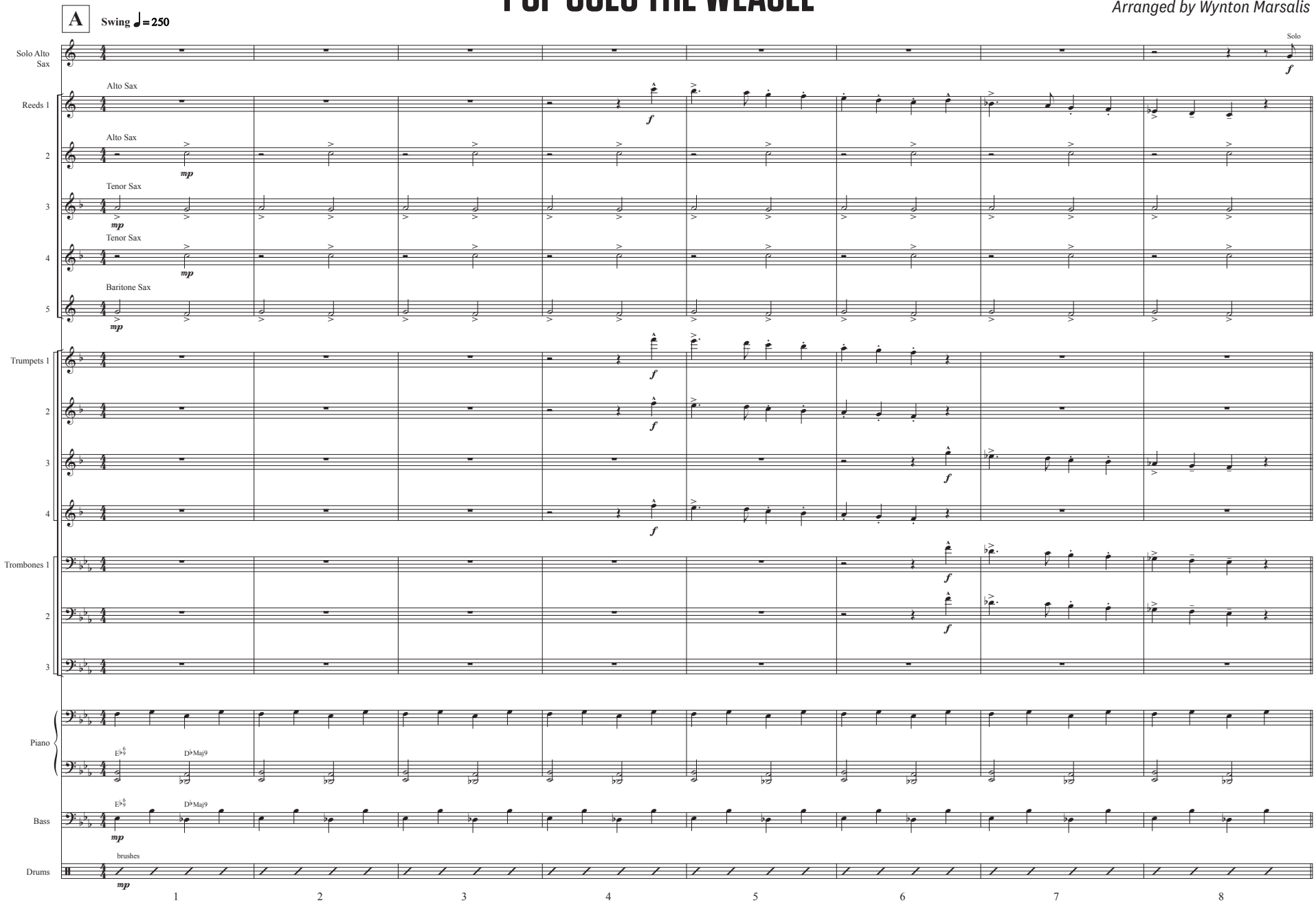

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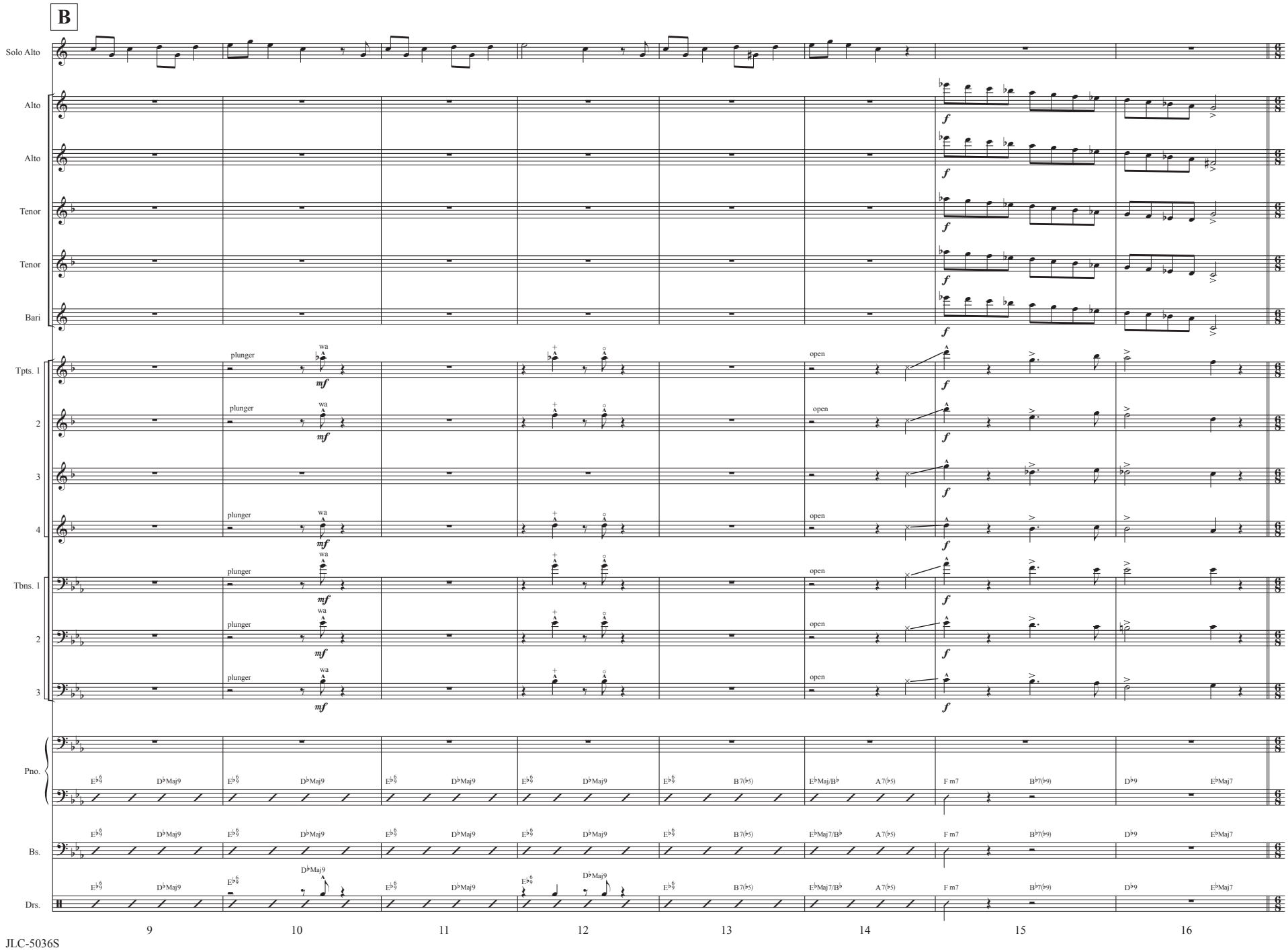
B
Solo Alto
Alto
Alto
Tenor
Tenor
Bari
Tpts. 1
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Tbns. 1
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3
Pno.
Bs.
Drs.
plunger
wa
open
mf
f
E♭6/9
D♭Maj9
B7(♭5)
E♭Maj/B♭
A7(♭5)
F m7
B♭7(♭9)
D♭9
E♭Maj7
E♭Maj7/B♭
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11
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