



LIMBO JAZZ

DUKE ELLINGTON
Arranged by DAVID BERGER

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor

1st E \flat Alto Saxophone
2nd E \flat Alto Saxophone
1st B \flat Tenor Saxophone
2nd B \flat Tenor Saxophone
E \flat Baritone Saxophone
1st B \flat Trumpet
2nd B \flat Trumpet
3rd B \flat Trumpet
4th B \flat Trumpet

1st Trombone
2nd Trombone
3rd Trombone
4th Trombone
Guitar Chords
Guitar
Piano
Bass
Drums

Optional Alternate Parts

C Flute
Tuba
Horn in F (Doubles 1st Trombone)
1st Baritone Treble Clef (Doubles 1st Trombone)
2nd Baritone Treble Clef (Doubles 2nd Trombone)



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PERFORMANCE NOTES

- Duke Ellington composed this naïve-sounding tune for an octet record that he made with the father of the tenor saxophone, Coleman Hawkins, in 1962 for Impulse Records. The simple chord progression is easy to play on and will sound very familiar—it is based on "Panama Rag." Ellington wrote several great pieces on this progression including "Stompy Jones" and "Flaming Sword," but I am sure that everyone will recognize it as the chords to "Happy Birthday." I recommend having the horns improvise the melody of "Happy Birthday" in unison over the rhythm section playing measures 5 and 13. This will get the progression in everyone's ear and subconscious laying the groundwork for improvising on this tune.
- My arrangement is constructed in simple chorus form. Following the 4-bar introduction, which sets up the groove, there is a 16-bar chorus of unison saxophone melody, which is repeated with brass responses. At measure 21 the trumpet plays a solo lasting one chorus, with saxophone backgrounds followed by alto sax at measure 37, with brass backgrounds. On the repeat of measure 21, the trombone solos with saxophone and brass call-and-response followed by the tenor solo at measure 37, with a different saxophone and brass call-and-response. There is a 16-bar shout chorus which then leads to a D.S. al coda back to measure 5, which is repeated just like at the beginning—one chorus unison saxes and add the brass answers the second time.
- The groove is very interesting in this piece. The drummer plays even eighth notes in a pseudo-Caribbean style while the rest of the ensemble plays with a swing feel. This allows for blues inflections.
- The limbo was an island dance that achieved wide popularity in the U.S. in the early 1960s. It was actually more of a contest than a dance. Traditionally, two people hold a stick parallel to the ground starting about six feet in the air and a third dancer passes underneath the stick bending backwards from the knees up. If he/she is able to pass under the stick without touching it, the stick is progressively lowered for future passes. Needless to say, this requires a fair amount of agility and strength.
- Being an Ellington composition, I have chosen to arrange it in that style, so all of the ensemble practices for Ellington's music apply. All quarter notes are short unless marked otherwise. Tied eighth notes are long. I haven't marked any accents because nearly every note in the entire chart should be played with an accent: first and last notes of phrases, high note of phrases, short quarters and syncopations. Crescendo as you ascend and diminuendo as you descend. No vibrato on unisons.
- Play with authority. The excitement is made from the accents, not from cranking up the volume. Strive for a fat warm sound.
- I recommend using an acoustic bass with no amplifier and having the drummer adjust to the bassist's volume. This volume level will permit the horns and piano to play at a comfortable volume and have room for inflections. A common misconception in our rock and roll-dominated world is that the bass should be as loud or louder than the first trumpet. In jazz music, the rhythm section's function is to accompany the horns who generally play the melody.
- Acoustic rhythm guitar can work nicely on this piece. If an electric guitar is used in a comping capacity, the volume should be kept at a minimum. If the guitar is made to solo, he/she should turn up for the solo and the down afterwards.
- Measures 21 through 52 make up the solo section of the piece. If you need to shorten the chart, I would suggest omitting the repeat of this section. Conversely, if you would like to open the chart for solos, just add repeats to this section. The backgrounds can be played on cue to avoid too much repetition.
- The two main points to keep in mind while playing "Limbo Jazz" are to honor the innate reserved understatement (too much grandstanding will make this childlike tune sound corny) and above all, have fun!

—David Berger

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CONDUCTOR
JEM05027C

LIMBO JAZZ

By DUKE ELLINGTON
Arranged by DAVID BERGER

LIMBO ♩ = 160 (DRUMS PLAY EVEN 8THS, ALL OTHERS SWING 8THS)

5/8 (PLAY TWICE ON D.S.)

C FLUTE (OPTIONAL)

1ST Eb ALTO SAXOPHONE

2ND Eb ALTO SAXOPHONE

1ST Bb TENOR SAXOPHONE

2ND Bb TENOR SAXOPHONE

Eb BARITONE SAXOPHONE

1ST Bb TRUMPET

2ND Bb TRUMPET

3RD Bb TRUMPET

4TH Bb TRUMPET

1ST TROMBONE

2ND TROMBONE

3RD TROMBONE

4TH TROMBONE

QUIRAR

PIANO

BASS

DRUMS

TOM - ON SHELL

H.H. W/FOOT

ON SNARE, RIM KNOCK

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

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