

JAZZ BAND SERIES



A Child Is Born

Music by THAD JONES

Arranged by JOHN DENTON

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor	1st Trombone
1st E♭ Alto Saxophone	2nd Trombone
2nd E♭ Alto Saxophone	3rd Trombone
1st B♭ Tenor Saxophone	4th Trombone
2nd B♭ Tenor Saxophone	Guitar Chords
E♭ Baritone Saxophone	Guitar
1st B♭ Trumpet	Piano
2nd B♭ Trumpet	Bass
3rd B♭ Trumpet	Drums
4th B♭ Trumpet	

Optional Alternate Parts

C Flute (Optional)
Tuba (Optional)
Horn in F (Doubles 1st Trombone)
1st Baritone T.C. (Doubles 1st Trombone)
2nd Baritone T.C. (Doubles 2nd Trombone)
3rd Baritone T.C. (Doubles 3rd Trombone)

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

This version of the great jazz standard “A Child Is Born” is a little more upbeat than the original composed and arranged by trumpeter/bandleader Thad Jones. It’s intended to express a parent’s joy when a child is born.

Exaggerating the dynamic and tempo changes in the introduction will get the immediate attention of the audience. The piano sets the tempo at measure 9 in a loose and comfortable swing style with the rest of the rhythm section added four measures later. Most of the first chorus is played *mf* with the melody passed between unison saxes and brass. The dynamics should start to build in measure 38, leading to the ensemble in measure 47.

The chart should transition smoothly from the ballad intro in the jazz waltz at measure 9. Keep it relaxed and smooth. The transition at measure 83 into 4/4 meter is seamless. The quarter note is constant and the groove is a relaxed bossa. The return to the waltz at measure 119 will be at a slightly slower tempo with a ritardando in measure 118 to set up the transition. The saxes can help make the transition and ritardando very smooth. Caution the players about the modulations.

The ensemble leads into an alto sax solo at measure 63, which may be played as written or improvised. I suggest directing the soloist to learn and memorize the melody and then study each chord to learn the chord tones. Next, the soloist may play only the roots of the chords to hear the sound of the chord progression. Learn the written solo and compare it to the melody—listen for the similarities and differences. These simple exercises will assist the soloist in understanding the chords and their relationship to the melody. This step-by-step learning process will make improvisation more fun and interesting. The backgrounds at the end of the alto solo should start soft and build to the 4/4 ensemble section at measure 83.

The trumpet solo at measure 99 should begin simple and gradually build in intensity as the solo progresses. The same improvisation learning process applies to the trumpet soloist. If time permits, I suggest teaching this improvisation learning process to the entire ensemble.

The final statement of the melody is in measure 119, which should be played broadly and, as mentioned earlier, at a slightly slower tempo. Emphasize the dynamics throughout the last chorus and bring out the moving voices in the ensemble. The arrangement ends as it began, with a brief piano solo and a tutti statement of the first melodic phrase.

Please enjoy.

—John Denton

CONDUCTOR
JEM04036C

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4

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