

# ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

High School Jazz Band Program

## A Quick Guide to Repertoire Selection for *Essentially Ellington* '11-12

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Welcome to the Jazz at Lincoln Center 2011-12 *Essentially Ellington* program. We are extremely excited about this year's repertoire! In addition to three charts from the Ellington library, this year's music includes three charts from the **Dizzy Gillespie Big Band**. These charts (along with changes in the guidelines governing the selection of music for Competition & Festival entries) offer perhaps the most diverse repertoire from which to choose than any years past. Here are some tips to help you as a director best utilize this year's music.

### Riding On A Blue Note - Composed and arranged by Duke Ellington

Though this chart is considered an easy swinger with a simple chord progression and riffs, that doesn't mean there isn't much to glean from it musically. This is a great vehicle for working on ensemble sound, swing articulations as a group, and dialoguing with a featured soloist. This is classic Ellington composition style with dialogue between trumpet soloist and ensemble. The tempo is great for working on the subtleties of swing feel, syncopation and hemiola for the rhythm section and horns. The ensemble parts require lead players to project feel and articulation for all in the section and ensemble to follow, particularly the final tutti passage.

### Oop Bop Sh'Bam - Composed by Dizzy Gillespie, arranged by Gil Fuller

The best way to work on jazz articulation and phrasing is through singing. It's also lots of fun. **Oop Bop Sh'Bam** allows your students the opportunity to have fun while starting to learn the bebop language. The blowing section allows the soloist and ensemble to apply the ideas learned from singing directly to the instruments. Bebop is often thought to be at played fast and furious speeds; this chart teaches the language of bebop at a nice relaxed tempo. The rhythm section can work on different, more interactive comping than typical big band charts, and it can be opened up for blowing and featuring some strong improvisers. This chart just screams fun!

### Things To Come - Composed by Dizzy Gillespie, arranged by Gil Fuller

If fast and furious is what you want, then here it is. **Things to Come** is for those who work on jazz playing all year and desire to challenge students to really step up. The tempo, range and fast-moving chord progression give the students a steady course of study for the year. All that is learned about bebop on *Oop Bop Sh'Bam* is employed here with the added challenge of keeping the feel relaxed at a fast tempo. Much will be required of the lead trumpet, but this is doable if the brass players are encouraged to work year round on fundamental exercises for technique (like Arban studies, etc.) and long tones. This chart is more difficult but does not need to be feared.

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**Sepia Panorama** - Composed and arranged by Duke Ellington

Besides working on the bebop language, it is always good to continue to work on the blues. **Sepia Panorama** is a classic Ellington blues composition with plenty of room for blowing. If you have a talented young bassist, this is a nice vehicle to display his or her virtuosity as the bass dialogues throughout. There are great contrasting colors and mood changes throughout the composition. The tempo makes it doable for any level and it is easily adaptable to be opened up for more solos. This is just a great chart within the swing tradition.

**Sunset and the Mockingbird, from The Queen's Suite** - Composed by Duke Ellington, arranged by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn

If you want to teach your band about creating textures and moods, **Sunset and The Mockingbird** is a wonderful chart to do just that. This is a great vehicle for piano, clarinet and alto saxophone to show off their ability to interpret melody. Each solo instrument gets to emulate in its own way the “sound” of the mockingbird while the ensemble creates different and varying textures on top of which to paint this lovely scene. The tempo is very relaxed and the swing feel is subtle. This is a great chart for inspiring maturity of sound and understanding of contrasting sonorities.

**A Night In Tunisia** - Composed and arranged by Dizzy Gillespie

A classic arrangement of a classic jazz standard, **A Night In Tunisia** offers the opportunity to feature many fine soloists on a now familiar vehicle. It also offers an opportunity to work on an Afro-Cuban groove that melds into a bebop swing feel. The lyrical trombone melody gives a chance for your trombone soloist to show off a beautiful sound while dialoguing with the rhythmic ensemble parts. This is also a great vehicle to work on the ii-V-i progression in minor keys. There are many recordings of this classic to reference for transcription and emulation. This is simply a great chart to show off a good rhythm section and good soloists.

We hope that you have fun with this year's repertoire. As always, we look forward to hearing how you make this music fit the personality of your band. And we hope to hear your band in New York at the 17<sup>th</sup> **Annual *Essentially Ellington* Competition & Festival**.