

TRINITY LABAN CONSERVATOIRE
OF MUSIC & DANCE

RESOURCE PACK
FOR SCHOOLS



Trinity Laban: Jazz On Tour

The Trinity Laban Studio Band

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GET TO KNOW THE BAND



Pianist, bandleader and composer
Count Basie (1904–1984)

THE FALL AND RISE OF THE MODERN BIG BAND

The 1930s through to the mid-1940s was a time in jazz generally known as the **‘Swing’ era**, when band leaders such as Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman were in their heyday.

However, the years following the Second World War (the end of 1940s) brought about huge change. Dance halls and swing band music became less popular and many swing bands were disbanded – including the band led by **Count Basie**, one of the most well-known big bands of the time. For many people, swing music brought back memories of the war years and they wanted to listen to something new.

To survive after the swing era, big bands had to rebrand and start again – moving from the dance hall to concert venues. After downsizing his band to just a handful of musicians at the start of the 1950s, Count Basie received a new recording contract and reformed his big band for a US tour, leading to the release of the album *The Atomic Mr Basie* in 1958. This was a hugely influential record that helped to rejuvenate the big band sound and won in three categories at the first-ever Grammy Awards. The sound of the album marked the direction that big bands were moving

in, with more sophisticated harmonies and orchestration inspired by other forms of jazz (particularly **bebop**), European classical composers and Kansas City swing.

Count Basie’s remodelled band line up became the blueprint for the modern big band. The core instrumentation of the big band from Swing era remained, but it was now common for bands to have larger brass sections comprising four trumpets and four trombones – including a bass trombone and occasionally a tuba. Five saxophones in the section became the norm as well, and saxophonists often ‘doubled’ on flute, clarinet or bass clarinet as well as their main instrument. For these reasons, the big band started to become known as the Jazz Orchestra.

THE TRINITY LABAN STUDIO BAND

The Trinity Laban Studio Band is a 17-piece ensemble that explores an exciting variety of music from the 1950s right up to the present day, by composers and arrangers from across the world, as well as new music by current Trinity Laban students eager to flex their own writing and arranging skills.

Built in the modern big band mould as shaped by Count Basie, The Trinity Laban Studio Band presents a kaleidoscopic palette of timbres and a huge dynamic range! Led by bass trombonist **Richard Henry**, this band celebrates the spirit of community at Trinity Laban – where musicians develop their sound and learn together, preparing and being ready for the profession. Our aim is to immerse our musicians and audiences in a broad and fascinating range of big band sounds and approaches to collective music-making, through a combination of written arrangements and improvised solos!

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GET TO KNOW THE MUSIC

Our programme will include the following tunes – take a listen on YouTube by clicking the links below and get a feel for the music ahead of the gig!

All of Me

Arranged by Sammy Nestico, performed by the Count Basie Orchestra.

This arrangement features several typical features of the **Kansas City jazz** style – listen out for the brass and woodwind riffs behind the piano solo. This piece is built around a common '**AA**' form, where each A section lasts 16 bars and the second A section is the same as the first with a slight deviation at the end. The 32-bar sequence is repeated three times, completed by a book-end style arrangement – finishing the piece with the same material from the intro.

Quiet Lady

Written & arranged by Thad Jones, performed by the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra.

The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra take their name from the **Village Vanguard** – the legendary jazz club in New York where the band have held a weekly residency for over 50 years! First recorded in 1974, this tune is a great example of the increasingly complex harmonies, chord sequences and arrangements that were typical of the time. Listen out for the use of the '**doubling**' instruments in this tune – flutes, clarinets and bass clarinet – as well as the use of **cup mutes** used by the trumpets and trombones.

Shiny Stockings

Arranged by Frank Foster, performed by the Count Basie Orchestra.

This is one Count Basie's most famous tunes, although it was written and arranged by **Frank Foster** who sold the rights of the music to the record company and he didn't receive any royalties from its success until he was in his 70s! *Shiny Stockings* continues to be a favourite of big bands today, with its extreme 'light and shade' **dynamics** – from the quiet tune played with brass mutes at the start to the blistering loud shout chorus towards the end!

Dear Old Stockholm

Arranged by Jim Martin.

This tune was built around an old Swedish folksong and became famous in the English-speaking world following versions recorded by trumpeter **Miles Davis** and saxophonist **John Coltrane**. It was originally a 16-bar melody, but this version is turned into a 12-bar minor blues.

Here's That Rainy Day

Arranged by Mike Gibbs.

This song, written for a Broadway musical *Carnival in Flanders* in 1931, has become one of the most popular songs for Jazz musicians to improvise over. **Mike Gibbs'** arrangement is a sophisticated example of **reharmonisation** – where the chords in the original version are changed to other chords that also work with the melody. The melody has also drastically changed, with the tune at the start played by the brass section almost unrecognisable from the original!



Examples of Big Band sheet music

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GET TO KNOW THE LINGO

You might hear a few new words and terms at the gig – here’s a guide to some of the most common ones you’ll hear.

Jazz

First of all, what is Jazz? Jazz is a genre of music, originating from the African American communities of New Orleans during the early 1900s. **Improvisation** is an important part of Jazz – this is where musicians spontaneously create their own tunes and lines ‘in the moment’, responding to an existing tune or accompaniment. Other key ingredients include **syncopation**, **harmony**, and **the Blues**.

Form

When we talk about form, we’re describing the **structure** of a piece – the order in which the different parts of the piece are arranged. Many of the pieces you’ll hear at our gig are based on classic song structures, such as **AA 32 bars**, **AABA 32 bars** or the **12-bar blues**. Variations on these forms were increasingly common throughout 1960s to the present day – such as **4 bar tags**, which are added sections of music that help to finalise the end of a section or tune.

Shout Chorus

A shout chorus is usually the climax of a piece, characterised by **high trumpets**, elaborate **drum fills** and the brass section in **rhythmic unison**, answered by the saxophones. Listen to the closing section of [Quiet Lady](#) (from 6:19) or the last chorus of [Shiny Stockings](#) (from 3:16) to hear some great examples.

Backings

These are short repeated melodic patterns known as ‘**riffs**’ that are played behind a soloist. Listen to [Here’s That Rainy Day](#) for the 4-note riff played by the sax section behind the trumpet solo (at 1:42). This riff helps to connect the trumpet solo to the following shout chorus (at 2:12) where two further ideas are presented on top of this riff - stabs on the trombones and a **syncopated** riff on the trumpets.

Soli sections

Soli are featured moments for a section of musicians – often the saxophones – where an intricate melody line is joined by other, harmony lines. All the musicians performing the soli play the exact **same rhythm** but with **different pitches**. Listen to the tune [Groove Merchant](#) (from 2:17) to hear one of the finest soli examples!

Extended techniques

These are simply additional techniques musicians use to keep things sounding interesting! At our gig, listen out for **shakes** (rapid movement of the lips when playing a brass instrument, to create a trill-like effect) and **bends** (where the pitch of a note starts lower and bends up – like in a blues guitar solo.)

Arranger

This person was the key to the success of most bands! Arrangers took existing tunes and reinvented them to create fresh ideas. Today you might call this a cover version. Many popular songs of the day were rearranged for the big band format – the **Buddy Rich Orchestra’s** arrangement of **The Beatles’** [Norwegian Wood](#) was a massive hit at the time.



Count Basie with the Count Basie Orchestra

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While there are 17 musicians in our band, they are grouped into three 'sections' of instruments who work together, often playing the same or similar rhythms.

Rhythm Section

The 'engine room' of the band driving the music forward, the rhythm section is made up of **piano**, **bass**, **drums** and **guitar**.



Brass Section

This section is made up of four **trumpets** and four **trombones**, including a **bass trombone**. As the big band continued to develop, arrangers called for a larger range of **mutes**, which change the dynamic and sound (timbre) of a brass instrument. Common mutes are the plunger mute, straight mute and the cup mute. At the gig, you'll also hear Harmon mutes – made famous by trumpeter **Miles Davis**.



Saxophone Section

There are five saxophones in our section – two **altos**, two **tenors** and one **baritone**. It became more and more common for sax players to 'double' on other instruments – including the flute, clarinet or bass clarinet – as well as playing their main instrument.

