

Granz formed his Pablo label in the 1970s, several established jazz artists, including Basie, signed on in order to record unfettered by commercial demands. Basie benefited greatly from his association with Granz and made several recordings during the '70s that rank among his best work. He recorded less often with his big band during this era (although when he did, the results were outstanding), concentrating instead on small-group and piano-duet recordings. Especially noteworthy were the albums featuring the duo of Basie and Oscar Peterson, with Basie's economy and Peterson's dexterous virtuosity proving an effective study in contrasts. Many of Basie's albums of the '70s were Grammy Award winners or nominees.

Suffering from diabetes and chronic arthritis during his later years, Basie continued to front his big band until a month before his death in 1984. The band itself carried on into the next century, with Thad Jones, Frank Foster, and Grover Mitchell each assuming leadership for various intervals. Basie's autobiography, *Good Morning Blues*, written with Albert Murray, was published posthumously in 1985. Along with Duke Ellington, Count Basie is regarded as one of the two most important and influential bandleaders in the history of jazz.

li'l ol' groovemaker...BASIE!



For this set, it was Quincy Jones's turn to provide a program for the Basie Orchestra. All nine of the originals are virtually forgotten today but are very well-played by this veteran band. Although Frank Foster was still in the band, Eric Dixon (on tenor and flute) was starting to assert himself as a major solo voice while trumpeter Snooky Young has a few strong spots.

The Basie orchestra had several hit recordings during the late 1930s and early '40s, among them "Jumpin' at the Woodside," "Every Tub," "Lester Leaps In," "Super Chief," "Taxi War Dance," "Miss Thing," "Shorty George," and "One O'Clock Jump," the band's biggest hit and theme song. It had continued success throughout the war years, but, like all big bands, it had declined in popularity by the end of the 1940s. During 1950 and '51, economy forced Basie to front an octet, the only period in his career in which he did not lead a big band. In 1952 increased demand for personal appearances allowed Basie to form a new orchestra that in many ways was as highly praised as his bands of the 1930s and '40s. (Fans distinguish the two major eras in Basie bands as the "Old Testament" and "New Testament.") The Basie orchestra of the 1950s was a slick, professional unit that was expert at sight reading

and demanding arrangements. Outstanding soloists such as tenor saxophonists Lucky Thompson, Paul Quinichette, and Eddie "Lock-jaw" Davis and trumpeters Clark Terry and Charlie Shavers, figured prominently. Singer Joe Williams, whose authoritative, blues-influenced vocals can be heard on hit recordings such as "Every Day I Have the Blues" and "Alright, Okay, You Win," was also a major component in the band's success. Arrangers Neal Hefti, Buster Harding, and Ernie Wilkins defined the new band's sound on recordings such as "Li'l Darlin'," "The Kid from Red Bank," "Cute," and "April in Paris" and on celebrated albums such as *The Atomic Mr. Basie* (1957).

The 1950s band showcased the sound and style Basie was to employ for the remainder of his career, although there were to be occasional—and successful—experiments such as *Afrique* (1970), an album of African rhythms and avant-garde compositions that still managed to remain faithful to the overall Basie sound. Throughout the 1960s, Basie's recordings were often uninspired and marred by poor choice of material, but he remained an exceptional concert performer and made fine records with singers Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, and Frank Sinatra. When jazz record producer Norman

Li'l Ol' Groovemaker Basie!

Count Basie And His Orchestra

Composed By, Arranged By – Quincy Jones

- 1 Li'l Ol' Groovemaker Basie 2:45
- 2 Pleasingly Plump 4:06
- 3 Boody Rumble 3:40
- 4 Belly Roll 2:27
- 5 Count 'Em 5:20
- 6 Nasty Magnus 5:59
- 7 Dum Dum 2:13
- 8 Lullabye For Jolie 2:23
- 9 Kansas City Wrinkles 5:40

Recorded by Verve April 21, 22 & 23, 1963 in New York City

Engineer [Recording] - Phil Ramone

Recorded By [Director Of Engineering] - Val Valentin

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