

COUNT BASIE'S "HEAD ARRANGEMENTS"

Basie would start out and vamp a little, set a tempo, and call out, "That's it!" He'd set a rhythm for the saxes first and Earle Warren would pick that up and lead the saxes. Then he'd set one for the bones, and we'd pick that up. Now it's our rhythm against theirs. The third rhythm would be for the trumpets, and they'd start fanning with their derbies. ... The solos would fall in between the ensembles, but that's how the piece would begin, and that's how Basie put his tunes together. He had a big band, but he handled it as though it were six pieces.

– Dickie Wells, *The Night People*

FRANK FOSTER DISCUSSES HIS COMPOSITION, "SHINY STOCKINGS"

It embodies all the things that were important to Basie. It builds – it starts soft and ends with an explosion [**shout chorus**]. It leaves space for the rhythm section to do whatever it's going to do. It has that ensemble writing which the band can sink their teeth into and really make happen [**sol**]. And a wonderful trumpet solo by Thad Jones.

Years later Basie gave me the supreme compliment. Every now and then, he'd say about a chart, "Oh, it's very nice, kid," and then leave it at that. Well, he grabbed me, he said, "Junior, you know that 'Shiny Stockings?' You really put one down that time." You couldn't receive a better compliment from Count Basie.