

**ON DVD**



*Live in Berlin & Stockholm 1968*  
**Count Basie & His Orchestra (Impro Jazz)**  
by Graham Flanagan

Every jazz fan, while listening to an album by one of their favorite legends of the genre, occasionally closes their eyes to imagine what it might have been like actually to be there for the recording itself. Due to the fact that jazz performances and recording sessions were so rarely filmed (and because time travel has yet to be perfected), it's always a treat to see the true greats in action on your TV screen. Impro Jazz has already made many dreams come true with its releases of live performances by Oscar Peterson, Duke Ellington, Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster, among others. Now they've added Count Basie to their steadily growing catalogue.

This disc features two sets from November 1968 played over the course of a week in Berlin and Stockholm. Digitally transferred from a live TV broadcast, the video and sound quality may initially appear somewhat crude. However, once the music starts and the idea sets in that you're actually seeing Basie and company playing during the '60s, you'll quickly forget any issues with the disc's aesthetic attributes.

The 16-piece orchestra sounds as wonderful as expected on 18 songs; Basie's deft touch on the piano nimbly punctuates their boisterous horn charts. Of all the soloists, perhaps the most notable is tenorman Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, who fills the formidable shoes of former Basie bandmember Lester Young. The fiery vocalist Marlena Shaw lends some sexiness to the proceedings with a swinging rendition of "Bill Bailey" as well as on a bossa nova-tinged arrangement of "On a Clear Day". Eric Dixon shines on flute during the band's rendition of his original composition "Blues for Jean".

This will no doubt become an essential purchase for Basie collectors. And it - along with the rest of the Impro Jazz DVD catalogue - should spark serious interest among jazz fans in general. No longer must you close your eyes and imagine what it might have been like to see a legend at work. Now all you have to do is press play.

For more information, visit [mvd2b.com](http://mvd2b.com). A Count Basie tribute is at Rose Theater Feb. 11th-13th with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. See Calendar.