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## Music Movie Mondays: Count Basie: Then As Now, Count's The King

By [David Voigt](#), Toronto Independent Film Examiner

April 18th, 2011 4:19 pm ET

Directed by [Gary Keys](#)

The latest installment of Music Movie Mondays here in our great city of Toronto brings us a unique look at a prominent American Jazz pianist, organist, composer and bandleader [William "Count" Basie](#).

Count Basie: Then As Now, Count's The King traces the history of the pianist, composer, and bandleader over several decades. Filmmaker Gary Keys juxtaposes a roundtable discussion among old cats from the Count Basie Orchestra with recorded performances, including a cameo appearance in "Blazing Saddles." Archival clips and a gallery of portraits and snapshots shows the ever-smiling face of a man as vivacious as the grooves he delivers--his good humor suffusing the music and the players going at it all around him, from Lester Young to Ella Fitzgerald.

With interviews from jazz notables that played with Count Basie like Frank Foster, Frank Wess, Benny Powell, Joe Wilder, George Lewis and Ira Gitler talking about their various experiences playing for Basie over the years combined with archival performances from Billie Holiday, Billy Eckstine, Lester Young and others you have an interesting look back at the big band days of jazz and their experiences. The problem is unless you are a jazz fan; most people don't know who any of these people are. Nothing is offered for the casual fan looking to know more, and is ultimately not accessible to anyone who is a neophyte on the topic of jazz music. No story was told, it was simply a loose collection of different stories linked together by archival performances.

3 out of 5 stars

Count Basie: Then As Now, Count's The King probably isn't available at any video store around Toronto, but you can check [here](#) for more details. Otherwise I'd try an online retailer like [seeofsound.com](#).

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