

Good Morning Blues

(William) Count Basie (1904-1984) was an extremely popular figure in the jazz world for half a century. He was a fine pianist and leader of one of the greatest jazz bands in history. “Good Morning Blues”, early Count Basie recording has been somewhat forgotten as a Christmas blues, probably because the word “Christmas” isn’t in the title, but it’s a fine one. When the song was recorded (1937), the Basie Band featured some of the most groundbreaking musicians in jazz history, including Lester Young, Jo Jones and “Sweets” Edison. Although this band set the standard for what swing should sound like, at heart it was a big blues band with a great, round blues singer named Jimmy “Mr. Five By Five” Rushing.

Blues”

**“Good Morning
is**

big-band blues at its best, but these guys make it sound easy.

Good Morning Blues

Rushing’s conversational style fits the tune perfectly, as he introduces himself — *“I feel alright, but I’ve come to worry you”*.

His vocal style was perhaps (along with contemporary Joe Turner) the best known and most imitated off the pre-WWII (male) blues singers. While no disrespect for such great blues men like Blind Lemon Jefferson, papa Charlie Jackson, and other rural blues men, it was the urban style of Rushing that was recognized and commercial. More so, Jimmie’s full-blown baritone, with an accent on every vowel, fit in well with his mentor and friend, Count Basie.



Count Basie

Jimmy Rushing wrote lyrics to “Good Morning Blues”, music was by Basie and Eddie Durham.

Eddie Durham, a somewhat forgotten name in jazz history, was the first important jazz soloist to be featured on electric guitar (in 1938 with the Kansas City Five), predating Charlie Christian by a year. He also played trombone throughout most of his career and was quite significant as a swing-era arranger, too. He contributed arrangements to Count Basie (1937-1938), also to Artie Shaw and Glenn Miller (“In the Mood”).



Jimmy Rushing

Count Basie was among the most important bandleaders of the swing era. With the exception of a brief period in the early '50s, he led a big band from 1935 until his death almost 50 years later, and the band continued to perform after he died. Basie's orchestra was characterized by a light, swinging rhythm section that he led from the piano, lively ensemble work, and generous soloing. Basie was not a composer like Duke Ellington or an important soloist like Benny Goodman. His instrument was his band, which was considered the epitome of swing and became broadly influential on jazz.



Count Basie, playing double bass with the Count Basie Orchestra (1945)



Count Basie Jazz Band performing on stage (1945)



Count Basie Jazz Band