

# It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)

Music by Duke Ellington

Words by Irving Mills

*Arranged by Ralph Ford*

## INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor

C Flute (Optional)

1st E $\flat$  Alto Saxophone

2nd E $\flat$  Alto Saxophone

1st B $\flat$  Tenor Saxophone

2nd B $\flat$  Tenor Saxophone

E $\flat$  Baritone Saxophone (Optional)

1st B $\flat$  Trumpet

2nd B $\flat$  Trumpet

3rd B $\flat$  Trumpet

4th B $\flat$  Trumpet (Optional)

1st Trombone

2nd Trombone

3rd Trombone (Optional)

4th Trombone (Optional)

Guitar Chords

Guitar (Optional)

Piano

Bass

Drums

## Optional/Alternate Parts

B $\flat$  Clarinet

Vibraphone

Tuba

Horn in F (Doubles 1st Trombone)

1st Baritone Horn T.C./B $\flat$  Tenor Saxophone (Doubles 1st Trombone)

2nd Baritone Horn T.C./B $\flat$  Tenor Saxophone (Doubles 2nd Trombone)

**YOUNG  
JAZZ  
ENSEMBLE**

## NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

Recognized as one of the “standards” of jazz, Duke Ellington’s masterpiece composition has been covered by hundreds—if not thousands—of artists from all genres of music.

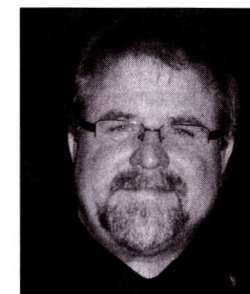
This arrangement includes an added twist of stating the first half, or four measures, of the verse in a Latin style, and then answering with the second half (four measures) of the verse in a swing style. For rehearsal purposes, it will be imperative for the rhythm section to rehearse this transition to ensure a smooth change of “feel” between the styles. The key difference in these two patterns is the Latin to swing rhythms in the drums and piano, and the change from a samba-style bass riff to a walking bass pattern. The winds should swing the eighths in the swing section but play eighths more straight and even in the Latin section. These differences become less obvious at a faster tempo.

The wind articulation stays much the same in between the two styles, utilizing long-short (doo-daht) eighth-note patterns. Be sure to exaggerate the *mf* dynamic from mm. 32–35, with a big hit and fall-off on the last half of m. 35 leading into the solo sections at m. 36. In general, *marcato*, or rooftop, markings are detached and accented—think “daht.” *Staccatos* are short but not clipped or too short.

There are written solos beginning at m. 36 for tenor 1 and trumpet 1. Feel free to cue the backgrounds at your discretion, particularly if the solo section is repeated more than twice for additional solos. As in the verse and throughout the chart, the transfer of styles remains constant. Leading into the ending of the chart, beginning at m. 99, direct the build to start softly and exaggerate to the conclusion. Enjoy a new take on the classic Ellington masterpiece!

Enjoy!

—Ralph Ford



**Ralph  
Ford**

Ralph Ford (b. 1963) is a composer, arranger, conductor, educator, media creator, producer, writer, radio host, and announcer with over thirty years of experience in these various genres. He is an exclusive composer and arranger for the Belwin division of Alfred Music, with over 240 titles available worldwide for orchestra, concert band, jazz ensemble, and marching band.

He earned his undergraduate degree in 1986 and his Master of Science degree in 1988 from Troy. He was then appointed to the Troy music faculty where he taught orchestration, arranging, theory, technology, jazz studies, and applied brass followed by his appointment as director of bands, coordinator of winds and percussion, and professor of music. Ralph retired from Troy University in June 2011.

A frequently commissioned composer, his music has been premiered and performed by university, military, professional, community, and school ensembles around the world. Ralph is also in demand as a conductor, clinician, adjudicator, and guest lecturer throughout the United States and abroad.



①

FLUTE

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BARI.

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

GTR.

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

UNISON SOLI

SOLO

me

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for the song "It Don't Mean A Thing". The score is arranged for a conductor and includes parts for Flute, four Alto voices, four Tenor voices, four Trumpets, four Trombones, Guitar, Piano, Bass, and Drums. The music is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a 4/4 time signature. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 9 through 16 indicated at the bottom. The piano part features a "SOLO" section starting at measure 9. The guitar part includes chord markings: Gm7, Fm, and Gm7. The vocal parts (Alto, Tenor, and Trumpets) have lyrics written below the notes, including the phrase "me". The trumpet and trombone parts have "UNISON SOLI" markings. The conductor's part is indicated by a circled "1" at the top left.



CONDUCTOR

IT DON'T MEAN A THING

FLUTE <sup>25</sup> LATIN

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BARI.

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

GTR. <sup>F#m7</sup> <sup>F#m7</sup> <sup>F#m7</sup> <sup>F#m7</sup> <sup>D7</sup> <sup>C7</sup> <sup>F#m7</sup> <sup>G7</sup> <sup>E7(b9)</sup> <sup>E7(b9)</sup> <sup>F#m7</sup>

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

*cresc.* *Swing*



CONDUCTOR

IT DON'T MEAN A THING

FLUTE <sup>(41)</sup> LATIN

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BARI.

TPT. 1

TPT. 2

TPT. 3

TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

TEN. 4

GTR. <sup>F#10</sup> <sup>F#10(9#7)</sup> <sup>F#10</sup> <sup>F#10</sup> <sup>D7</sup> <sup>C7</sup> <sup>F#10</sup> <sup>B7</sup> <sup>E7(b9)</sup> <sup>E7(b9)</sup> <sup>F#10</sup>

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

me 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48

*CRESC.* *SWING*





64

FLUTE

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BAR. 1

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

TEN. 4

GR. 1

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71

Chords: Gmi9, Gmi(m7), Gmi9, Eb9, D9(#9), Gmi9, C7, Cm7(b9), F#m7, Eb9, Cm7

Chords: Fmi9, Fmi(m7), Fmi9, D9, C9(#9), Fmi9, Bb7, Bbm7(b9), Ebm9, Ab9, Em7

REPEAT AS NEEDED FOR SOLOS

72 SWING

FLUTE

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BARI.

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

TEN. 4

GTR.

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79

Chords: F#m7, B9, E7m7, F#m7, F#o7, E7m7/G, C7, C#9, F#9, D7(F#)

Chords: E7m7, A9, D7m7, E7m7, Eo7, D7m7/F, B7, B#9, E9, C7(F#)

FLUTE

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

SAX.

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

GTR.

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

LATIN

END SOLO

Chords: Gmi6, Gmi(m7), Gmi9, Eb9, D9(#9), Gmi9, C7, Cm7(b9), F#m6, Gb9, D7(#9)

CONDUCTOR

TO CONTINUE

89 LATIN

SWING

DRUM SOLO

IT DON'T MEAN A THING

Musical score for the song "It Don't Mean A Thing" (Latin Swing). The score includes parts for Flute, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Baritone, Trumpet 1-4, Trombone 1-4, Guitar, Piano, Bass, and Drums. The score is divided into measures 88 through 96. Measure 89 is marked as the start of the "LATIN" section. The tempo is "SWING". A "DRUM SOLO" section begins at measure 95. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, dynamics (e.g., *crec.*), and chord symbols (e.g.,  $F_9$ ,  $Bb7(b9)$ ,  $Bb7$ ,  $A7$ ,  $F_7(b9)$ ,  $Bb7$ ,  $E7$ ,  $F_7(b9)$ ). The conductor's part is indicated by the "CONDUCTOR" label at the top left.

99

Musical score for CONDUCTOR, featuring parts for FLUTE, ALTO 1, ALTO 2, TENOR 1, TENOR 2, BARI., TRP. 1, TRP. 2, TRP. 3, TRP. 4, TBN. 1, TBN. 2, TBN. 3, TBN. 4, GTR., PNO., BASS, and DRUMS. The score spans measures 97 to 104.

The score is written for a full band and vocal ensemble. The vocal parts (Alto, Tenor, Baritone) have lyrics written below the notes. The instrumental parts include Flute, Trumpets (1-4), Trombones (1-4), Guitar, Piano, Bass, and Drums. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into measures 97 through 104, with measure numbers printed at the bottom of each measure.

97

98

99

100

101

102

103

104

