

# THE HINDU

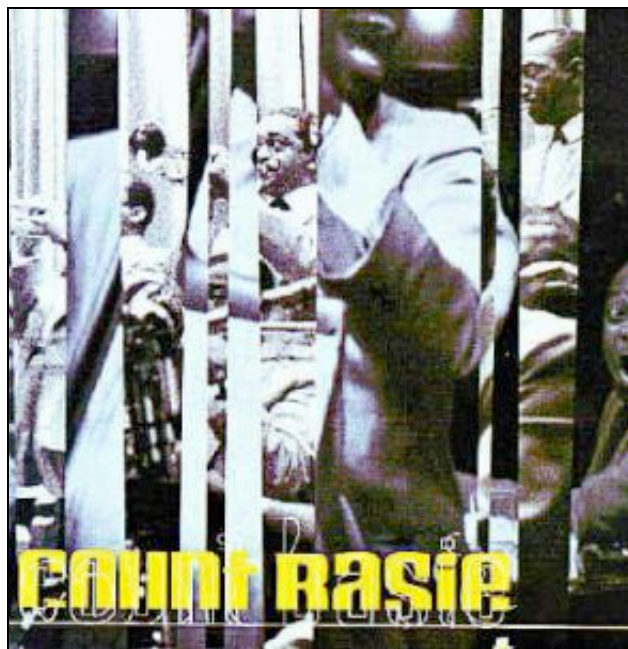
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[Chennai](#)

## Chords & Notes



### **Count Basie: Atomic Swing - EMI/Virgin, CD, Rs. 400**

LIKE HIS *Jazz Profile*, *Atomic Swing* draws upon Count Basie's archives from the time when this king of swing and his big band had weathered the storm of small group modern jazz in the 1940s and 1950s to come through alive and kicking.

Recorded between 1957 and 1962, the 13 tracks here are short (about four minutes on an average) and most probably, catch the band in ballrooms rather than in studios or on concert platforms. As evidence, the inlay card bears a marvellous picture of a rapturous dancing couple with the man having thrown his partner over his head, holding her, horizontal in mid-flight, by her wrists!

Basie and his band too are (figuratively) in full flight. The deceptive format of short pieces and light-hearted ambience does nothing to hide their consummate skill and creativity as one of the

greatest jazz bands of all time.

For instance, on "9:20 Special", a hoary Basie favourite, there are terrific improvised solos on piano (Basie), alto saxophone (Frank Wess), tenor saxophone (Frank Foster), muted and open trumpet (Joe Newman), and piano again, interspersing the theme shared between trumpets, trombones, saxes, and piano, and all packed into under four minutes of relentless rhythm. Even more packed is the three-minute "Out the Window", with solos by piano, trumpet, trombone, and one alto and two tenor saxophones.

The famous "Moten Swing", written by Basie in honour of his mentor Benny Moten, is another gem, especially with its long piano intro.

### **Arturo Sandoval: My Passion for the Piano - Columbia/Sony, CD, Rs. 399**



THE CUBAN-BORN trumpeter Arturo Sandoval shot to fame under the wing of Dizzy Gillespie, pioneer of be-bop and Afro-Cuban jazz, who, apart from being a great jazz trumpeter, was also a proficient pianist and great composer. Sandoval too is a Latin jazz legend.

Despite the many great pianists that Afro-Cuban jazz boasts of, it's still surprising to find Sandoval resting his trumpet to record a whole album on the piano. In another dimension to his versatility, most of the album is straight-ahead mainstream jazz. Only a couple of tracks are Latin-influenced.

Sandoval is supported throughout by bass (Dennis Marks) and drums (Ernesto Sampson), while on a couple of tracks each Ed Calle (a famous Latin tenor/soprano saxophonist) and Samuel Torres (on percussion) join the trio. The trio tracks, offering flashes of the great pianist McCoy Tyner, enable Sandoval to display his mastery of the piano, from solo intros and themes to solo improvisations. But even with Calle's extensive and breathtaking solos on soprano sax ("Departure") and tenor sax ("Time Before"), Sandoval's dominant role remains.

Everyone plays his part with inspiration. After Marks takes his turn to solo on "All the Things You Are", Sampson's usual quiet and effective work with brushes and cymbals yields place to solo fireworks. "Surena" and "Stella by Starlight" feature intriguing alternations between mainstream and Latin rhythms.

The passion shines through as brightly here as it does through Sandoval's customary trumpet. Not only passion, but also virtuosity.

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