

Full Count Returns to Crossroads, Brings Basie and Big Band Sound

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Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

GARWOOD — On Thursday, Westfield's Full Count Jazz Band returned to the Garwood's Crossroads to play a tribute set to legendary bandleader/composer (and Jersey native) Count Basie.

The huge band filled the small stage, beginning with "Basie Straight Ahead," a more jazz-influenced selection that carried the Big Band sound, along with a pair of solos from the tenor sax and the piano.

The second piece, "Corner Pocket," returned to the more Big Band sound, with big bursts from the horn section. This time, however, the band let the trumpet take a solo, as the pianist and bassist gave the sound a hard push. The band then moved into "The Kid from Red Bank," which featured a much faster bass, along with an excellent alto sax solo.

Full Count has noted that its strength lies in its members not playing only Big Band standards, but also more recent songs arranged for that style. Unfortunately, the band did not name all the songs for the audience, and this caused one slight misstep.

"April in Paris," from the western comedy classic *Blazing Saddles*, is employed in a classic scene. Lawman Cleavon Little rides his horse through the desert as the music plays only to actually come across Basie and his band playing in the sand. Having a fine opportunity to men-



Eric Nierstedt for *The Westfield Leader and The Times*
BASIE BOOST...The Full Count Big Band revisited Count Basie classics at the Crossroads in Garwood last week.

tion it, Full Count just moved on to the next song.

Still, these were classic compositions played by an expert band, and a fun time was had. Full Count turned out excellent renditions of Basie's work, including an unnamed piece somewhat reminiscent of the "Pink Panther" theme, with quick sax bursts as well as solos from the bass, baritone sax and drums. A second unnamed number added a call-and-response effect, with the horns gliding like strings, then adding a

12-bar-blues effect.

The last few selections were also in fine form, as the band dedicated "Leena and Lenny" to the late Leena Horn (Basie composed the piece for her and her husband). Full Count then performed "Ya Gotta Try," which featured a pair of sax solos and ended with the show with the flute-tipped "Freckle Face" and the expectedly faster "Whirly Bird," with swirling horns and another pair of solos from the saxophones. This closed the night on a well-performed, if not gripping, tribute.