

FREDDIE GREEN

Jim Hall: *"Don't just listen to guitars. But if you have to listen to one, study the way Freddie Green plays rhythm with Count Basie's band. If you pruned the tree of jazz, Freddie Green would be the only person left."*

CHRONOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY

- March 11, 1911:** Freddie Green (hereafter FG) born in Charleston, South Carolina
Father plays pump organ; mother sings in church choir
- c.1921 (age 10):** Father dies
- 1923 (age 12):** FG moves to NYC to live with maternal aunt
- 1927 (age 16):** Family moves to Harlem; FG quits school
FG frequents clubs; FG hears Jelly Roll Morton & Jimmie Lunceford
- 1930 (age 19):** Mother dies; FG moves back to Charleston, South Carolina
- 1930-32 (age 19-21):** FG gets married and has a son
FG abandons ukulele and picks up the banjo
- 1932 (age 21):** Jenkin's Orphanage band tours Maine with FG as the banjo player
FG stays in NYC as the band is returning south
FG starts gigging at the Yeah Man Club in a trio as the banjo player
- c. 1932 (age 21):** FG begins to learn guitar:
"As soon as I picked up the banjo, the guitar came in. Now I had to go through this again, the added strings, you know."
- 1934 (age 23):** FG joins William Gant in a duo at the Exclusive Club as rhythm guitarist
"I had to be the drummer also, because we didn't have any drummer at all."
- 1935 (age 24):** FG teams up with Kenny Clarke and others to form a quintet
- 1936 (age 25):** John Hammond hears FG with the quintet
FG auditions with the Basie band
- March 26, 1937:
(age 26)** FG has first gig with Basie band for a recording session with Decca
"I didn't want to lose this job. So I started playing rhythm. I thought 'Well, they won't complain to me anymore about the single-string thing. I'll just play rhythm.'"

- 1941 (age 30):** FG wins guitar award in *Metronome* readers' poll
(play "Shoutin' Blues")
- 1955 (age 44):** Basie band records big hit with Joe Williams
(play "Every Day I Have the Blues")
- 1956 (age 45):** Basie band records *Basie in London* in Gothenburg, Sweden
(play "How High the Moon")
- 1956 (age 45):** FG records with Joe Turner on *The Boss of the Blues*
(play "Wee Baby Blues")
- 1957 (age 46):** Basie band records with Joe Williams and Ella Fitzgerald
(play "One O'Clock Jump")
- 1958 (age 47):** FG wins the *Down Beat* Critics Poll Award
(play "Moten Swing")
- 1959 (age 48):** Basie band records in Zurich, Switzerland
(play "Corner Pocket," "Cute," & "The Kid from Red Bank")
- 1962 (age 51):** Basie records with the Kansas City 7; FG in a small group setting
"I do a lot of chord changes but there is no question of working them out beforehand with the bass player. I don't do anything in advance. It's always on the spur of the moment."
(play "Count's Place," "Lady Be Good," "Secrets," "Tally Ho, Mr. Basie!," & "What'cha Talkin?")
- 1960s:** Basie band continues to tour & record; performs in Las Vegas with Sinatra
(play "All of Me," "I Got Rhythm," & "Magic Flea")
- April 26, 1984:** Count Basie dies; FG continues to play in the Basie band
(age 73)
- 1985 (age 74):** FG inducted into Jazz Hall of Fame
- 1986 (age 75):** FG receives Grammy nomination for work on *Swing Reunion*
(play "Four Five Six" from *Long Live the Chief*)
- March 1, 1987:** Freddie Green dies in Las Vegas
(age 75)

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. Extremely consistent four-to-the-bar "walking tenor" rhythm guitar style
2. Creation on counter-melody to bass line through notes on the D-string
 - "one-note chords" counterpoint the walking bass
 - parallel thirds or sixths with bass line
 - pedal tone to create oblique motion for bass line
 - voice exchanges between rhythm guitar and bass
 - increase of tension towards cadences (often through cross-relations)
3. Special handling of dominant seventh chords
 - emphasis on 3rd or 7th
 - leaps between 9th and 7th
 - use of characteristic tritone (between 3rd and 7th) as two-note accent
4. Cadential phrase of $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ over $ii7-V7-I$ or $V7-I$
 - approximates classic 4-3 suspension
5. Highly linear motion
 - consistent use of stepwise motion
 - leaps of a third or fourth are rare
 - no leaps bigger than a fifth
 - chromatic passing tones
 - chromatic neighbor notes
 - finds possibilities to use falling chromatic lines
6. Bridges one chord to the next
 - holds common tones between different chords
 - uses chord tones from prior and upcoming harmony
7. Free use of dissonance as needed, both in preparation and resolution
8. Emphasis on $\hat{6}$ and $\hat{1}$, especially when playing over the tonic harmony
9. Passing motion, both unaccented and accented
 - often between 3rd and 5th of a chord
 - exists on both a metric and hypermetric level
10. Develops goal-oriented lines that sometimes conflict with underlying chord changes
 - thinking "chordally" versus thinking "scalarly"

RECORDINGS & TRANSCRIPTIONS

- Basie, Count. "Count's Place." *Count Basie and the Kansas City 7*. Count Basie and the Kansas City 7. MCA MCAD-5656.*
- Basie, Count. "One O'Clock Jump." *One O'Clock Jump*. Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, Joe Williams. Verve 559806.††
- Basie, Count. "Tally Ho, Mr. Basie!" *Count Basie and the Kansas City 7*. Count Basie and the Kansas City 7. MCA MCAD-5656.*
- Basie, Count and Charlie Price. "Shoutin' Blues." *Kansas City Powerhouse*. Count Basie. RCA 63903.††
- Chatman, Peter. "Every Day I Have the Blues." *Count Basie Swings – Joe Williams Sings*. Count Basie with Joe Williams. Polygram 519852.†
- Foster, Frank. "Four Five Six." *Long Live the Chief*. Count Basie Orchestra. Denon CY-1018.††
- Gershwin, George and Ira Gershwin. "Oh, Lady Be Good." *Count Basie and the Kansas City 7*. Count Basie and the Kansas City 7. MCA MCAD-5656.*
- Gershwin, George and Ira Gershwin. "I Got Rhythm." *Wild & Swingin'*. Count Basie. Varese 061352.†
- Green, Freddie. "Corner Pocket." *Cute*. Count Basie. Eclipse 64014-2.**
- Hamilton, Nancy and Morgan Lewis. "How High the Moon." *Count Basie in London*. Count Basie. Verve 833805-2.†
- Hefti, Neal. "Cute." *Cute*. Count Basie. Eclipse 64014-2.†
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- Marks, Gerald and Seymour Simons. "All of Me." *Count Basie's Finest Hour*. Count Basie. Verve 589637.††
- Moten, Bennie. "Moten Swing." *The Count Basie Story*. Count Basie. Blue Note 79669.†
- Nestico, Sammy. "The Magic Flea." *Wild & Swingin'*. Count Basie. Varese 061352.†
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* transcription by Trevor de Clercq

** transcription by Roland Mueller, edited by Michael Pettersen

† transcription by Michael Pettersen

†† transcription by Mark Allen, edited by Michael Pettersen

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