Dream Lucky: When FDR was in the White House, Count Basie was on the radio, and everyone wore a hat...

Roxane Orgill

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The time: 1936-1938. The mood: Hopeful. It wasn't wartime, not yet. The music: The incomparable Count Basie and Benny Goodman, among others. The setting: Living rooms across America and, most of all, New York City.

Dream Lucky covers politics, race, religion, arts, and sports, but the central focus is the period's soundtrack—specifically big band jazz—and the big-hearted piano player William "Count" Basie. His ascent is the narrative thread of the book—how he made it and what made his music different from the rest. But many other stories weave in and out: Amelia Earhart pursues her dream of flying "around the world at its waistline." Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., stages a boycott on 125th Street. And Mae West shocks radio listeners as a naked Eve tempting the snake.

Critic Nat Hentoff praises the "precise originality" with which Roxane Orgill writes about music. In *Dream Lucky*, she magically lets readers hear the past.

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From reader reviews:

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