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It Don't Mean a Thing (if it Ain't Got that Swing)



SEE SING TEACHERS' HANDBOOK

Duke Ellington was one of the most influential jazz pianists and band leaders of the jazz era. He wrote over 900 compositions, including this one which he composed in 1932. The song is a jazz standard, known by many jazz performers the world over.

Swing is a particular kind of jazz that was extremely popular in the 1930s. Ellington is usually credited for naming the style of music known as swing and he defines it in this song, which will be famous for a long time. Ellington loved making music!



WORDS AND MUSIC BY ELLINGTON AND MILLER

Swing Em C7 B7
 It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing.
 Em A7 D9
 Doo wah doo wah doo wah doo wah doo wah
 G B7 Em
 doo wah doo wah doo wah. It don't mean a
 C7 B7 Em A7
 thing all you got to do is sing. Doo wah doo wah
 D9 G
 doo wah doo wah doo wah doo wah doo wah. It
 makes no diff'-rence if it's sweet or hot. Just
 Em A D B7
 give that rhy-thm ev'-ry-thing you've got. Oh, it
 Em C7 B7 Em
 don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing.

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Doo wah doo wah doowah doo wah doo wah doowah doo wah doo

To Coda ⊕ E

C B

A musical score for a single voice. It consists of a treble clef staff with five horizontal lines. The lyrics are: "wah." followed by a short rest, then "What good is mel-o - dy?". The notes are: a dotted half note for "wah.", a quarter note for the first "What", an eighth note for "good", another eighth note for the first "is", a quarter note for "mel-o", a eighth note for the hyphen, a quarter note for "dy", and a sixteenth note followed by a tie and a sixteenth note for the final "dy".

Em C7/D B7 E

A musical score for a single melodic line. The key signature is A major (no sharps or flats). The time signature is common time (indicated by 'C'). The vocal line starts with a half note, followed by four quarter notes. It then continues with a dotted half note, a half note with a sharp sign, and a half note with a flat sign. There is a short rest. The melody then resumes with a half note, followed by three quarter notes. The lyrics "What good is music, if it ain't poss" are written below the notes.

C7/D B7 Em C7 B7 Em

The musical score shows a treble clef staff with four measures. The first measure contains two eighth notes followed by a fermata over a grace note and a sixteenth note. The second measure has a single eighth note followed by a fermata over a grace note and a sixteenth note. The third measure is a rest. The fourth measure is also a rest. Below the staff, the lyrics "ess-ing some - thing sweet?" are written in blue, and to the right, the lyrics "It ain't the" are partially visible.

A musical score for a single melodic line. The key signature is A major (no sharps or flats). The time signature is common time (indicated by 'C'). The melody consists of quarter notes and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "me-lo - dy." The chords indicated above the staff are C7, B7, Em, C7/D, and B7.

A musical score for a single melodic line. The key signature is A major (no sharps or flats). The time signature is common time (indicated by 'C'). The melody consists of quarter notes and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "There's some-thing else that makes the tune com-plete." The score includes chord symbols above the staff: Em, C7/B, B7, F#7, and B7. It also includes a dynamic instruction 'D.C. al Coda' and a repeat sign with a circle. The melody ends with a fermata over the final note.

⊕ CODA Software

A musical score for a string quartet. The score consists of four staves, one for each instrument: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello. The key signature is A major (no sharps or flats). The time signature is common time (indicated by 'C'). The music is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Measure 11 starts with a dynamic of 'f' (fortissimo) and includes a rehearsal mark '11'. Measure 12 starts with a dynamic of 'ff' (fortississimo). The score includes various note heads (solid black, hollow white, and cross-hatched) and rests, with some notes having stems pointing up and others down. The vocal part at the bottom provides lyrics in English and German.

