

Jimmy Rushing

Jimmy Rushing was born on August 26, 1903 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was born into a musical family and learned to play the violin and the piano while still very young.

Jimmy quit school in 1925 and headed for California where he played at house parties and nightclubs. He returned to Kansas in 1927 and joined with a band called *The Blue Devils*. The piano player for the group was **Count Basie**. Jimmy and Basie teamed up and joined a band led by **Jimmy Moten** in 1932. After Moten's death, Basie formed his own band and Jimmy became the band's lead singer. Jimmy was the only Blues singer to tour with a major Swing Band. Jimmy remained with Count Basie for over fifteen years until the band broke up in 1950. Count Basie and Jimmy were reunited for the last time at the **Newport Jazz Festival** in 1957.

After the Count Basie band broke up, Jimmy retired for a short time then formed his own group. He cut records for Vanguard in the mid fifties and also cut several records for Columbia with Coleman Hawkins, Dave Brubeck and Benny Goodman. In 1957 Jimmy had his first television appearance in **The Sound of Jazz**.

Two of Jimmy's most popular tunes were Swinging the Blues and One o'clock Jump. Some of his other songs include: Boogie Woogie, Good Morning Blues, See See Rider, In the Moonlight and I want a Little Girl.

Jimmy was almost as wide as he was tall and he was known affectionately as "**Mr. Five-by-Five**." He was a dedicated performer who believed that blues came only from having experienced poverty, and sorrow firsthand. He once stated that, "**Rich people don't know nothing about the blues, please believe me**. The Blues come right back to a person's feelings, to his daily activities in life."

Jimmy Rushing died of cancer on June 8, 1972.

Sources:

[Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

[Encyclopedia Africana](#)