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JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

**VARIOUS THEMES**

**BLACK, BROWN, AND BEIGE: MOVEMENT 3, PART 1**

**BY DUKE ELLINGTON**

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

**FULL SCORE**

JLP-7363

**BY DUKE ELLINGTON**

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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# DUKE ELLINGTON SERIES

## VARIOUS THEMES (BLACK, BROWN, AND BEIGE: MOVEMENT 3, PART 1) (1943)

### **Biographies:**

Edward Kennedy 'Duke' Ellington influenced millions of people both around the world and at home. In his fifty-year career he played over 20,000 performances in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East as well as Asia. Simply put, Ellington transcends boundaries and fills the world with a treasure trove of music that renews itself through every generation of fans and music-lovers. His legacy continues to live onward and will endure for generations to come. Wynton Marsalis said it best when he said, "His music sounds like America." Because of the unmatched artistic heights to which he soared, no one deserves the phrase "beyond category" more than Ellington, for it aptly describes his life as well. When asked what inspired him to write, Ellington replied, "My men and my race are the inspiration of my work. I try to catch the character and mood and feeling of my people."

Duke Ellington is best remembered for the over 3,000 songs that he composed during his lifetime. His best-known titles include: *It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)*, *Sophisticated Lady*, *Mood Indigo*, *Solitude*, *In a Mellow Tone*, *I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart*, and *In a Sentimental Mood*. The most amazing part about Ellington was that he had some of his most creative periods while he was on the road. *Mood Indigo* was supposedly written while on a road trip.

Duke Ellington's popular compositions set the bar for generations of brilliant jazz, pop, theatre, and soundtrack composers to come. Though he is a household name for his songs, Ellington was also an unparalleled visionary for his extended suites, often composed with Billy Strayhorn. From *Black, Brown and Beige* (1943) to *The Far East Suite* (1966) to *The Uwis Suite* (1972), the suite format was used to give his jazz songs a more empowering meaning, resonance, and purpose: To exalt, mythologize, and re-contextualize the African-American experience on a grand scale.

Duke Ellington was awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1966. He was later awarded several other prizes: The Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969 and the Legion of Honor by France in 1973, the highest civilian honors in each country. He died of lung cancer and pneumonia on May 24, 1974, a month after his 75th birthday, and is buried in the Bronx, in New York City. His funeral was attended by over 12,000 people at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Ella Fitzgerald summed up the occasion: "It's a very sad day. A genius has passed."

William Thomas Strayhorn is hardly unknown, but his presence in the world of Ellingtonia has always been shrouded in a bit of mystery. It is only within the last ten years that the Strayhorn mystery has been solved. The history of the family of William Thomas Strayhorn goes back over a hundred years in Hillsborough, NC. One set of great-grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. George Craig, lived behind the present Farmer's Exchange. A great-grandmother was the cook for Robert E. Lee. Billy, however, was born in Dayton, Ohio in 1915. His mother, Lillian Young Strayhorn, brought her children to Hillsborough often. Billy was attracted to the piano that his grandmother, Elizabeth Craig Strayhorn, owned. He played it from the moment he was tall enough to reach the keys. Even in those early years, when he played, his family would gather to listen and sing.

Originally aspiring to become a composer of concert music, he was heavily involved in jazz and popular music by the time he was a teenager, writing a musical while in high school and playing gigs locally with a trio. His father enrolled him in the Pittsburgh Musical Institution where he studied classical music. He had more classical training than most jazz musicians of his time. In 1938, he met and played for Duke Ellington, who was sufficiently impressed and invited Strayhorn to join him in New York. Neither one was sure what Strayhorn's function in the band would be, but their musical talents had attracted each other. By the end of the year Strayhorn had become essential to the Duke Ellington Band; arranging, composing, sitting in at the piano. Billy made a rapid and almost complete assimilation of Ellington's style and technique. It was difficult to discern where one's style ended and the other's began. Strayhorn lived in Duke's apartment in Harlem while the Ellington Orchestra toured Europe. Reportedly, Strayhorn studied some of Duke's scores and "cracked the code" in Ellington's words. He became Duke's musical partner, writing original music and arrangements of current pop tunes. In the early fifties, Strayhorn left the Ellington fold briefly, arranging for Lena Horne and other singers, and writing musical reviews. By 1956, however, he was back almost full-time with the Ellington organization where he remained until his death from cancer in 1967.

Some of Strayhorn's compositions are: *Chelsea Bridge*, *Day Dream*, *Johnny Come Lately*, *Raincheck*, and *My Little Brown Book*. The pieces most frequently played are Ellington's theme song, *Take the A Train* and Ellington's signatory, *Satin Doll*. Some of the suites on which he collaborated with Ellington are: the *Deep South Suite*, 1947; the *Shakespearean Suite* or *Such Sweet Thunder*, 1957; an arrangement of the *Nutcracker Suite*, 1960; the *Peer Gynt Suite*, 1962; the *Far East Suite*, 1966. He and Ellington composed the *Queen's Suite* and gave the only pressing to Queen Elizabeth II of England. Two of their suites, *Jump for Joy*, 1941 and *My People*, 1963 had as their themes the struggles and triumphs of blacks in the United States. Both included a narrative and choreography. In 1946, Strayhorn received the Esquire Silver Award for outstanding arranger.

In 1965, the Duke Ellington Jazz Society asked him to present a concert at New York's New School of Social Research. It consisted entirely of his own work performed by him and his quintet. Two years later Billy Strayhorn died of cancer on May 31, 1967. Duke Ellington's response to his death was to record what the critics cite as one of his greatest works, a collection titled *And His Mother Called Him Bill*, consisting entirely of Billy's compositions. Later, a scholarship fund was established for him by Ellington and the Juilliard School of Music.

Strayhorn's legacy was thought to be well-known for many years as composer of many classic pieces first played by Ellington. It was only after the Ellington music collection was donated to the Smithsonian Institution that Strayhorn's legacy was fully realized. As documented by musicologist Walter van de Leur in his book on the composer, several compositions copyrighted in Ellington's name were actually Strayhorn's work, including entire suites, and particularly *Satin Doll*. Ironically, perhaps his most well-known song, *Lush Life* was written during his years as a student in Pittsburgh. The Ellington band never officially recorded it.

In recent years his legacy has become even more fully appreciated following research and biographies by David Hajdu and Walter Van De Leur, which led to properly crediting Strayhorn for songs previously credited to Duke or uncredited. Billy Strayhorn wrote beautiful, thoughtful, classic, and timeless music, and was brilliant as both a composer and an arranger. While enhancing Ellington's style of striving to showcase the strengths of his band members, Strayhorn's classical background elevated the group and its sound even further and helped the name Duke Ellington become eternally synonymous with class, elegance, and some of the greatest American music ever known.

### **Background of Black, Brown, and Beige:**

Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown, and Beige* remains one of the seminal works of his legendary career. Described by Ellington as being a "tone parallel to the history of the American Negro," it was easily the most ambitious project of his career upon its composition over the course of 1942.

Ellington commenced work on this magnum opus shortly after the conclusion of one of his other early experiments at longer musical forms, 1941's jazz musical *Jump For Joy*. Surprisingly, the piece was only performed in full on three occasions: a sneak peak debut at Rye High School in Westchester County, NY on January 22, 1943, a premiere performance at Carnegie Hall the following night, and finally at Boston's Symphony Hall on January 28. From this point forward, the band would only perform individual movements, as Ellington felt that the overall length and subject matter of the piece would make it inaccessible to most audiences.

At first, the piece received, at best, mixed reception from critics and audiences alike. Many expressed skepticism over Ellington's desire to tackle more challenging, long-form musical material, with critics from several newspapers expressing their beliefs that Ellington was getting in over his head attempting to merge jazz with more "artistic" forms of music. This lukewarm reception would come to be disregarded by the time Ellington entered the studio in 1958 to record a revised version of the suite in full, this time featuring edited sections to feature renowned gospel vocalist Mahalia Jackson. This version received much more widespread critical acclaim than the original performance, and is considered to be one of the cornerstone entries of the Ellington discography.

*Black, Brown, and Beige* represents several major innovations in the world of jazz. It was Ellington's first major attempt at a long-form composition, consisting of three main parts in a quasi-symphonic structure, with instrumental soloists oftentimes being cast in roles that were more akin to opera than traditional big band writing. The work also tore down political and cultural barriers, as it openly attempted to present jazz in artistic rather than popular terms, as well as celebrating African American culture while doing so.

These key innovations make *Black, Brown, and Beige* stand out as a transcendental work of not just Ellington's expansive catalogue, but Western music in general.

### **Notes to the Conductor:**

*Black, Brown, and Beige* is divided into three movements and each of the movements is further divided into parts. *Various Themes* is part 1 of movement 3 (titled *Beige*).

The longest of the portions of *Black, Brown, and Beige*, *Various Themes* is, as the name implies, a number of separate melodic motifs stitched together and given a unified title. The original names for these melodies are *Sand*, *Beige* (incorporating the theme from *Sugar Hill Penthouse*), and *Cy Runs Rock Waltz*. This gives the movement a feeling somewhat similar

to an entr'acte in a musical.

The first section, *Sand*, is taken at a brisk Latin tempo, with the trumpets and woodwinds providing strong fanfare-style accompaniment to the rumbling and almost sinister main melody in the trombones and baritone saxophone. The rest of the saxophones join in on the melody at measure 31, with continued accompaniment from the clarinet and trumpets until measure 47. At this point, the various melody fragments are passed around through the sections, with the climax coming at measure 61. The segment comes to an abrupt halt with a dramatically descending saxophone line leading into a final dissonant brass hit.

An Ellington stride piano solo and a slow woodwind dirge at measure 88 sets up a shift to 3/4 time for the second section of the movement. The melody, handled first by trumpeter Shorty Baker at measure 105 and then trombonist Lawrence Brown at measure 161, would go on to serve as the main theme for *Sugar Hill Penthouse*. This entire section needs to be approached with a certain level of delicacy, despite the saxophones having some occasionally knotty background figures.

Measure 192 marks the next interlude between sections, with Baker once again thrust into the spotlight. This interlude is marked by a shift back to 4/4 time as well as a noticeably slower tempo. A Ben Webster tenor saxophone cadenza leads back to a 3/4 time that is taken a bit brighter than before. This section, known as *Cy Runs Rock Waltz*, features mostly rhythmic unison throughout the horns. Although he is technically an accompanist, drummer Sonny Greer's performance during this section is quite intense and virtuosic. The final portion of the movement shines the spotlight back on Webster, as he performs a series of cadenzas over multiple ensemble chords.

### **General Performance Notes:**

- Be sure to carefully adhere to the many subtle tempo shifts throughout the movement, as they add a sense of necessary musical drama.
- When a soloist is performing, the ensemble should always be sure to stay out of the way in order to allow them to stand out.
- Although this piece bears more than a few parallels to classical music, never forget that this is jazz of the highest order, and that it should always be treated as such.

### **Note About This Publication:**

Our goal in publishing *Black, Brown, and Beige* is to provide an edition that represents Duke Ellington's original compositional intent. In other words, this matches the 1943 Carnegie Hall and Symphony Hall performances. In preparing this edition for publication we used the following sources: Ellington's original 1942 score, the 1943 Carnegie Hall recording, an incomplete set of original 1943 parts, assorted re-copied parts from the 1940s, an incomplete 1958 set of parts, and a 1963 published score edited by Mercer Ellington and Tom Whaley and copied by Joe Benjamin. There were many inconsistencies between the sets of parts. In addition, as is often the case with Ellington's compositions, the music evolved over time and parts were changed or modified. As personnel in the Ellington band changed, Duke would often redistribute notes or alter certain sections to suit the musicians and overall sound of the ensemble. Our work was also subject to the fidelity of the original 1943 recording. Simply put: there are passages that one cannot clearly hear. Furthermore, where there were discrepancies between the sets of parts and the recording we relied on Ellington's score as the last word.

Publishing Duke Ellington's music is never a straightforward undertaking for the reasons illustrated above. While our mission is to publish definitive editions we do recognize that due to the nature of Ellington's compositions and his ensemble, the music will always be open for debate. Herein we make no claim to ending the debate, but rather, on the contrary, submit evidence toward the furtherance of discussion and analysis. Enjoy studying, discussing, and performing this historic music.

### **Acknowledgments:**

Thanks to Ken Kimery, John Hasse, and the Duke Ellington Collection in the Archives Center of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

**Doug DuBoff, Dylan Canterbury, and Rob DuBoff**

- February 2018

# DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

*Twentieth Anniversary Concert*

CARNEGIE HALL  
New York

Saturday Evening, January 23, 1943  
at 8:45 o'clock

*Proceeds for Russian War Relief*

## PROGRAM

### I.

Black and Tan Fantasy.....*Ellington-Miley*  
Rockin' in Rhythm .....*Ellington-Carney*  
Blue Serge .....*Mercer Ellington*  
Jumpin' Punkins .....*Mercer Ellington*

### II.

Portrait of Bert Williams .....*Ellington*  
Portrait of Bojangles  
Portrait of Florence Mills

### III.

Black, Brown and Beige.....*Ellington*  
(A Tone Parallel to the History of the Negro in America.)

— *Intermission* —

### IV.

The Flaming Sword .....*Ellington*  
Dirge .....*Billy Strayhorn*  
Nocturne  
Stomp

### V.

Are You Stickin'? .....*Ellington*  
(Chauncey Haughton, clarinet)  
Bakiff ..... *Tizol*  
(Juan Tizol, valve trombone; Ray Nance, violin)  
Jack the Bear.....*Ellington*  
(Alvin Raglin, string bass)  
Blue Belles of Harlem.....*Ellington*  
(Duke Ellington, piano)  
Cotton Tail .....*Ellington*  
(Ben Webster, tenor saxophone)  
Day Dream .....*Ellington-Strayhorn*  
(Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone)  
Rose of the Rio Grande.....*Warren-Gorman-Leslie*  
(Lawrence Brown, trombone)  
Trumpet in Spades.....*Ellington*  
(Rex Stewart, cornet)

### VI.

Don't Get Around Much Any More.....*Ellington*  
Goin' Up  
Mood Indigo

*(Duke Ellington and his orchestra are under the exclusive management of the William Morris Agency, Inc.)*

This is the program from the 1943 Carnegie Hall appearance which was partly a Russian War Relief benefit concert and a 20th anniversary celebration of Duke Ellington's band.

Duke **ELLINGTON**  
*and his ORCHESTRA*

Debut  
Carnegie  
Hall

Saturday Eve., Jan. 23-8:45 P.M.

Tickets . . . 55¢ 83¢ \$1.10 \$1.65 \$2.20 \$2.75 \$3.30 (TAX INCL.)  
NET PROCEEDS TO RUSSIAN WAR RELIEF

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This is an original advertisement for the 1943 Carnegie Hall concert.

BLACK, BROWN AND BEIGE

by  
Duke Ellington

- - -

FIRST MOVEMENT:

BLACK:

A message is shot through the jungle by drums.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Like a tom-tom in steady precision.

Like the slapping of bare black feet across the desert wastes.

Like hunger pains.

Like lash after lash as they crash and they curl and they cut. DEEP!

Like kidneys that thump.

Like heart-beats that bump...out of tempo.

Like the thud of the butt of the whip.

Like an axe-handle crushing the skull.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Like the crush of the weight of a hob-nailed boot stomping on bare black feet.

Like exploding a shell in a gun.

This BOOMing is echoing in the brain. Nerves of a black brood...in tempo.

---

1619:

Poor Boola. Chained to the bottom of a slave ship.  
Down. Beaten down. Chained to the living and the dead.  
Chilled by the icy fingers of the dead black brother  
chained to his bleeding arm. Burned by the hot blood  
mingling with the sweat of the moaning black soul  
chained to his leg. Choked by the stench of the  
rotting hold. Frenzied at the soft low moan of

After the success of Duke Ellington's human rights-themed musical *Jump for Joy* (1941), the first large scale stage production to introduce discussion of the historical and present day treatment of the "American Negro," he began work on an opera titled *Boola*. This work, while never completed, was meant to offer further evidence and discourse regarding the plight of African Americans. As his compositional focus changed during the course of 1942, Ellington wound up using the overall structure, themes, and lyrics of *Boola* in the planning of *Black, Brown, and Beige*. His goal was to incorporate the previously written lyrics in *Black, Brown, and Beige* and have them accompany the different sections of the work. It was through this new multi-movement work that Ellington sought to shed further light on the suffering that African Americans had endured.

After the initial performance of *Black, Brown, and Beige* at Rye High School, Ellington was encouraged to remove the lyrics due to their provocative nature. The concern was that these human rights themes might tarnish Ellington's premier performance at Carnegie Hall the following night. His Carnegie Hall concert would also be the first occasion of a non-white band appearing at the venue.

To the left is one of the original lyric sheets.

CARNEY

SAND

(SOLO)

19

21

27

30

39

46

155

163

169

SLOW

172

175

Here is Harry Carney's original part to *Sand*, the first part of *Various Themes*. This part was used for Duke Ellington's Carnegie Hall appearances in 1943 and 1944.





# VARIOUS THEMES

## SCORE

### BLACK, BROWN, AND BEIGE: MOVEMENT 3, PART 1

MUSIC BY DUKE ELLINGTON

ARRANGED BY DUKE ELLINGTON

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

FAST LATIN  $\text{♩} = 150$

WOODWIND 1: ALTO SAX  
WOODWIND 2: ALTO SAX  
WOODWIND 3: CLARINET/TENOR SAX.  
WOODWIND 4: TENOR SAX.  
WOODWIND 5: BARITONE SAX.  
TRUMPET 1  
TRUMPET 2  
TRUMPET 3  
TRUMPET 4  
TROMBONE 1  
TROMBONE 2  
TROMBONE 3  
GUITAR  
PIANO  
BASS  
DRUM SET

*ff* *sim.* (4) (8)

2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9

W.W. 1 (A. Sax)  
W.W. 2 (A. Sax)  
W.W. 3 (Cl.)  
W.W. 4 (T. Sax)  
W.W. 5 (B. Sax)  
TPT. 1  
TPT. 2  
TPT. 3  
TPT. 4  
TBN. 1  
TBN. 2  
TBN. 3  
D. S.

(4) (8)

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a jazz ensemble. It features 13 staves. The top five staves are for woodwinds: W.W. 1 (A. Sax), W.W. 2 (A. Sax), W.W. 3 (Cl.), W.W. 4 (T. Sax), and W.W. 5 (B. Sax). The next four staves are for trumpets: TPT. 1, TPT. 2, TPT. 3, and TPT. 4. The next three staves are for trombones: TBN. 1, TBN. 2, and TBN. 3. The bottom staff is for the Drums (D. S.). The score is in 4/4 time and begins with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). A circled '9' is at the top left. The music consists of various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are dynamic markings like accents (>) and slurs. At the bottom, there are rehearsal marks: a circled '4' above the drum staff at measure 12 and a circled '8' above the drum staff at measure 16. The page number '9' is at the bottom left, and measure numbers 10 through 16 are at the bottom.

17

Wm. 1 (A. Sax)  
Wm. 2 (A. Sax)  
Wm. 3 (C.)  
Wm. 4 (T. Sax)  
Wm. 5 (B. Sax)  
Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2  
Tpt. 3  
Tpt. 4  
Tbn. 1  
Tbn. 2  
Tbn. 3  
D. S.

*Solo*-----

(4) (8)

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a jazz ensemble. It features 13 staves for instruments: five saxophones (Wm. 1-5), four trumpets (Tpt. 1-4), three trombones (Tbn. 1-3), and a double bass (D. S.). The score is in 4/4 time and begins at measure 17. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The saxophones and trumpets play a melodic line with accents and slurs. The trombones play a rhythmic accompaniment. The double bass plays a steady bass line with a 'y' mark above the first measure. A 'Solo' section is indicated for the saxophones starting at measure 23. Measure numbers 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 are printed at the bottom of the page.