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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DUKE ELLINGTON'S COMPOSITIONAL STYLE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE SELECTED WORKS

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington's compositions are significant to the study of jazz and American music in general. This study examines his compositional style through a comparative analysis of three works from each of his main stylistic periods. The analyses focus on form, instrumentation, texture and harmony, melody, tonality, and rhythm. Each piece is examined on its own and their significant features are compared.

Eric S. Strother

May 1, 2001

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DUKE ELLINGTON'S COMPOSITIONAL STYLE:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE SELECTED WORKS

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THESIS

Eric Scott Strother

The Graduate School
University of Kentucky

2001

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DUKE ELLINGTON'S COMPOSITIONAL STYLE:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE SELECTED WORKS

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
at the University of Kentucky

By

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Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Richard Domek, Professor of Music

Lexington, Kentucky

2001

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington is gaining respect as one of America’s greatest composers. The centennial of his birth in 1999 brought about renewed interest in his music for performers, listeners, and scholars alike. This study is a comparative analysis of three of Duke Ellington’s compositions: “East St. Louis Toodle-O,” “Cottontail,” and “Oclupaca.” The study will examine each of the three pieces on its own, and through this brief comparison, will posit an outline of his compositional style.

The document will begin with an overview of the life and style of the composer. Then analyses of the three individual pieces will be presented, concluding with a comparison of the three works. The analyses will examine each piece in terms of form, instrumentation, texture and harmony, melody, tonality, and rhythm.

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to show how Ellington’s compositional style developed through his career. The bulk of the existing literature deals with issues of performance, biographical information, and personnel. Scholars are only now beginning to examine the compositions themselves; “East St. Louis Toodle-O” has been discussed briefly in Mark Tucker’s *Ellington: The Early Years* and Gunther Schuller’s *Early Jazz*. “Cottontail” is discussed in some depth in Gunther Schuller’s *The Swing Era* and Mark Gridley’s *Jazz Styles*.¹ There do not appear to be any published works which consider “Oclupaca.”

Mark Tucker primarily focuses on the earlier recordings of “East St. Louis Toodle-O.” After discussing Bubber Miley’s trumpet theme, he deals specifically with the form of the piece. The other feature Tucker considers is the distinctive ostinato figure. Gunther Schuller focuses primarily on comparing the four earliest recordings in terms of their form and instrumentation.

¹ Mark Gridley, *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000); Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Mark Tucker, *Ellington: The Early Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

Schuller also writes extensively about “Cotton Tail,” which he describes as “an important precursor of the big-band style of ‘modern jazz.’”² After addressing the unique saxophone voicings in the bridge section, Schuller turns to Ben Webster’s solo. All in all, Schuller believes “Cotton Tail” is an excellent example of a jazz composition in terms of improvisation and preconceived material. More importantly, it was a harbinger of the directions jazz would take in the following years.

Methodology

The three pieces for this study were selected as examples from the three main stylistic periods of Ellington's career. The first period was from the late 1920s through the mid-1930s, represented by "East St. Louis Toodle-O." The second period was the late 1930s and early 1940s, represented by "Cottontail." There is considerable debate among Ellington fans as to which of these first two periods was actually the higher point of creativity. The final period runs from the late 1950s through the late 1960s, represented here by "Oclupaca" from the *Latin American Suite*.

I chose to use the first recording of each piece for this study with the exception of "East St. Louis Toodle-O."³ This particular recording was chosen due to its availability. Unless otherwise noted, references to these song titles refer to these specific recordings. Where there are discrepancies between the manuscripts and the recordings, the recorded versions will take precedence.

The primary sources for the music were the author’s transcriptions and manuscripts from the Duke Ellington Archive at the Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History. Since the manuscripts for “East St. Louis Toodle-O” were incomplete and seem to be of a later version of the composition, the primary source was a personal transcription; I also consulted a

² Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 126.

³ Ellington, Edward Kennedy. “Cottontail.” Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra. From *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz, Revised: Volume III*. CBS Special Projects RDD 033-3; Ellington, Edward Kennedy. “East St. Louis Toodle-O.” Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. From *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz, Revised: Volume III*. CBS Special Projects RDD 033-3; Ellington, Edward Kennedy. “Oclupaca.” Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. *Latin American Suite*. Fantasy Records OJCCD-469-2.

partial transcription and study by Richard Domek, who also reviewed the final version of the author's transcription.⁴

"Cottontail" and "Oclupaca" were reconstructed from the Smithsonian manuscripts and checked against the recording and published transcriptions from the *Jazz @ Lincoln Center* series by David Berger.⁵ These additional sources helped clarify unclear portions of the manuscripts and recordings but did not serve as primary source material.

The preparations for the study included extensive listening to recordings by the Ellington orchestra. An attempt was made to focus on the recordings which were made in the same general time frame as the pieces were written. The three pieces selected are intended to exemplify the characteristics of the period, but are not necessarily considered to exemplify the period as a whole.

The following changes in the music are evident in a chronological style progression:

1. Greater harmonic complexity
2. Greater emphasis on tone color
3. Greater emphasis on the reeds and less emphasis on the brass
4. Greater emphasis on composition and less emphasis on improvisation

After discussing each piece I will compare the three pieces based on those characteristics. The analysis will focus on the wind parts, but will also include the rhythm section (piano, guitar/banjo, bass, and drums) when relevant. When discussing the melodic characteristics of homorhythmic tutti sections the highest sounding instrument is considered the melody and the other instruments are simply providing a chordal accompaniment, unless one of the inner voices is so prominent as to be considered the lead.

One controversy surrounding Ellington's music is the issue of whether some solos were truly improvised or were composed by Ellington. The details of this debate are outside the scope of this study and therefore will not be explored. Unless manuscript or eyewitness evidence exists to the contrary, the solos are considered improvised. Therefore, this study will consider the solo sections in terms of their melodic content as well as their relation to the rest of the texture.

⁴ Richard Domek. "East St. Louis Toodle-Oo," brass quintet arrangement. Unpublished.

⁵ Ellington, Edward Kennedy. "Cottontail." Transcribed by David Berger and Brent Wallarab, Warner Brother's Publications, 1998. Ellington, Edward Kennedy. "Oclupaca." Transcribed by David Berger, Warner Brother's Publications, 1999.

It is important to present an overview of the life and style of the composer before beginning the analysis in order to illuminate some of the issues surrounding the compositions as well as place the works into a context.

Historical Background ⁶

Born in Washington, D.C., on April 29, 1899, Ellington was raised as part of the city's Black middle class⁷. He was exposed to music of the European tradition; his mother was proficient at the piano and played popular songs and rags from sheet music, and his father played famous opera pieces by ear.

Despite this early exposure, Ellington was not interested in music as a child. His mother enrolled him in piano lessons around age eight, but he was more interested in baseball than music at the time. This attitude changed in his teens when he heard ragtime piano player Harvey Brooks and found the music irresistible. He began frequenting Holliday's pool hall, located next to the Howard Theater, which attracted many of the local pianists. He watched and listened to anyone who would play; some were formally trained conservatory players and some others were self-taught ear players. One of these men, the conservatory-trained Oliver "Doc" Perry, taught him how to read music and recognize chords simply by looking at the music. Ellington later received lessons in harmony from Henry Grant, a teacher at his high school. By the time he was nineteen, Ellington had formed his first band, *The Duke's Serenaders*.

In 1923 Ellington and two band members, saxophonist Toby Hardwick and drummer Sonny Greer, left Washington to try to make it in New York where they joined up with Elmer Snowden and his band. Their first attempt was a dismal failure which sent them back to Washington. Determined to succeed, the band (now known as the *Washingtonians*), returned to New York and landed a job at the Club Kentucky. The orchestra's tenure at the Club Kentucky was by no means steady work, but it was a significant time for the group.⁸ Summer tours and recordings spread Ellington's name

⁶ Biographical material is summarized from John Edward Hasse, *Beyond Category: The Life and Genius of Duke Ellington* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993) and Mark Tucker, *Ellington: The Early Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

⁷ John Hasse discusses the caste system present in Washington's Black community at this time in greater detail in his book *Beyond Category: The Life and Genius of Duke Ellington*, 29-33.

⁸ The Kentucky Club was notorious for fires in late spring. Fortunately for the musicians the club's owners always seemed to have a "hunch" that something might happen and suggested that they take their instruments with them before these fires occurred. (Hasse, 79.)

and music beyond the confines of a seedy nightclub and into the homes of people who might never have heard his music otherwise. The new members added to the orchestra, most notably trumpeter James “Bubber” Miley, trombonist Joe “Tricky Sam” Nanton, and saxophonist Harry Carney, were instrumental in defining what would become the Ellington sound.

Ellington’s exposure at the Club Kentucky was key to the orchestra getting a job at the Cotton Club, Harlem’s premier nightclub. The Cotton Club years are considered by some to be the zenith of Ellington’s career. This period further refined the orchestra’s sound with the additions of clarinetist Barney Bigard and saxophonist Johnny Hodges, and helped Ellington grow as a composer by requiring him to write in a variety of musical styles. He had to write for a new show every few months, and he was constantly modifying pieces he had written earlier. Playing with his orchestra for six or seven nights a week gave Ellington the chance to learn the abilities of his players which he would then use to refine his creations. Ellington, more than any other band leader, would use that knowledge in his compositions.

A few years after Ellington left the Cotton Club in 1931, the orchestra went through a low period. The deaths of his parents, personnel changes, and life on the road changed Ellington’s musical ideas. In the late 1930s and 1940s, the entire face of jazz was changing. According to Gunther Schuller, “the hellion audience of the gangster-ridden ‘jazz age’ gave way to an audience characterized by a more personal, deeper involvement with jazz. The speakeasy was replaced by the college campus and more people saw in jazz a form of *musical* expression, rather than merely a ‘wild’ new form of exotic entertainment.”⁹ While Ellington was moving toward a more refined style, focusing on melody, harmony, tone color, and moods, the rest of the jazz world was entering the “swing era,” in which the music was more commercial and rhythmically driven. Ellington and his orchestra remained true to their musical ideals, while incorporating enough of the “swing” style to get lucrative jobs, recordings, tours, and broadcasts.

The early 1940s marked another pinnacle for the Ellington orchestra. The additions of composer/arranger Billy Strayhorn, bassist Jimmie Blanton, and tenor saxophonist Ben Webster led the orchestra into a period that rivaled the Cotton Club years as a high point in Ellington’s career. Strayhorn added formal exposure to Western art music (which would be used in composing larger scale works) that Ellington lacked in addition to easing Ellington’s burden of being the sole composer and arranger for the orchestra. Blanton was a revolutionary bassist who conceived of bass

⁹ Schuller. *Early Jazz*, 356.

lines as melodies rather than simply harmonic underpinning.¹⁰ Webster was one of the top tenor saxophonists of the time and was equally at ease playing solos in the “hot” dance numbers as well as in the “sweet” ballads. The music of this period was characterized by Hasse as

being marked by increased rhythmic drive and instrumental virtuosity brought by Blanton and Webster, inspired solos from other players, expanded harmonic choices introduced by Strayhorn, consistently high musical quality, presaging of bebop and other musical developments to come, and numerous musical explorations and innovations.¹¹

This high point was short lived; the mid 1940s again threatened the Ellington orchestra. Personnel issues (including loss of Johnny Hodges, Jimmie Blanton, Ben Webster and Sonny Greer and World War II which was responsible for drafting many eligible musicians), industry conflicts, and the increasing popularity of the small combo-oriented style known as bebop threatened the existence of the orchestra. Ellington again adapted for survival. After moderate success as a songwriter, Ellington turned his attention to extended works, and through a series of concerts at Carnegie Hall, he worked to establish his orchestra as a concert orchestra. These concerts led to increased fame outside of the jazz community, but inside he faced harsh criticism. By the late 1940s, many jazz critics were calling for Ellington to join other notables, such as Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey, and disband his orchestra. Ellington persevered through the early 1950s, which brought about more changes to his world. Nightclubs closed as people moved out of cities and into the suburbs, vaudeville theaters had already begun closing with the advent of television, and when jobs were available, they often went to the smaller, more affordable combos.

The turning point came in the summer of 1956 when *Time* ran a cover story on Ellington. On the eve of the article’s publication, Ellington and his orchestra debuted at the prestigious Newport Jazz Festival in Newport, Rhode Island. He prepared a new composition for this occasion and was excited about the opportunity. The first set did not fare well; four of his members did not show up. They opened their second set with the new composition, *Newport Festival Suite* and then

¹⁰ Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 110.

¹¹ Hasse, 240.

broke into the 1937 composition *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue*.¹² Tenor saxophonist Paul Gonsalves took over during a solo break, and after the sixth chorus, the crowd broke loose into dancing and a riot-like frenzy.¹³ The promoter urged Ellington to stop the show, but apparently sensing the magic of the moment, Ellington refused. This gave him the encouragement he needed to press forward, and for the next fifteen years Ellington composed with renewed zeal.

More than at any other time in his career, Ellington's desire to create was insatiable. He took his orchestra into private studios to record more than three hundred pieces between 1956 and his death in 1974. Ellington also began moving away from his role as bandleader during this period. In 1965, the opportunity came to produce a composition based on spiritual themes. Grace Cathedral in San Francisco commissioned him to write a work to be performed as part of their consecration celebration. *The Concert of Sacred Music*, the first of three such concerts, was a reworking of existing pieces with a new opening piece based on the first four words of the Bible, "In the Beginning, God."¹⁴

As often happened with Ellington, tragedy struck at the peak of his creative periods. This time it was the death of Billy Strayhorn in May 1967.¹⁵ Unlike the other tragedies that stopped Ellington cold, this one instead prompted a tribute to Strayhorn called . . . *And His Mother Called Him Bill*, which was recorded 3 months later.

In 1968 Ellington was appointed to the National Council on the Arts by President Lyndon Johnson. During Johnson's tenure, Ellington was invited to the White House seven times, including once to accept the President's Gold Medal. The Nixon White House hosted a celebration of the composer's seventieth birthday, brought to a climax by President Nixon's presentation of the nation's highest non-military honor to Ellington — the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In the fall of 1968, the orchestra made its first tour of South and Central America which inspired the *Latin American Suite*. The orchestra spent the next few years touring foreign countries. In 1971 they went on an extensive tour of Europe under the direction of the U.S. State Department and made several trips to the Far East.

¹²Ellington avoided much reference to or performance of his older works, perhaps because it reminded him of what his critics were saying about his best work being behind him.

¹³ Instead of the single blues chorus he was supposed to play, Gonsalves played twenty-seven.

¹⁴ The work won a Grammy for Best Original Jazz Composition.

¹⁵ Ellington's estranged wife Edna died in 1966, but there is no indication that this affected his work.

Ellington began to realize his own mortality as he watched his friends and bandmates die. In January 1974 he was hospitalized for influenza. During the stay doctors diagnosed a deeper problem; Ellington had developed lung cancer from a lifetime of smoking. He knew from the extensive spread of the disease that he would not live much longer, but he kept that knowledge to himself. In March, Ellington was forced to leave the orchestra and checked into the Harkness Pavilion of Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, where he did not stop working until his death. With an electric piano by his bedside, he continued working on his opera *Queenie Pie* and consulted with his son Mercer on the ballet *The Three Black Kings* and the recording of the Westminster Abbey performance of the *Third Sacred Concert*. Ellington died May 24, 1974; his funeral at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York drew over 10,000 mourners, including several high-profile names in jazz, such as Count Basie and Ella Fitzgerald.

The Ellington Style

It is important to understand some of the basic characteristics of Duke Ellington's compositional style in order to establish a perspective from which to evaluate the works in this study. Like other composers, Ellington's style evolved over the course of his life, while also maintaining some basic characteristics. There are four distinct styles attributed to the Ellington orchestra through his career.¹⁶ The "jungle" style is characterized by the expressive growl sounds of the trumpet and trombone, evoking images of voices in a jungle night; the "mood" style is moody and sad, indicative of the real blues feeling, even in pieces which are not blues in form; the "concerto" style referred to a set of small concerti for different soloists in the orchestra; the "standard" style, which were included the standard jazz repertoire packaged in the colors and timbres typical of his orchestra. Regardless of the stylistic label, Duke Ellington's compositional style was centered around his attitude toward music and rhythm, the contribution of his sidemen, and his facility at the keyboard. These elements are clear in an examination of any of his recordings.

One of the main attractions of jazz lies in the integration of improvised elements and the individual interpretations of pre-written scores. Ellington was the first genuine jazz composer to incorporate these effects comprehensively. The sounds of the rural field shouts, work hollers, and blues had already made some inroads into instrumental interpretation. Ellington believed everything

¹⁶ Ken Rattenbury, *Duke Ellington: Jazz Composer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 15.

is dependent on rhythm and everything people do is governed by rhythm. Thus, the rhythmic nature of this music is an outgrowth of the natural order.¹⁷

Ellington's style, particularly regarding form and rhythm, seems to have been influenced by early forms of American Black music, such as blues and ragtime, as well as the popular (white) music of Tin Pan Alley. The melodic conventions of the blues and the rhythms of early ragtime remained integral to Ellington's work throughout his career.

He always shunned the term "jazz" because of its ties to the dark and seedy parts of life and preferred to think of his music as "Negro music," or the music of his people. He described it as "something more than the American idiom. It is a result of our transplantation to American soil and was our reaction in the plantation days to the tyranny we endured. What we could not say openly we expressed in music." His success as a composer likely came from skillful blending of elements of black (African) and white (Euro-American) music.

One formal element of some West-African music is a sort of antiphonal "call and response," whereby a leader sings phrases which alternate with phrases sung by a chorus. It is the chorus, rather than the leader, that is the foundation of the song. The repetitive rhythmic character of the chorus parts provide a firm foundation for the leader to improvise over. A peculiarity of this call-and-response pattern is the elision that occurs between the call and the response. The two parts regularly overlap by one starting while the other part is still singing.

The contributions of Ellington's sidemen can be summarized in the "Ellington effect." The term was coined by Billy Strayhorn, who collaborated with Ellington as a composer, arranger, lyricist, second pianist, and deputy leader from 1939 until his own death in 1967. Strayhorn described Ellington's unique sound like this:

Each member of his band is to him a distinctive tone color and set of emotions, which he mixes with others equally distinctive to produce a third thing, which I like to call the Ellington effect. Sometimes this mixing happens on paper and frequently right on the bandstand. I have often seen him exchange parts in the middle of a piece because the man and the part weren't the same character.¹⁸

¹⁷ Rattenbury, 7.

¹⁸ Hasse, 309

In other words, Ellington did not score the music for a particular instrument, but for the distinct sound of the orchestra member. Ellington considered the ability to hear his music performed crucial to his ability to compose. He seemed to be able to recognize the personal sound of a musician and incorporate that into his own conception of how orchestral jazz and solo jazz should sound. Ellington was always deeply involved with his soloists. His concern was with the individual musicians and what happened when they put their musical characters together. By letting his men play in ways that were comfortable to them, Ellington was able to discern qualities in their sounds that might not otherwise be discovered.

It should be noted that even though they are described as Ellington's arrangements, these early pieces were actually worked out by the whole group. Someone would come up with an idea, the band would talk it over, play it, and make adjustments as needed. These collaborations would lay the groundwork for Ellington's personalized compositions in which each player's part would be written with him in mind.

Generally speaking, during these years Ellington came to rehearsals with an idea for a piece. He then worked through the piece with his orchestra, telling the players what to play for that section and listening as each player played his part. If the part did not sound right, Ellington changed it until he was satisfied with the results. The copyist then created a rough score based on what was being played. Ellington then took that score and polished it even more.

Ellington was a pianist and leaned toward a pianistic approach to orchestration. It was common for Ellington to thicken and extend a chord to provide a different note for each player. Schuller commented on this: "Such voicings were unorthodox and wrong, according to the textbooks. Ellington did not care about the textbooks. His own piano-playing gave him the most accessible answer to voice-leading problems. Contrapuntal thinking has always been foreign to him, but the parallel blocks of sounds he favors so predominantly are handled with such variety and ingenuity that we, as listeners, never notice the lack of occasional contrapuntal relief."¹⁹ Ellington blended his pianistic approach with the general harmonic background found in the popular music of Tin Pan Alley. Parallelism was common to in the music, but Ellington's harmony was unique in its personal connection to blues chromaticism.²⁰

¹⁹ Gunther Schuller. *Early Jazz*, 342-3.

²⁰ Rattenbery

In his book *Early Jazz: Its Origins and Development*, Gunther Schuller elaborates on a number of stylistic characteristics of Ellington's early period. The first of these is the separation of the reeds and the brass. Ellington treated the reeds and the brass as separate groups of instruments and rarely used cross-group voicings. An exception to this is the way Ellington used the clarinet. In ensemble passages it was quite common for him to use the clarinet like a lead trumpet to create a three part trumpet line.

In the late 1920s Bubber Miley was largely responsible for the initial steps in developing the orchestra's style through his introduction of a rougher sound. One of the defining characteristics of the Ellington orchestra during these early years was the "growl and plunger" technique attributed to Miley and Nanton. While not a compositional technique, per se, this aural effect created an opportunity to write things that may not have worked as well with players using a straight tone. It also led the orchestra to the "jungle" sound which made them famous.

Ellington's middle period continued the trend of collaboration while also moving toward a sense of centralized control by Ellington. Ellington was the primary shaper of the harmony, instrumental voicings, and form, while the players were still largely in control of the timbral aspects. Even though his work featured more complex, non-traditional harmonies, Ellington's style in this period could best be described as experimental rather than a completely radical departure from convention. For example, he might use unconventional voicings for conventional harmonies, such as putting the ninth of a chord in the baritone sax or doubling a "non-chord" tone such as the sixth.

One clear delineation between this period and the early period is the focus of the individual pieces. Ellington was no longer concerned with simply writing dance pieces, but was instead focusing on producing thoroughly composed orchestral works, in which improvisation was carefully integrated within the structure of the work. Unlike many of his early pieces, which featured a head followed by a series of solos, the middle period pieces often used only one or two solos (if any) in the midst of preconceived orchestral sections: improvisation was secondary to the structure of the composition.

Ellington's work in the late 1950s and 1960s represented both a departure from and a logical outgrowth of trends established earlier in his career. The use of harmony, tonality, instrumental voicings, and ensemble resources reflected an extension of the techniques used in the early 1940s. As time progressed, there was a greater focus on the reed section and smaller, "chamber-oriented" ensemble combinations. Meanwhile the use of tight ensemble voicings, the degree of harmonic dissonance, and the treatment of tonality represent a change in style from previous years. Innovative

harmonies, inverted textures, and crossed voices also played a greater role than they did in earlier works. The increased use of dissonance and tight spacings imparts a more penetrating quality to the harmonic style.

Throughout Ellington's career he was constantly refining his style. Few compositions were considered finished products when they were recorded, evidenced by the number of different versions which exist for many pieces. Some argue which is the "right" or "authoritative" version of a piece, but there is no simple answer to this question. To Ellington music existed in the sounds rather than on paper: with each performance the pieces were being recreated. The versions of the three pieces considered in this study are perhaps the most popular and accessible versions, but they cannot be labeled "authoritative."

Now that the historical and stylistic foundations have been laid, the rest of this study will focus directly on the music. The next three chapters will focus on the three individual pieces; the final chapter will compare the three.

Chapter 2

East St. Louis Toodle-O

“East St. Louis Toodle-O”²¹ entered Ellington’s repertoire around 1926. The version examined in this study is the Victor recording from December 19, 1927.²² The piece came out of the orchestra’s early “collaborative composition” period; ASCAP assigns compositional credit to Ellington and James “Bubber” Miley.²³ “East St. Louis Toodle-O” was one of Ellington’s first “hit” records and served as the orchestra’s signature piece until the 1940’s, when it was replaced by “Take the ‘A’ Train.”²⁴

The personnel for the recording include Otto Hardwicke (alto saxophone), Rudy Jackson (tenor saxophone/clarinet), Harry Carney (baritone saxophone), James “Bubber” Miley (trumpet), Louis Metcalf (trumpet), Joe “Tricky Sam” Nanton (trombone), Fred Guy (banjo), Wellman Braud (string bass), Sonny Greer (drums), and Duke Ellington (piano).

The name of the piece, which developed during the recording session, is a mix of commercialism and African American dance tradition. According to Mark Tucker, the reference to East St. Louis in the title was the result of the original recording company wanting to increase sales in the predominantly black East St. Louis, Illinois. “Toodle-O,” pronounced by Ellington as “Toad’lo,” was described by the composer as a broken walk. Tucker believes that this was probably tied to a dance style known as the todalo. The todalo was a dance with jerky, unrefined movements, reminiscent of the broken walk to which Ellington referred.²⁵

“East St. Louis Toodle-O” is most notable for Ellington’s use of texture and tone color. The opening ostinato permeates the work and serves as a melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic foundation.

²¹ All musical examples in this chapter, unless otherwise indicated, are the composite of the author’s transcriptions with those of Richard Domek. Mark Tucker’s transcriptions in *Ellington: The Early Years* were consulted but not used.

²² Three earlier recordings exist, but this one was selected because of the availability of materials.

²³ American Society of Composers, Artists, and Publishers (ASCAP) “ACE on the Web.” http://www.ascap.com/ace/search.cdf?searchstr=duke%20ellington&search_in=w&search_det=t,s,w,p,b,v&dsn=ws_ascap&start=1&mode=results&search_type=exact&results_pp=5&requesttimeout=600 April 5, 2001.

²⁴ Tucker, 243.

²⁵ Tucker, 250.

The characteristic “jungle” brass in combination with the dark tone of this ostinato figure give the work an earthy character.

Form

Formally, “East St. Louis Toodle-O” consists of the alternation of two contrasting sections. The first section, labeled A, has a minor tonality and is divisible into eight-measure phrases. The B section is in the relative major tonality and can be subdivided into an eight-measure phrase followed by a ten-measure phrase. The baritone sax and trombone solos consist of back-to-back strains (B1 plus B2); taken together we can view these as a large 36 measure B section. The following outline summarizes the structure of the piece:

Section	Tonality	Length (in measures)
A1 (Miley solo)	Minor	32 (8+8+8+8)
B1+B2 (Carney/Nanton solos)	Major	36 (8+10+8+10)
A2 (Jackson solo)	Minor	16 (8+8)
B3 (Brass soli)	Major	18 (8+10)
A3 (Miley reprise)	Minor	8

Figure 2.1 Formal design of “East St. Louis Toodle-O”

The outline reveals the alternating section pattern of A1 B1(B2) A2 B3 A3 and its corresponding tonal pattern. It also exposes a pattern regarding sectional length: each time a section repeats, its length is cut in half. It is difficult to know whether this plan of formal diminution was a conscious compositional choice. Whatever the reason, this formal design is an interesting one in that it fits the character of a piece that gradually fades away.

The smaller scale form of Miley’s opening statement is clearly a 32-bar a a b a structure, despite Miley’s liberal melodic delineation. As Figure 2.2 shows, he overlaps the entrance of his next phrase with the end of the previous phrase’s accompaniment, a technique used consistently throughout this section. During the bridge, which is a tonal miniature of the large-scale B sections, Miley plays over a sparse accompaniment for the first six measures before the full orchestra enters to accompany the final two measures. In contrast, Rudy Jackson’s solo, the first repeat of A, is clearly divided into eight-measure phrases, and his cadences coincide with those of the ostinato.

Miley's restatement at the end is virtually identical to the first eight measures of his opening statement.

The musical score illustrates the phrasing of Miley's solo and the accompanying ostinato. The trumpet part is divided into three phrases: Miley Phrase 1 (measures 1-8), Miley Phrase 2 (measures 9-16), and Miley Phrase 3 (measures 17-24). The ostinato part is divided into two phrases: Ostinato Phrase 1 (measures 1-8) and Ostinato Phrase 2 (measures 9-24). The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Figure 2.2 Miley phrasing compared with the ostinato phrasing in “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Milley. Copyright © 1927.

The use of the familiar a a b a song form in the opening section of the piece makes the B section stand in greater contrast. From the beginning of the piece the listener has heard forty-eight measures of music that divide evenly into eight-measure phrases before the second half of Carney's solo is stretched to ten measures. The soloists (Carney and Nanton) subdivide the eight-measure phrase into two four-measure segments and the ten-measure phrase into segments of four and six measures; the last two measures function as a cadential evasion. Carney highlights the beginning of the second phrase by repeating the melodic material from the first four measures of phrase one. The perception of this 8+10 design is strengthened when Nanton's solo follows the same form. The brass soli restatement in B3 section maintains a parallel melodic emphasis on phrase structure.

The A and B sections and their successive variants are clearly set apart from one another. In addition to the tonal and timbral contrasts, Ellington heralds each change of section by the use of a three quarter note figure in the final measure of the preceding section (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3 End of the first section of “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

Instrumentation

Ellington’s basic musical desire was to make his orchestra sound different from other competing orchestras in order to give him an advantage in the highly competitive market.²⁶ One way he was able to do this was through his orchestration. Some of these orchestral choices were determined by conventions of dance orchestras at the time, but even within those institutionalized structures, Ellington was able to carve out a unique place apart from his competitors.

At this point in the development of ensemble jazz, brass instruments, particularly trumpets, were an important element of the sound. While Ellington certainly uses the brass in a leading role, the reeds make a significant contribution as well. An obvious brass focus is the solo trumpet, which frames the work with a statement of the theme at the beginning and end. Bubber Miley’s trumpet sound was a defining factor in these early years. The “growl and plunger” technique, which was his trademark, provided a raw, “gutbucket” sound to Ellington’s orchestra that no one else had. The trombone solo near the midpoint of the piece and the brass soli at the end also lend emphasis to the dominant role of the brass. Although there are two trumpets in the orchestra, the other trumpet plays only during the brass soli and the transition section of Miley’s bridge.

While the reeds have perhaps a less dominant role than the brass, their contributions are significant. The three saxophones are the foundational elements of the ostinato that pervades this work. The use of the baritone saxophone as a solo instrument (and Harry Carney’s strength and facility on the instrument) is a distinguishing characteristic of the Ellington orchestra. Other

²⁶ Ken Rattenbury, 18.

orchestras used the baritone saxophone, but Carney's sound and Ellington's scoring for him were distinguishing characteristics of Ellington's orchestra.²⁷ Rudy Jackson was a clarinet player who doubled on tenor saxophone. In this piece Ellington used him mostly on the saxophone, but Jackson switched to his main instrument for his solo. The color contrast created by the use of a solo clarinet is striking. The dark, woody sound of the clarinet playing over the ostinato creates a contrasting, mellow formal section between the previous high trombone solo and the subsequent brass soli.

Texture/Harmony

Ellington uses three basic textures in this work: solo with the orchestral ostinato, solo with countermelody, and tutti. These textures correspond with formal divisions and are an effective means of contrast. The minor (A and variant) sections are constructed as solo with ostinato, while the major sections (B and variant) are solo with rhythm section accompaniment, or are tutti. Even within Miley's minor opening solo, the ostinato drops out for the major-tonality bridge.

The chord voicings in the ostinato (Figure 2.4) appear in root position as well as in inversions. The root position chords have the root assigned to the string bass, baritone sax, and alto sax. The third is in the piano and trombone, with the fifth in the tenor sax. The inversions merely

A1

A. Sax

T. Sax/
B. Sax

Trombone

Piano (l.h.)/
Bass

Cmin Ddim Cmin Bdim7 Cmin Ddim G7 Cmin [G+] DdimCminDdim

Figure 2.4 Ostinato from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

rotate the chord members down through the voicings. Doubling the bass line in the highest voice seems to be a standard convention that emphasizes the bass pitches, while the use of the piano to

²⁷ Hasse, 94.

double the trombone part in the same octave seems more unconventional. A more conventional doubling would be to double the trombone with the tenor sax or to use the piano in a different octave. Ellington chose to play along with Nanton. Conspicuously absent from this ostinato are the trumpets. This was likely a conscious choice, precipitated by the need to keep Bubber Miley fresh for his featured solo and to sustain Ellington's desired aural effect. As it is, the ostinato is dark and murky, and the addition of the trumpets would have added a brightness to the sound that is counter to this mysterious quality.

Bubber Miley's opening solo sounds against this ostinato (Figure 2.5) with few repeated dissonances. The g^b1 (measures A1:2, 9, 12, and 13) is a "blue" note and resolves down by a half step to f^1 in three of its five occurrences (mm. A1:2, 12, 13). Measure A1:9 has the blue note leaping a tritone away to c^1 .

The figure displays a musical score for the solo by Bubber Miley and the ostinato from "East St. Louis Toodle-O". The score is divided into three systems, each with a trumpet part on top and an ostinato part on the bottom. The ostinato is played by Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Trombone/Piano, Bari Sax, and Bass. The trumpet part is labeled "Trumpet 1".

System 1: Measures A1:1 to A1:8. The trumpet part begins with "Beginning of Miley Phrase 1" at measure A1:1. The ostinato part begins with "Beginning of Ostinato Phrase 1" at measure A1:1. The trumpet part features a melodic line with triplets and a half note. The ostinato part consists of a series of chords, some with triplets.

System 2: Measures A1:9 to A1:16. The trumpet part ends "End of Miley Phrase 1" at measure A1:8 and begins "Beginning of Miley Phrase 2" at measure A1:9. The ostinato part ends "End of Ostinato Phrase 1" at measure A1:8 and begins "Beginning of Ostinato Phrase 2" at measure A1:9. The trumpet part continues with a melodic line, including a tritone leap from g^b1 to c^1 in measure A1:9. The ostinato part continues with a series of chords, some with triplets.

System 3: Measures A1:17 to A1:24. The trumpet part ends "End of Miley Phrase 2" at measure A1:16 and begins "Beginning of Miley Phrase 3" at measure A1:17. The ostinato part ends "End of Ostinato Phrase 2" at measure A1:16. The trumpet part continues with a melodic line, including a tritone leap from g^b1 to c^1 in measure A1:17. The ostinato part continues with a series of chords, some with triplets.

Figure 2.5 Miley solo with ostinato from "East St. Louis Toodle-O" by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

Another prominent dissonance is the sustained f^1 in measure A1:3. At first glance this fourth scale degree appears to function as the resolution tone for the g^b1 in measure A1:2, but it also functions as a passing tone between the g^b1 and e^b1 . Miley uses this f^1 to extend the tension created

by the blue note before resolving it to the more consonant $e\flat^1$. The effect is enhanced by the presence of a C minor chord in the ostinato.

Miley frequently imposes $E\flat$ against diminished sonorities that do not contain this pitch. Measure A1:4 is conspicuous because of the entrance on $e\flat^2$ over the D diminished chord. This pitch is clearly anticipatory of the C minor sonority that follows. In measure A1:6 $e\flat^1$ appears over a B diminished harmony and serves as an upper neighbor to d^1 , creating tension and again preparing C minor. Measure A1:10 is an example of $e\flat^1$ being used as a dissonant “quasi-cadential” pitch. The $e\flat^1$ at the end of measure A1:14 again anticipates C minor.

The ostinato also appears under the clarinet solo (Figure 2.6). The first eight measures are mostly consonant. The $d\flat^1$ which begins measure A2:2 creates a tremendous dissonance against

The image shows a musical score for a clarinet solo and an ostinato. The clarinet part is in the treble clef, and the ostinato is in the bass clef. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system, labeled 'A2:1', shows measures 1 through 4. The clarinet line starts with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, B4, and C5. The ostinato line consists of a series of chords: Ddim, G7(b9), and Bdim7. The second system, labeled 'A2:5', shows measures 5 through 8. The clarinet line includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 5. The ostinato line continues with chords: G7(b9), Bdim7, and G7(b9).

Figure 2.6 Clarinet solo (first half) from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

the D diminished harmony in the ostinato; it resolves by half-step to a less dissonant minor seventh. This c^1 immediately progresses to $B\flat$ and G, which remain dissonant with the ostinato; the G is particularly dissonant given that it sounds over F and $A\flat$. This measure and measure A2:4 present the same sounding harmony, $G^{7(b9)}$, using different constructions. Jackson’s line in measure A2:2 implies a G triad with a passing fourth while the harmony is clearly D diminished; this makes the sounding harmony for this measure is with an accented appoggiatura on the downbeat ($d\flat^1$). Measure A2:4 juxtaposes a G^7 arpeggio in the clarinet over a B diminished-seventh chord in the ostinato. The final two measures of the first half (A2:7-8) present the climax of this solo. As before,

the ostinato descends scalewise back to C, but the clarinet moves upward. This contrary motion accents the solo's climax at the end of the first phrase.

Figure 2.7 Clarinet solo (second half) with simplified ostinato from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

The second half of this solo (Figure 2.7) begins in dissonance. Over the C minor sonority in the ostinato, Jackson alternates between $c\sharp^1$ and d^1 . By measure A2:11, he achieves greater consonance with the other parts. His $F\sharp$ is dissonant with the G in the trombone and piano, but it function as lower neighbor tones. The c^1 is retained, as a rearticulated suspension, into the next measure and resolves down to $B\flat$. In measure A2:14 the $B\flat$ in the clarinet changes the sounding harmony to $B\flat^7$ rather than the D diminished chord in the ostinato.

The second type of texture, solo with countermelody, involves counterpoint between two instruments. These sections include the trombone countermelody to the bridge of Miley's opening solo and a single piano line during the baritone sax solo.

Nanton's countermelody to the bridge of Miley's solo (Figure 2.8) is clearly a contrapuntal passage. The chief component of this counterpoint is dissonance and resolution between the two parts. At the trombone entrance (measure A1:17), the trumpet plays $c\flat^1$ and $b\flat^1$ against c^1 in the trombone. The trumpet resolves to the consonant $a\flat^1$ on the last half of the second beat. In the following measure, Miley outlines an $A\flat^6$ harmony (with a passing $e\flat^2$) against the $E\flat^7$ harmony

The musical score for Figure 2.8 consists of three systems. The first system features a Trumpet part (top staff) and a Trombone part (middle staff). The Trumpet part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G4. The Trombone part starts with a whole note G3, followed by a descending eighth-note line. The second system continues the Trumpet and Trombone parts, with the Trombone part featuring a slur over a descending eighth-note line. The third system shows the piano accompaniment (bottom two staves), with the right hand playing a melodic line and the left hand playing a bass line with chords.

Figure 2.8 Bridge from opening trumpet solo with trombone counterpoint from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

in the trombone. The fourth and fifth measures of this association are mostly consonant, but measure A1:22 exhibits accented neighbor tones ($d^{\flat 2}$) in the trumpet over the $e \flat^1$ in the trombone. Each of the dissonances resolves in a conventional manner.

Another instance of contrapuntal texture is the line Ellington plays against Carney’s baritone

The musical score for Figure 2.9 consists of three systems. The first system features a Piano part (top staff) and a B. Sax part (middle staff). The Piano part begins with a whole note G3, followed by a descending eighth-note line. The B. Sax part starts with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G3. The second system continues the Piano and B. Sax parts, with the B. Sax part featuring a slur over a descending eighth-note line. The third system shows the piano accompaniment (bottom two staves), with the right hand playing a melodic line and the left hand playing a bass line with chords.

Figure 2.9 Baritone sax solo with piano counterpoint from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

sax solo (Figure 2.9). The piano melody is played in a tenor range and is generally consonant with the saxophone line. Most of the dissonances that are present are the result of passing or neighbor tones in the saxophone part. Measure B1:3 is a special case. The oblique motion and the chromatic nature of the piano part create more dissonance than might otherwise be present. The first beat of the following measure is largely dissonant (B \flat against C) in order to delay Carney's melodic cadence until the second beat.

The tutti texture is illustrated by the brass soli (B3) and the end of Miley's bridge. In the brass soli (Figure 2.10) Ellington relies primarily on parallel motion involving triads. As a result

Figure 2.10 Brass soli from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

Ellington uses fewer non-chord tones in this section than in the others. In the third measure the opening third is filled in with a passing tone on the end of the first beat. The voicing created by the melodic movement in the seventh measure is noteworthy. For each pair of eighth notes, the first part of the beat contains a root position F \sharp diminished chord that moves to a first inversion E \flat major chord on the last half of the beat. The f \sharp^1 and a \flat^1 in the F \sharp diminished chords are blue notes which resolve up by semitone to g 1 and b \flat^1 respectively. This alternation is a cadential figure leading to a surprise C diminished chord on the downbeat of measure eight.

The beginning of the second ten-measure phrase (Measure B3:9) is identical to the beginning of the initial eight measure phrase. Measures eleven through fourteen are primarily triadic and highly chromatic. The chromatic motion in measure fourteen is repeated two measures later. The

intermediate measure is highly disjunct. In the pre-cadential measure, the trombone and second trumpet form a tritone (d^1 and a^b^1) on the last two beats which resolves conventionally to a major third (e^b^1 and g^1).

The last two measures of the bridge in Miley's solo (Figure 2.11) are an important point in the music. These two measures are the only truly tutti measures in the piece; most other sections omit at least one instrument, usually the second trumpet. Each part consists of a descending chromatic line which produces parallel harmonic motion. Ellington maintains consistent voicing throughout the two measures, producing parallel chromatic motion. The piano replicates the important chord tones doubled in the other instruments. This is a rather creative way of modulating back to C minor by using the chromatic motion that Ellington has been using in this section.

The musical score for Figure 2.11 shows the end of the bridge for the opening trumpet solo. It is written in 4/4 time and features a descending chromatic line in all instruments. The piano part includes chord voicings: B7, B \flat 7, A7, A \flat 7, and G7. A box labeled 'A23' is placed above the first measure.

Figure 2.11 End of the bridge for the opening trumpet solo in “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

Melody

The origin of the ostinato (see Figure 2.4) is a source of some controversy. Some attribute it to Bubber Miley, who had a habit of reading signs and singing the words to a tune in his head. While the band was traveling to upstate New York, he saw an advertisement for Lewando's Cleaners

and began singing “Oh Lewando’s” to this melody.²⁸ Others say it is related to the ground bass from J.S. Bach’s Passacaglia in C.²⁹ The melody is basically a sequence of diatonic thirds centered around the fourth measure; the thirds ascend to this measure and then descend.

Bubber Miley’s theme is of unknown origin. Tucker draws a comparison between this theme, as played on an earlier recording, and a solo played by Charlie Green in the middle of “The Gouge of Armour Avenue” recorded two years earlier. He also notes links to popular folk material from the time.³⁰ Ellington wrote that Miley had a story for everything he played, and he related this as Miley’s story for this solo: “This is an old man, tired from working in the field since sunup [sic], coming up the road in the sunset on his way home to dinner. He’s tired but strong, and humming in time with his broken gait.”³¹

Miley’s melody spans a minor thirteenth (c^1 to a^b2), and includes all chromatic pitches except $C\sharp$. The tessitura lies mainly within the octave of e^b1 – e^b2 . The ornamentation Miley uses obscures the essential melody, so the following examples will be accompanied by a second melody line that is a distillation of what Miley played.

The opening eight measures (Figure 2.12) emphasize the tonic (C minor) triad. The motion is predominantly by leap, usually by third to outline the triad, except for the final two measures. These measures are very much conjunct and consist of neighbor motion around the chord tone E^b .

The figure shows two staves of music. The top staff, labeled 'Miley's melody', is in C minor (two flats) and common time. It begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G, a quarter note F, a quarter note E, and a quarter note D. The next measure has a whole note G with an 'Al:1' box above it. The third measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '+' sign above the G. The fourth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with an 'o' above the G. The fifth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventh measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The tenth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eleventh measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twelfth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirteenth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fourteenth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fifteenth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixteenth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventeenth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighteenth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The nineteenth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twentieth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twenty-first measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twenty-second measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twenty-third measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twenty-fourth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twenty-fifth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twenty-sixth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twenty-seventh measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twenty-eighth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The twenty-ninth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirtieth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirty-first measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirty-second measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirty-third measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirty-fourth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirty-fifth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirty-sixth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirty-seventh measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirty-eighth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The thirty-ninth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fortieth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The forty-first measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The forty-second measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The forty-third measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The forty-fourth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The forty-fifth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The forty-sixth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The forty-seventh measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The forty-eighth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The forty-ninth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fiftieth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fifty-first measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fifty-second measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fifty-third measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fifty-fourth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fifty-fifth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fifty-sixth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fifty-seventh measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fifty-eighth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The fifty-ninth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixtieth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixty-first measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixty-second measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixty-third measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixty-fourth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixty-fifth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixty-sixth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixty-seventh measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixty-eighth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The sixty-ninth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventieth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventy-first measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventy-second measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventy-third measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventy-fourth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventy-fifth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventy-sixth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventy-seventh measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventy-eighth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The seventy-ninth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eightieth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighty-first measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighty-second measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighty-third measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighty-fourth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighty-fifth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighty-sixth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighty-seventh measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighty-eighth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The eighty-ninth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninetieth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninety-first measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninety-second measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninety-third measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninety-fourth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninety-fifth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninety-sixth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninety-seventh measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninety-eighth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The ninety-ninth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G. The hundredth measure has a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, with a '3' above the G.

Figure 2.12 Miley solo first phrase (with reduction) from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

²⁸ Derek Jewell *Duke: A Portrait of Duke Ellington* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977), 39; Stanley Dance *The World of Duke Ellington* (New York: Charles Schribner’s Sons, 1970), 7; James Lincoln Collier, *Duke Ellington* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 111.

Mark Tucker attributes this story to the development of Miley’s solo theme. (*Ellington: The Early Years*, 248). The assertion is based on Roger Pryor Dodge’s essay on Bubber Miley (Roger Pryor Dodge “Bubber,” *H.R.S. Rag*. October 15, 1940, p. 10)

²⁹ Roger Pryor Dodge “Bubber Miley” *Jazz Monthly*, May 1958.

³⁰ Mark Tucker, 249.

³¹ Duke Ellington, *Music is My Mistress* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 106.

The final phrase is very similar to this phrase; both focus on the tonic C minor triad.

The second phrase (Figure 2.13) also outlines the C minor triad. The contour of this phrase

Figure 2.13 Miley solo second phrase (with reduction) from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

is in opposition to the first. The first phrase begins low, moves to the high pitch at the beginning of the fifth measure, and returns to the low C. This phrase begins on the high pitch of the first phrase and moves lower and stays there.

The bridge phrase (Figure 2.14) outlines the chords over which Miley is playing. Measures

Figure 2.14 Miley solo third phrase (with reduction) from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

A1:17-20 emphasize A \flat and E \flat triads, while the two following measures emphasize E \flat and C. Measure A1:22 is strictly C with an upper neighbor. In the final two measures, Miley plays the roots of the chords in this chromatic progression.

While this solo is not technically a “blues” solo in that it is not based on the blues changes, there are several elements which relate to the blues. The use of the chromatic g \flat ¹ (measures A1:2, 9, 11, 12, 13, 24, and 26 in Figure 2.13) is a “blue” note which resolves down by half step to f¹ in four instances (mm. A1:2, 12, 13, 26). Measure A1:9 has the blue note leaping a tritone away to c¹. Measures A1:11 and 24 feature the blue note resolving up a half step to g¹.

The other major blues-related aspect of this solo is the structure of the eight-measure phrases. The first four measures consist of a pair of related two measure subphrases. Figure 2.15 illustrates

the similarities between these figures. The last four measures of each period constitute a contrasting “answer” to the statements of the first four.

Figure 2.15 Subphrase relations in Miley’s solo from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

Miley’s solo is followed by Harry Carney’s baritone saxophone solo (Figure 2.16). This eighteen-bar solo exhibits a sort of parallel construction in that the first four measures of each phrase are identical and the next four are built around the same thematic idea. The first part of these

Figure 2.16 Carney’s solo from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927. Author’s transcription.

phrases is built around a triplet and eighth note figure (an example is labeled A in the figure) that is sequenced. The final iteration (measure B4 and B12) is altered slightly, moving by thirds in the triplet instead of in steps. The second part of the solo, starting in measure B12, is built on a four-note chromatic run (an example is labeled B in the figure). This figure is usually found in paired elements with the two elements moving consecutively in opposite directions. As stated above, the second half of this solo is two measures longer than the first; the final two measures are a cadential extension.

Figure 2.17 Nanton’s solo from “East St. Louis Toodle-O” by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927. Author’s transcription.

The following trombone solo (Figure 2.17) by Joe Nanton adheres to the same formal design as Carney’s. The primary characteristic of this solo is half-step chromatic motion. The first measure is a good example of this, beginning with the $c^2-d b^2-d^2$ and ending with $b b^1-a^1-a b^1$. This solo is much less motivically structured than Carney’s solo. The first half, although it is in $E b$ major, places emphasis on the pitch C and is in an overall higher tessitura than the second half. The second half begins on f^1 and works its way up a fifth before turning around and ending with an $E b$ minor arpeggio. Nanton’s experience is clear when this solo is compared with Carney’s. While Carney’s solo seems to be a gently rolling series of motivic patterns, much like a pedagogical exercise, Nanton demonstrates a command of his instrument by using registral contrasts and chromatic lyricism in the extreme upper range of the instrument.

The final solo belongs to Rudy Jackson (Figure 2.18). Jackson continues Nanton’s example of chromatic lyricism; he continues the half-step motion, as evident in each of the first four measures. He, like Nanton, uses a mixture of stepwise and arpeggiated motion to create a

melodically interesting solo. The deep, rich sound of Jackson's lower register is in stark contrast

The image shows a musical score for Clarinet, labeled 'Clarinet' on the left. The score is in 4/4 time and has a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of three staves of music. The first staff starts with a box labeled 'A2:1' and contains measures 1 through 5. The second staff starts with a box labeled 'A2:5' and contains measures 6 through 8. The third staff starts with a box labeled 'A2:9' and contains measures 9 through 13. The music features various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and slurs, and dynamic markings like '(h)'. The notation is spread across three staves.

Figure 2.18 Jackson's solo from "East St. Louis Toodle-O" by Duke Ellington and James Miley. Copyright © 1927.

to the high trombone that preceded it. Only measures A2:7 and 8 leave the lower register. The registral contrast in these two measures is significant because of their position as the climax of the solo. Jackson uses greater rhythmic variety than his two predecessors. The triplets on the first beat of measures A2:6 and 8 are particularly noticeable. As mentioned above, the second half of the solo seems outside the harmony and is melodically static.

The brass soli (see Figure 2.10) is reminiscent of ragtime and traditional New Orleans jazz.³² The three voices are scored straight down from first trumpet to trombone. The sixth measure is different from most of the rest of the section in that the first trumpet moves conjunctly while the other two instruments move by thirds. The pattern is inverted in the following measure, as the first trumpet moves by third while the other two instruments move by step.

Tonality and Harmony

The tonal relationships of the piece's formal sections are consistent with common practice music. Ellington's formal sections modulate between C minor and its relative major, E \flat . In addition the chord progressions for "East St. Louis Toodle-O" are straightforward and emphasize the tonic-dominant relationship.

In the minor sections (sections labeled A, see for example Figure 2.4) Ellington features the tonic chord (C minor) and dominant substitutions (D diminished and B diminished-seventh) before

³² Traditional New Orleans jazz is what is often referred to as "Dixieland".

completing the phrase with a $ii^{\circ} - V - I$ (D diminished – $G^7 - C$ minor) cadence. It should be noted that in these early years this was not a standard cadential pattern (the circle of fifths progression involving secondary dominants was more common) and illustrates Ellington moving beyond standard convention.

One unexpected component of the C minor chord progression is the chord that begins the eighth measure of the phrase (see Figure 2.4). This chord is somewhat ambiguous in its function. Since it retains two common tones with the tonic chord, which it follows, it is tempting to label it a C minor triad with a major seventh without a root. Aurally, this chord sounds more like an augmented dominant (G-B \flat -D \sharp). The reality of this chord is most likely that it is “linear” and non-functional and appears as the result of stepwise voice motion.

The bridge section of Miley’s solo (see Figure 2.8) begins over an $A\flat$ chord, the subdominant of $E\flat$, rather than the tonic or dominant. This is likely drawn from the blues tradition in which the interplay between the subdominant and the tonic creates a greater sense of tension than that created by the dominant and tonic. This $E\flat$ major section, which is contained within a larger C minor section, is the only $E\flat$ section to use this subdominant to tonic progression.

The major sections (sections labeled B, see for example Figure 2.9) are even more harmonically straightforward than the minor ones. The first twelve measures consist of alternating dominant ($B\flat^7$) and tonic ($E\flat$) chords. The thirteenth measure introduces the subdominant ($A\flat$) and cadences with a repeated circle of fifths progression ($C^7 - F^7 - B\flat^7 - E\flat$). There is a hint of an A diminished-seventh chord at the end of the thirteenth measure, but it is the result of chromatic passing motion in the bass and piano and is considered a contrapuntal chord rather than a functional chord. Nanton’s solo includes an F minor chord at the end of the eleventh measure. Again this is the result of passing motion in the bass and piano and should be considered coloristic.

The brass soli section is slightly more colorful than the preceding model. The cadence at the end of the first eight measure phrase moves to an F \sharp diminished-seven chord with A \flat in the piano. This setting of the material retains the color chords discussed above. Measure B2:14 substitutes A diminished, G minor, E diminished, and C minor for $E\flat$ and C^7 , between the $A\flat$ and F^7 in the circle of fifths.

Rhythm

Aside from the solos, especially Miley’s highly ornamented and rhythmically free main thematic solo, “East St. Louis Toodle-O” is replete with uncomplicated ensemble rhythms

characterized by half notes and quarter notes. The exceptions to this are the ensemble transition out of the bridge during Miley's solo and the brass soli, since they feature eighth notes and only one instance of syncopation. Additionally, there are a few measures at the end of the clarinet solo where Carney plays in syncopation (Figure 2.19), but this appears to be a result of Carney rushing the beat.³³ The rhythmic variety and complexity of this piece come from the soloists rather than from the background figures.

Figure 2.19 End of the ostinato under Jackson's solo

Conclusions

Formally this work has an intriguing structure which consists of two alternating sections: one in C minor which is based around the 32-bar song form and one in E \flat major based around an asymmetrical eighteen bar form. In the overall scheme of the piece, each time one of these sections appears it is only half as long as the previous appearance. In this manner Ellington has cleverly constructed a piece which is in a constant state of diminution. For the most part, the brass serve as the thematic carriers while the reeds create the mood.

The two sections are also distinguishable texturally. The C minor sections are accompanied by an ostinato (played by the saxes, trombone, and rhythm section) while the E \flat major sections are accompanied solely by the rhythm section. As a result of these textural differences the two sections have different harmonic characters; the sections accompanied by the ostinato tend to be more dissonant than the others. The ostinato sections also tend to alter the written harmonies through the interaction between the soloist and the ostinato. Two of the E \flat sections (the bridge to the opening

³³ Unfortunately there is no way to find out what really happened, although there are several explanations that have been speculated. It is not out of the question to think that Carney was simply rushing the beat, although it is equally plausible that Ellington felt the piece was beginning to drag and instructed him, as a foundational member of the ostinato group, to speed up.

solo and the brass soli) include homorhythmic ensemble playing which contrasts with the soloist nature of the rest of the piece.

“East St. Louis Toodle-O” is melodically varied in that there is no uniform melodic character. The ostinato melody is a somewhat palindromic sequence of diatonic thirds, and the solos it appears with, Bubber Miley’s and Rudy Jackson’s, are heavily influenced by the blues. The major melodies feature arpeggiation mixed with chromatic stepwise movement. Miley’s melodic contribution also contributes to the sonorous effects of the work with its earthy, raw sound.

Both the tonal and rhythmic elements of the piece are relatively uncomplicated. The sections of the piece alternate between C minor and the relative major (E \flat) and the rhythms are mainly quarter and half note rhythms on the beats. Syncopation has a minute role outside of the solos. Miley’s solo is the most rhythmically free in the piece; the values notated in the examples are approximations rather than precise metronomic divisions. The other solos consist of more or less straight eighth notes (and triplets in Harry Carney’s case). Ellington did not seem to be overly concerned with breaking new ground in these areas and focused on other elements instead.

Even though “East St. Louis Toodle-O” was composed early in Ellington’s career, it still bears the marks of his compositional genius. While not formally a blues piece, this work is heavily influenced by the blues, primarily achieved by the dark mood and rough growling of Bubber Miley. Ellington’s chief concern was the sound of the orchestra; the mood created by his instrumental combinations is the most noteworthy aspect of the piece. He strategically contrasts the dark, moody ostinato sections with the brighter “New Orleans” sound and the full ensemble textures with thinner solo and contrapuntal textures. The result sounds somewhat disjointed, yet Ellington’s understanding and mastery of timbre and organization makes “East St. Louis Toodle-O” stand as a united whole rather than a disjointed series of solos.

Chapter 3

Cottontail

“Cottontail,”³⁴ the second piece considered in this study, was recorded May 4, 1940, as part of the Blanton-Webster sessions. There are no records to indicate whether it was in the repertoire before this session. The manuscripts reveal a working title of “Shuckin’ and Sniffin’”; there is no indication as to why it was changed to “Cottontail.”³⁵

The personnel are Otto Hardwicke and Johnny Hodges (alto sax), Barney Bigard (tenor sax/clarinet), Ben Webster (tenor sax), Harry Carney (bari sax), Wallace Jones and Cootie Williams (trumpet), Rex Stewart (cornet), Lawrence Brown and Joe “Tricky Sam” Nanton (trombone), Juan Tizol (valve trombone), Fred Guy (guitar), Jimmy Blanton (bass), Sonny Greer (drums), and Duke Ellington (piano).

Form

“Cottontail” is a series of six choruses based on the AABA song form; specifically the choruses are based on George Gershwin’s “I Got Rhythm.” The first chorus is abbreviated by four measures because Ellington chose to place a four-measure interlude between the bridge and Ben Webster’s solo. This arrangement was likely designed to create a big introduction for the featured solo, which spans the next two choruses. The fourth chorus is divided into a brass soli for the first half followed by a bari sax solo on the bridge and a piano solo to round out the form. The fifth chorus is scored for sax soli, and the final chorus is again divided into three parts. The first part continues the sax soli, adding a brass countermelody, which culminates with a shout chorus on the bridge before returning to the head theme for the final eight measures. The chart in Figure 3.1 summarizes the overall structure of the piece. The first column, “Chorus Label” indicates the label which will be used in this chapter to denote the specific chorus. The small letters in the “Length” column indicate the phrase of the 32-bar song form which are represented in the section.

³⁴ All of the musical examples, except for the solo sections, were taken from a reconstruction of the original manuscripts. Solo section examples are the author’s transcriptions.

³⁵ The words “Shuckin’ and Sniffin’” appear faintly at the top of most of the manuscript parts for this piece. It seems fairly common for Ellington to create pieces with “working titles” and then change them later.

Chorus Label	Chorus Number	Section	Length (in measures)	Length (in choruses)
A	1	Head	16	.5 (aa)
		Accompanied Trumpet solo	8	.25 (b)
		Interlude	4	—
B	2	Webster solo	32	1 (aaba)
C	3	Webster solo continued	32	1 (aaba)
D	4	Brass soli	16	.5 (aa)
		Bari sax solo	8	.25 (b)
		Piano solo	8	.25 (a)
E	5	Sax soli	32	1 (aaba)
F	6	Sax soli with brass accents	16	.5 (aa)
		Shout chorus	8	.25 (b)
		Reprise	8	.25 (a)

Figure 3.1 Formal outline of “Cottontail”

“Cottontail” has an overarching formal scheme beyond being simply a series of choruses. Ellington alternates broken choruses with unified choruses in the overall structure of the piece. Choruses A, D, and F each divide into sections of 16+8+8 (with the noted anomaly of the first chorus), each with a different texture and/or instrumentation; choruses B, C, and E all retain the same texture and instrumentation throughout.³⁶

Gunther Schuller posits that the first sixteen and the last eight measures function as an introduction and coda because of the recapitulatory nature of the final eight measures.³⁷ Working within this idea, we are left with a large-scale form which contains alternating solo and ensemble sections, as shown in Figure 3.2. As above, the small letters in the “Chorus section” column refer to the phrases of the choruses represented by the section.

³⁶ The second and third choruses do have a slight variation with the brass chords in the bridges, but this alteration merely serves to highlight the harmonies and does not really change the character of the section.

³⁷ Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 129.

Solo	Chorus section	Texture
Trumpet solo	A(b)	Solo
Interlude	A	Ensemble
Webster solo	B	Solo
Webster solo	C	Solo
Brass soli	D(aa)	Ensemble
Bari sax solo	D(b)	Solo
Piano solo	D(a)	Solo
Sax soli	E	Ensemble
Sax soli with brass accents	F(aa)	Ensemble
Shout chorus	F(b)	Ensemble

Figure 3.2 Alternation of solo and ensemble sections in “Cottontail”

Instrumentation

“Cottontail” is an example of Ellington writing for choirs of instruments, particularly brass versus reeds. With the exception of the opening (and the reprise at the end), there are no mixed sectional voicings; the two families of instruments are used either in a full orchestral tutti or as soli sections. Following the opening figure, the reeds alone accompany the trumpet solo. The tenor sax solo that follows is accompanied by the brass and the rhythm section.³⁸ The use of opposite-family accompaniments for the solos provides further contrast in these choruses.

Ellington emphasizes the contrast of brass and reeds in the alternation of the sections in which they are feature, as shown in Figure 3.3. He frames the work with full orchestral emphasis and alternates between featuring the brass and the reeds. The head and reprise portions of the piece have been omitted from the chart because their unison scoring does not figure into this internal framework.

³⁸ During this solo the clarinet does play with the brass. While this seems to contradict the above statement, it was common practice for the clarinet, written in the high register, to function as a lead trumpet. With this in mind, the statement is accurate.

Chorus	Section	Instrumentation	Family featured
A(aa)	Introduction	alto sax, baritone sax, trumpet, trombone	all
A(b)	Trumpet solo	trumpet, reeds	brass (reed accomp.)
A	Interlude	full ensemble	all
B	Tenor sax solo	tenor sax, trumpet, trombone, clarinet	reed (brass accomp.)
C			
D(aa)	Brass soli	trumpet, trombone	brass
D(b)	Baritone sax solo	baritone sax	reed
D(a)	Piano solo	piano	rhythm
E /F(aa)	reed soli	alto sax, tenor sax, baritone sax	reed (brass counter)
F(b)	Shout chorus	alto sax, tenor sax, baritone sax, trumpet, trombone	all
F(a)	Reprise	alto sax, baritone sax, trumpet, trombone	all

Figure 3.3 Sectional instrumentation of “Cottontail”

The opening orchestration is an example of Ellington’s unconventional instrument groupings. Rather than using the full orchestra, he chose to sample from each family: two saxophones, one trumpet, and one trombone. These instruments give a good representation of the orchestra’s sound without being overpowering; there are high and low woodwind and brass sounds. This is more closely related to combo writing than big band writing. The use of a unison line between these different instruments is even more atypical and presages the melodic writing used in bebop combo writing.

Texture/Harmony

“Cottontail” is primarily a homophonic work, either block chordal writing or in the form of a melody with chordal accompaniment. These homophonic sections are contrasted with other textures to break up the work and provide more textural interest. The following chart (Figure 3.4) outlines the textural contrasts of the work.

Chorus	Section	Texture
A(aa)	Head	Unison / Melody w/ Chordal Accompaniment
A(b)	Accompanied Trumpet solo	Melody w/ Chordal Accompaniment
A	Interlude	Contrapuntal
B/C	Webster solo	Solo (Melody w/ Chordal Accompaniment)
D(aa)	Brass soli	Block Chordal
D(b)	Bari sax solo	Solo
D(a)	Piano solo	Solo
E	Sax soli	Block Chordal
F(aa)	Sax soli with brass accents	Call and Response
F(b)	Shout chorus	Block Chordal
F(a)	Reprise	Unison

Figure 3.4 Textural makeup of “Cottontail”

The unison texture in the first eight measures of the head and the reprise provides a simple presentation of the theme. The second eight measures of the head (Figure 3.5) builds with brass chords punctuating. The chords feature tight block voicings, mostly seconds and thirds with a few fourths and one seventh in the trombones. Ellington also scores the trumpets and trombones in close spacing with the lowest trumpet and highest trombone sounding a third apart.

In the bridge for the opening chorus (Figure 3.6), Ellington employs tight chord voicings,

Figure 3.5 Second phrase of the head with brass chords from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

which create a dissonant character of the music. The spacing in the sax chords progress from the

Figure 3.6 shows a musical score for Saxes and Trumpet. The key signature is B-flat major. The saxophone part (Saxes) is marked with a box labeled 'A17'. It consists of sustained chords with some triplets. The trumpet part (Trumpet) features a solo with triplets and a chromatic line in the final measures.

Figure 3.6 Trumpet solo with sax accompaniment from the bridge of the head from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

range of a seventh to an octave, a ninth and, finally, an eleventh. The first chord is a ninth chord with the ninth written immediately above the root and the second sustained chord is a first inversion $G\text{ aug}^7$ with an added $B\flat$. This $b\flat^1$ in the second alto sax creates a diminished octave with the bari sax’s $B\flat$ on the bottom of the chord. These two chords contain the same harsh dissonance written as a minor second and a diminished octave. The chord in the fifth and sixth measures is a whole-tone pitch collection ($A\flat$, $B\flat$, C , D , E). The most distantly spaced chord is the one in the seventh measure; it is written as a C minor seventh chord over an F in the bari sax, creating an F^{11} chord.

The harmonic interactions between this sax background and the trumpet solo are also highly dissonant. The trumpet’s $c\sharp^2$ s in the first two measures (and the enharmonic $d\flat^2$ in the fifth measure) sound against c^1 and d^1 in the saxes; the trumpet’s d^1 and D minor arpeggio in the third and fourth measures sound against e^1 , g^1 , $b\flat^1$ and $B\flat$ in the saxes. In measures seven and eight, the trumpet plays a chromatic line from $e\flat^2$ to $a\flat^1$ against the F^{11} in the saxes.

Figure 3.7 shows a musical score for Saxes, Trumpets 1/3, and Trombones. The key signature is B-flat major. The saxophone part (Saxes) has a melodic line. The trumpets and trombones (Trumpets 1/3 and Trombones) play a chordal accompaniment.

Figure 3.7 Transition between the head and Webster’s solo from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

The transition at the end of the opening chorus (Figure 3.7) is a contrapuntal texture between the unison saxes and chordal brass. The trumpets are written as open sixths over the third and

seventh voicing in the trombones. The only time this pattern is broken is leading into A28, where the trumpets condense to diminished fourths and the trombones form triads, fifths, and fourths.

Figure 3.8 Bridge of the first chorus of Webster’s solo from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

Ben Webster’s solo is primarily unaccompanied, save by the rhythm section, except for the bridges. In these sections the clarinet functions as a lead trumpet on top of the texture. In the first chorus (Figure 3.8) the clarinet and trumpets are written as a first inversion triad. The trombones are in unison a fifth below the trumpets. The final chord of this bridge is different from the other voicings: the trombones here are assigned three different pitches.

The second chorus (Figure 3.9) features a different distribution of voices. Again the trombones are usually in relatively close position to the trumpets with the top trombone being at most a third below the bottom trumpet.

Figure 3.9 Bridge from the second chorus of Webster’s solo from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

Following Webster’s solo is the brass soli (Figure 3.10). This section is homorhythmic but does not move as strictly parallel block chords. The instruments are generally written in close spacing with no more than a fifth between the bottom trumpet and top trombone; the total span of all six instruments rarely surpasses a twelfth. The exceptions to these generalizations are found mostly in the last four measures of this section. Here the span of the instruments reaches three octaves and the distance from the top trombone to the bottom trumpet is as great as an octave. This wide spacing creates a full sound that is in contrast to the tight spacing that dominates the work.

Figure 3.10 Brass soli from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

Ellington uses seventh chords as well as extensions greater than a seventh to create biting dissonances. The first chord of the section is an B \flat major ninth chord containing a major seventh and an added major sixth; the seventh, A, is written a second away from the root in the top two trombones. The seventh measure is particularly harsh. On the second eighth note of the measure the trombones are each a second apart while the trumpets are a second and a third apart. The resulting harmony is the same tonic chord as the beginning measure of the passage, only this time it is condensed into the space of an octave and the root has been omitted.

The sax soli (Figure 3.11) continues in a more standard block style of writing. The motion is primarily parallel and there is an obvious pairing of instruments by type (i.e., altos playing together, tenors playing together, and the bari doubling the first alto part). The alto and tenor

Figure 3.11 Excerpt from the sax soli in “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

pairings are dominated by parallel thirds, although the tenors do have several seconds. The close voicing between the instruments creates a dense texture; there are only two measures in which the five instruments sound more than an octave apart, and those happen to be the measures in which the

bari sax moves independently of the first alto sax. Ellington uses many of the same voicings in this sax soli as he did in the brass soli as well as in standard block style writing, including seventh chords in inversions with the seventh immediately below the root and chords which contain pairs of seconds along with a consonant interval.

The musical score for Figure 3.12 is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Saxes, Trumpets, and Trombones. The Saxes part features a melodic line with various intervals and rests. The Trumpets and Trombones parts provide harmonic support with close voicings. The second system continues the saxophone solo and the brass accompaniment, showing more intricate voicings and rhythmic patterns.

Figure 3.12 Sax soli with brass chords from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

The soli continues for another sixteen bars, but this time the saxes are in a call and response arrangement with the brass (Figure 3.12). The instruments are all in close voicing, although the sax voicings are more varied than in the previous chorus, with the outer voices a seventh to a thirteenth apart. The brass are much more widely spaced, while more consistent in the spacing. The wide brass intervals are the result of scoring the tightly spaced trumpets and trombones a fourth apart.

Preceding the final return of the head is the “shout” section (Figure 3.13). These eight measures are the only true tutti example of block style writing in the piece, and feature some of the

The musical score for Figure 3.13 is a dense, tutti arrangement for the 'shout' section. It includes parts for A. Sax, T. Sax, B. Sax, Trumpets, and Trombones. The saxophone parts feature complex, overlapping lines with many intervals, while the brass parts provide a thick harmonic texture with close voicings. The overall texture is very full and rhythmic.

Figure 3.13 Shout section from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

widest voicings as well. Although the saxes begin within the span of an octave, they end with a span of two octaves plus a sixth. The brass likewise begin in close spacing (a ninth), and spread out as wide as two octaves plus a third. As in the previous sections, the trumpets and trombones are placed in close position to each other and spread out for a fuller sound. In the fifth measure of the section the top trombone and bottom trumpet are actually playing in unison on the fourth beat, only to find themselves a tenth apart a measure later.

Melody

The head melody (Figure 3.14) spans the range of a major tenth ($e\flat^1$ to g^2) and its pitch content includes all chromatic pitches but B and $C\sharp$. After four measures of emphasis on c^2 , the



Figure 3.14 Head melody from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

rest of the melody is basically an embellished descent from $e\flat^2$ to f^1 . Ellington scored the melody for the first alto sax, baritone sax, second trumpet, and first trombone, all playing in unison. One particular innovation in this melody is the choice of starting pitch. Rather than starting on a member of the tonic chord ($B\flat$), Ellington chose to begin on C, the ninth.

The trumpet solo during the bridge of the opening chorus (see Figure 3.15) seems to place a lot of focus on the pitch D. The first two measures alternate between $c\sharp^2$ and d^2 . d^2 is the focus pitch for third measure. Measure four outlines a D minor triad, and measure six features c^2 resolving



Figure 3.15 Trumpet solo from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

to d^2 .

The last four measures of the opening chorus, which bridges the trumpet and tenor sax solos, consist of two lines: one in the reeds and one in the brass. The reeds play in unison while the brass

Tenor Sax

B1

B9

B17

B25

C1

C9

C17

C25

Figure 3.16 Webster’s solo from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

play chromatic descending chords. This is relatively unremarkable in a melodic sense.

Ben Webster’s solo (Figure 3.16) is a definite highlight of the work. Webster relies heavily on short motives and sequence in creating this solo. One important motive is an ascending triplet figure followed by a longer note, as in the first measure of the solo. This occurs primarily at the beginning of phrases of the first chorus. An exception is in measure B30 where the sixteenth note triplets lead into the final phrase.

A second motive is that of a descending leap followed by a half step in the same direction. This also appears in three variations: a descending leap followed by a half step in the opposite direction, an ascending leap followed by a half step in the same direction, and an ascending leap

followed by a half step in the opposite direction. A third motive is a neighbor note triplet figure followed by an eighth note.

Webster also relies heavily on restatement and sequence in constructing this solo. He chooses to acknowledge the harmonic sequence in the bridge by using modified melodic repetition in his solo. He also begins the second chorus by sequencing the first two bars.

Webster's phrasing is fairly regular and consists of two and four bar phrase segments. As the following chart shows, the first chorus is palindromic in its phrase segment construction. The second chorus is more irregular, but does retain the structure of two measure phrases in the bridge.

	A	A	B	A
Chorus 1	2+2+4	2+2+2+2	2+2+2+2	4+2+2
Chorus 2	2+2+2+2	2+4+2	2+2+2+2	2+2+4

Figure 3.17 Phrasing in Ben Webster's solo from "Cottontail".

The brass soli melody is of little interest until the last four measures. In these measures the first trumpet plays a descending chromatic line down the octave from $b\flat^2$. The frequent return to $b\flat^2$ creates the aural effect shown in Figure 3.18, an effect of implied polyphony.

The bari sax solo (Figure 3.19) which follows the brass soli is largely arpeggiated and triadic.

Figure 3.18 Implied polyphony in the final four measures of the brass soli in "Cottontail" by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

That Carney likes the sound of the ninth is shown by the use of $E\flat$ over the D^7 harmony of the first two bars, A and $A\flat$ over the G^7 harmony in the third bar, D over the C^7 harmony in the fifth bar, and G over the F^7 harmony in the eighth bar. He links bars 2-5 together by half steps.

The piano solo (Figure 3.19) is blues-like in its melodic construction. The opening figure is repeated verbatim and then, on the third repetition, it is extended and brought to resolution. This

Figure 3.19 Carney and Ellington’s solos from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

is played with the right hand over a stride style accompaniment in the left hand. The choice of $d\flat^1$ (enharmonically $c\sharp^1$, or $\#9$) over a $B\flat$ major harmony is intriguing and likely was used for color and to create a blues related sound.

The melody of the sax soli (Figure 3.20) has more melodic interest than the brass soli did. Ellington mixes stepwise motion with arpeggiation to keep this melody interesting. Chromatic motion is abundant in this section. Usually the chromaticism is simply a half step between two notes, but it also appears in passages with as many as five consecutive chromatic notes. The phrase structure is a little different than in previous sections. After an initial eight measure phrase, the

Figure 3.20 Sax soli melody from “Cottontail” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

music moves in basically two measure subphrases through the bridge. The final eight measures are divided into a four measure subphrase, a two measure subphrase, and two one measure segments. Like the other choruses, the bridge uses melodic repetition to highlight the harmonic sequence. Measures E25-28 are a varied repetition; the two measure subphrases begin the same but end a third apart.

The “shout” section (Figure 3.13) features pairs of two measure segments. The first segment moves up by two whole steps, then two minor thirds before moving back down through the minor third chromatically. The second and fourth segments are a variation on the first, while the third segment is a slightly modified sequence of it.

Tonality and Harmony

As mentioned above, the chord progression for “Cottontail” (shown in Figure 3.21) is based on the George Gershwin song “I Got Rhythm.” It should be noted that this example shows the basic progression; there are instances in which chords are added or substituted. The most notable place where this happens is the beginning of Ben Webster’s second chorus, in which the first six and a half measures are accompanied by $B\flat^9$ chords with an added sixth in the piano and a static $B\flat$ in the bass.

Figure 3.21 displays a chord progression for “I Got Rhythm” across four staves of music. The chords are written above the staves, which are marked with measure numbers 9, 17, and 25. The progression is as follows:

- Staff 1 (Measures 9-16): $B\flat$, $Gm7$, $Cm7$, $F7$, $B\flat$, $Gm7$, $Cm7$, $F7$, $B\flat$, $B\flat7$, $E\flat$, $E\flat m$, $B\flat$, $Gm7$, $Cm7$, $F7$
- Staff 2 (Measures 17-24): $B\flat$, $Gm7$, $Cm7$, $F7$, $B\flat$, $Gm7$, $Cm7$, $F7$, $B\flat$, $B\flat7$, $E\flat$, $E\flat m$, $B\flat$, $F7$, $B\flat$
- Staff 3 (Measures 25-28): $D7$, $G7$, $C7$, $F7$
- Staff 4 (Measures 29-36): $B\flat$, $Gm7$, $Cm7$, $F7$, $B\flat$, $Gm7$, $Cm7$, $F7$, $B\flat$, $B\flat7$, $E\flat$, $E\flat m$, $B\flat$, $F7$, $B\flat$

Figure 3.21 Chord progression from “I Got Rhythm”

Ellington does not limit himself to the simple harmonies prescribed by the progression. The harmonic complexity of this piece centers around the use of chord extensions above the seventh and chromatic alterations to diatonic harmonies. For example, in the fifth measure of the head, the progression calls for $B\flat$ moving to $B\flat^7$. The melody states a sustained $E\flat$, which converts the harmony for the measure to $B\flat^{7(\#11)}$. However, if the $E\flat$ is thought of as $F\flat$, the harmony would

be $B\flat^{7(b5)}$. The use of $b5$ is another example of Ellington's writing in "Cottontail" predating bebop conventions. Likewise, in the trumpet solo over the bridge of the head, the saxophone chords add color to the existing harmonies. The addition of $E\flat$ to the first two chords makes them sound like a $D\min^{7(b9)}$ moving to a $G^{7(\#9/\#5)}$ with an added minor third. The $A\flat$ and D in the third chord alter the sound of the C^7 chord to $C^{9(\#5)}$.

Rhythm

Most of the rhythms found in "Cottontail" are simple quarter and eighth note patterns. However, with a tempo around 235 beats per minute, even these "simple" rhythms can be demanding. Ellington relies heavily on syncopation to add interest to the steady pulse of this piece. Ben Webster's solo is the only place in the piece where more complex rhythms are used, but even those are triplets and sextuplets.

Another rhythmic characteristic of this piece is the use of figures which would later characterize bebop. One of these is the "be-bop" figure, so named because of the rhythmic pattern



Figure 3.22 Examples of bebop rhythms from "Cottontail" by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1940.

of its sound. In the music of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie this two eighth note figure usually occurred at the end of a phrase and used a long-short type accent. Another example of this bop style is the use of tonic accents. In the seventh and eighth measures of the head melody Ellington sequenced an ascending three eighth note figure. The aural effect of these figures is that of a tonic accent on the last note. It is also a variation on the "be-bop" figure. Figure 3.22 shows two examples from the piece to illustrate this.

Conclusions

"Cottontail" is a series of six choruses based around the 32-bar song form and the chord progression for "I Got Rhythm." Ellington maintains a constant instrumentation for three choruses

(Ben Webster's two solo choruses and a sax soli chorus) and divides the remaining three into three distinct parts. The first chorus is incomplete and has a four measure interlude in place of the final eight measures.

For the most part, Ellington maintains a distinction between the reed section and the brass section in this work. This distinction is exemplified in the alternation of sections which feature particular sections of the orchestra. The saxes are typically written with tight block chordal voicings while the brass follows traditional orchestration practice by spacing the trombones wider than the trumpets. The one section during which Ellington uses cross-sectional voicings is the head melody. The scoring of this melody (alto and tenor saxophone, trumpet, and trombone) presages the combo writing that would emerge a few years later in the bebop movement.

This is not a piece that is most productively viewed in terms of its melodic content, interesting though its melodic theme may be. The real focuses in the piece are the texture and harmony. Ellington creates a dense texture out of close voicings within instrument families, particularly the saxes, as well as the whole orchestra. He contrasts this with more open voicings, as in the brass section, to create fuller sounding harmonies. The harmonies he uses are based on standard seventh chords but are extended as far as the thirteenth. These extensions alter the character of the harmony from being merely functional to being coloristic as well. "Cottontail" clearly demonstrates Ellington's integration of harmony, texture, and voice leading in producing a musical whole.

The head and Ben Webster's solo hold the most melodic interest of the work. The head begins on the ninth of the chord, an unusual choice, and focuses on that pitch for the first four measures. This creates a sense of tonal novelty at the beginning before it becomes obvious that the piece is firmly in B \flat major. The tonic pitch is only passed through and is never a place of rest; that distinction goes to the fifth. Ben Webster's solo relies on short motives, sequences, and altered repetitions.

Rhythmically this piece foreshadows much of what will arise in bebop. The tempo is extremely fast, making even simple rhythms more difficult. In addition, Ellington overlays the steady pulse, from the bass and drums, with syncopation to add interest. He also makes extensive use of what will become known as "be-bop" figures and irregular accents to define the melodic rhythms throughout this work. "Cottontail" clearly represents a new direction in Ellington's compositions of the time, though not a definitive long-term direction.

Chapter 4

Oclupaca³⁹

“Oclupaca,” which opens the *Latin American Suite*, recorded November 5, 1968 is the final piece in this study. The suite is the result of Ellington’s desire to express his appreciation for the warmth and enthusiasm the people showed his orchestra while they were on touring South America and Mexico in September of that year. Rather than interpreting and expressing the native musical forms and styles of the Latin American people, Ellington attempted to reproduce the impressions these countries and people made on him in music.⁴⁰

The title “Oclupaca” is a retrograde of the name Acapulco. Ellington originally gave this piece the name “MLUX,” but changed it before the recording.⁴¹ During the tour the band visited Acapulco and spent a day relaxing on the beach before playing for a dance. In the music Ellington wanted to capture the happiness and recuperative feelings associated with the experience.⁴²

The personnel include Johnny Hodges (alto sax), Russell Procope (alto sax/clarinet), Harold Ashby and Paul Gonsalves (tenor sax), Harry Carney (bari sax), Cat Anderson, Willie Cook, Mercer Ellington, and Cootie Williams (trumpet), Lawrence Brown and Buster Cooper (trombones), Chuck Connors (bass trombone), Jeff Castleman (bass), Rufus “Speedy” Jones (drums), and Duke Ellington (piano).

Form

The large scale form of “Oclupaca” consists of a series of twelve-bar blues choruses with a ten measure coda. These eleven choruses are divided into two tonal areas, with nine choruses in F minor and two in A \flat major (placed between the seventh and eighth F minor choruses); this creates an ABA’ structure. Figure 4.1 summarizes the formal structure. As the table shows, the

³⁹ The musical examples, except for the solo, were taken from the author’s score reconstructed from the manuscripts obtained from the Duke Ellington Archive at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History. The solo is the author’s transcription.

⁴⁰ Duke Ellington *Latin American Suite*, liner notes.

⁴¹ In his later years, Ellington frequently gave cryptic abbreviated working titles to his pieces. “MLUX” is one of those titles.

⁴² Duke Ellington *Latin American Suite*, liner notes.

sectional divisions follow the twelve bar chorus breaks strictly. With the exceptions of the reed solis and the tenor saxophone solo, each section lasts only one chorus.

Large-Scale Section	Chorus	Section	Measures	Tonality	Length
A	A	Ellington piano introduction	1-12	Fm	12
	B	Reed soli	13-24	Fm	12
	C/D	Reed soli with piano counterpoint	25-48	Fm	24
	E	Reed soli with trumpets	49-60	Fm	12
	F	Trombone/piano exchange	61-72	Fm	12
	G	Saxophone/trumpet “Shout”	73-84	Fm	12
B	H/I	Tenor sax solo	85-108	A b	24
A’	J/K	Reed soli	109-132	Fm	24
	—	Coda	133-end	Fm	10

Figure 4.1 Chorus arrangement of “Oclupaca”

Instrumentation

Ellington made very deliberate choices in instrumentation for this work. The bulk of the piece revolves around the reed section; there are only 24 measures out of the work’s 142 measures in which the reeds are not playing. More significant is the way the reeds are employed to enhance the mood and color of the work.

The manuscripts indicate that Ellington wrote the theme to be played by five saxophones; however the recording is different.⁴³ The recorded version of the “Oclupaca” indicates that the theme was played by baritone and tenor saxes along with clarinet played by Russell Procope.

⁴³ The manuscripts referenced here are the player’s parts held by the Duke Ellington Archive at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History. There is not a manuscript score.

Presumably Ellington found that the clarinet created a warmer, more mysterious mood than the alto saxes. Ellington also scored all four reed parts in unison (with the clarinet sounding an octave higher) during this opening section, which adds to the warmth. Ellington complements the reeds with two different instrumental framings, one his own piano and the other the trumpets. In both cases the accompaniments serve to fill in the long notes in the reeds. The alto saxes finally appear in the “shout” chorus (G1-12). Here it seems Ellington opted for these instruments because their brighter sound would blend better with the trumpets than would clarinets.

The brass are mainly relegated to supporting roles. The trumpets enter for the first time in measure C9 to punctuate the ending of the chorus. The next time they appear is in response to the saxes in measures E2-12. The only other times they are used are in the shout chorus and in the support chords for Gonsalves’ solo. The trombones are given the more melodic roles in the brass family. They appear only three times in the piece: with the trumpets at measure E9, in call and response with the piano from measures F1-12, and as a countermelody to Gonsalves’ solo (H1-I12).

“Oclupaca” maintains a simplified orchestration throughout. The three groups of instruments (reeds, brass, and rhythm) are used independently and never as a mixed group. The rhythm section generally functions independently from the wind parts, maintaining harmonic and rhythmic drive throughout the piece. The exception to this is the piano, which functions in a melodic role in the choruses C through F via interaction with the winds. In these measures the piano is a separate component in the texture, belonging neither to the rhythm section nor doubling a wind part.

Texture/Harmony

One of the most distinctive features of this piece is the use of unison sectional writing. Throughout the entire reed soli the reeds are written in unison with the clarinet sounding an octave higher, which creates the mysterious timbre of the theme. The only time the reeds appear chordally is during the shout chorus. The other instance of unison texture is the trombone countermelody during Gonsalves’ solo.

The wind parts are written in a very thin texture, usually with only one or two simultaneous layers of sound. Ellington maintains clear divisions among the four instrument sections (reeds, trumpets, trombones, rhythm); melodies and accompaniments, for example, are accorded to discrete instrumental families rather than to cross-sectional collections of players. Occasionally more than one family will combine into a larger accompanimental unit. When this happens Ellington generally has each section double the harmonies of the other sections; removing one section would affect the

timbre of the chord, but not the harmonic function. The exception to this is in measures C9 and 10 where the trumpets and trombones play as an entire brass section with less doubling.

Ellington's mastery of tone color is illustrated in his chord voicings within each section of the orchestra. The voicing in each instrumental section will be considered individually, beginning with the trombones. Ellington employed three trombones (two tenor and one bass). The highest pitch in each chord, usually the third, is played by the first trombone. The lowest pitch, generally the root, is played by the bass trombone. The second trombone carries the color tones. Figure 4.2 shows examples of typical trombone voicings from three different sections of the piece. The first example corresponds to measure C9, where the trombones are playing with the trumpets, and the other two are measures F1 and F8, where the trombones are featured with the piano. There are two voicings used for this section. The long chords have the seventh on the bottom with the root in the

The figure shows three measures of music for three trombone parts: Trombone 1, Trombone 2, and Bass Trombone. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb).
 Measure C9: Trombone 1 plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F), Trombone 2 plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F), and Bass Trombone plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F).
 Measure G1: Trombone 1 plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F), Trombone 2 plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F), and Bass Trombone plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F).
 Measure G8: Trombone 1 plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F), Trombone 2 plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F), and Bass Trombone plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F).
 Fingerings are indicated below the notes: for C9, Trombone 1 (3, 7, 1), Trombone 2 (3, 7, 1), Bass Trombone (3, 7, 1); for G1, Trombone 1 (3, 1, 7), Trombone 2 (3, 1, 7), Bass Trombone (3, 1, 7); for G8, Trombone 1 (5, 3, 1), Trombone 2 (1, 5, 3), Bass Trombone (5, 3, 1).

Figure 4.2 Trombone voicings in “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

middle and the third on top which resolves to a root position chord at the end of the measure. The exception to this voicing scheme occurs in measures F8 and 9 in which the trombones are voiced as parallel first inversion triads. In the countermelody to the tenor sax solo, the three trombones are written in unison.

There is a somewhat consistent scheme for the trumpet voicings (Figure 4.3) with the use of first inversion chord voicings. In measure C9 the four parts are written as two minor thirds

The figure shows five measures of music for four trumpet parts: Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, Trumpet 3, and Trumpet 4. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb).
 Measure C9: Trumpet 1 plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F), Trumpet 2 plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F), Trumpet 3 plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F), and Trumpet 4 plays a half note chord (Bb, D, F).
 Measure E4: Trumpet 1 plays a half note chord (E, G, Bb), Trumpet 2 plays a half note chord (E, G, Bb), Trumpet 3 plays a half note chord (E, G, Bb), and Trumpet 4 plays a half note chord (E, G, Bb).
 Measure E6: Trumpet 1 plays a half note chord (E, G, Bb), Trumpet 2 plays a half note chord (E, G, Bb), Trumpet 3 plays a half note chord (E, G, Bb), and Trumpet 4 plays a half note chord (E, G, Bb).
 Measure G1: Trumpet 1 plays a half note chord (G, Bb, D), Trumpet 2 plays a half note chord (G, Bb, D), Trumpet 3 plays a half note chord (G, Bb, D), and Trumpet 4 plays a half note chord (G, Bb, D).
 Measure H1: Trumpet 1 plays a half note chord (H, Bb, D), Trumpet 2 plays a half note chord (H, Bb, D), Trumpet 3 plays a half note chord (H, Bb, D), and Trumpet 4 plays a half note chord (H, Bb, D).

Figure 4.3 Trumpet voicings in “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

separated by a perfect fourth; measure E4 has the ninth in the fourth trumpet, at the bottom of a first inversion voicing, with all but the third trumpet resolving down by step in measure E6. Measure

G1 again uses the first inversion voicing, but this time adds a raised sixth in the second trumpet part and with a different resolution. Measure H1 shows the trumpets in second inversion with the raised sixth in the third trumpet. Measures C9 and 10, as mentioned above, is the only instance of a brass choir in the work. This section demonstrates Ellington's awareness of the common orchestration practice of using wide spacing at the bottom of the chord and close spacing at the top. He also takes much care to double the characteristic tones, the third and the seventh.

The shout chorus (Figure 4.4) features the saxes and the trumpets in a block chordal texture. The first two measures are repeated three times with the same voicings. The second alto sax and

Figure 4.4 Shout chorus from “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

second trumpet double the sixth; the first trumpet, first alto sax, and bari sax double the root in each chord; the first tenor sax and third trumpet double the fifth; the second tenor sax and fourth trumpet double the third. Each family is given tight voicings, with the four parts written within the range of a sixth.⁴⁴

Measures H1-I12 provide a block chordal accompaniment to the tenor saxophone solo and trombone countermelody (Figure 4.5). Here the trumpets and saxophones sound together to create the harmony. The first trumpet is doubled by the first tenor sax, the second trumpet is doubled by

⁴⁴ The octave displacement of the bari sax makes the sax range generally an octave, but this has been ignored for the purpose of this discussion.

the bari sax, and the third trumpet is doubled by the second alto sax. The fourth trumpet and first alto sax, while proceeding in the same rhythm, are not doubled.

The musical score for Figure 4.5 consists of five staves. The top staff is labeled 'Tenor Sax (solo)' and contains a melodic line with a 'HI' dynamic marking. The second staff is 'Alto Sax 1', the third is 'Alto Sax 2/ Tenor Sax 2/ Bari Sax', and the fourth is 'Trumpets'. The bottom staff is 'Trombones'. The score shows a solo by the Tenor Sax with accompaniment from the other instruments.

Figure 4.5 Gonsalves solo with accompaniment from “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

Melody

Following Ellington’s twelve measure vamp, the reeds state the opening melody in unison (Figure 4.6). This melody is easily subdivided into four measure subphrases, which is common for

The musical score for Figure 4.6 shows the head melody from “Oclupaca”. It consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Reeds (Clarinet at pitch, T. Sax/B. Sax sounds octave lower)' and contains a melodic line with a 'B1' dynamic marking. The second and third staves show the melody in different parts.

Figure 4.6 Head melody from “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

the blues form, and is characterized by pairs of ascending and descending half-steps. The first seven measures outline a quartal chord ($c^1-f^1-b \flat^1$). The contour of the subphrases goes from being static in the first four measures to a little more open in the second four before really opening up in the last four. This melody and texture returns in measure J1.

The melodic writing of the head follows the blues form very closely. There is a strong relationship between the first four measures and the second four measures; they are not verbatim repetitions, but there is enough similarity to invoke a sense of repetition. The final four measures are a resolution of the idea in the first eight. The blues scheme often carries an impression of the original idea but then brings it to a satisfying conclusion. During the multi-chorus sections the melodic lines blur the boundaries of the choruses. The same basic eighth note followed by a longer note dominates the melody in both parts. In the second chorus a series of eighth notes is followed by a sustained tone for both parts. The final four measures consist of two playing measures and two resting measures.

Related to the blues influence is the idea of motivic repetition Ellington uses in the remaining choruses. Each of these choruses are characterized with a specific two measure figure which is repeated four times. Each restatement is essentially a literal repetition except for the third one, which is always somewhat varied. This relates to the blues harmonic structure; the harmony changes in the fifth and sixth measures of a chorus, which coincides with the third statement of this melodic figure.

The image shows a musical score for the first chorus of "Oclupaca" by Duke Ellington. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system is for Reeds and Piano (r.h.). The Reeds part is in the upper staff, and the Piano (r.h.) part is in the lower staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The score is marked with a box labeled "C1" above the first measure of the reed part. The melody is characterized by a blues-influenced style, featuring a sequence of eighth notes followed by a longer note. Triplet figures are indicated by brackets with the number "3" below them. The piano part provides harmonic support with chords and rhythmic patterns.

Figure 4.7 First chorus of the reed and piano interaction from “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968. (Author’s compilation and transcription in consultation with published transcription.)

Beginning in measure C1 (Figure 4.7), the piano enters into call and response with the reeds. The first eight measures of the reed melody comprise a series of three-note segments containing a half-step and a leap. This melody implies a step progression in the sustained notes ($e^1-d^1-e^2-b^2-e^1$). It also reflects on the half-step motion from the head, particularly the e^1 and B^1 which are

Figure 4.8 Second chorus reed and piano interaction from “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

resolved in the piano line. The piano uses two different rhythmic motives for its counter line; each arpeggio outlines the appropriate harmony. The second chorus of this interaction (Figure 4.8) features a harmonically-oriented reed melody and descending piano arpeggios. The reed melody in this chorus is in many ways an inversion of the previous chorus. Whereas the melody in the previous chorus featured half-steps followed by leaps, this chorus reverses that pattern when it occurs.

At measure E1 (Figure 4.9) the trumpets are added to the interaction. The reeds continue in

Figure 4.9 Excerpt of sax, trumpet, piano interaction from “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

a disjunct line while the trumpets and piano answer in turn with block chords. The first, second, and fourth reed entrances are identical, whereas the third entrance is varied slightly. In all, Ellington continues to emphasize the half-step followed by a leap which has characterized the melodies throughout.

Figure 4.10 Trombone and piano interaction from “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

At measure F1 the trombones and piano enter into a call and response (Figure 4.10). This is the only time Ellington features the trombones in a prominent role. The trombones seem to accent the piano melody in the same way the trumpets and piano accented the reed melody in the previous section. The piano melody focuses a great deal on the fourth scale degree in both its diatonic and raised forms.

The shout chorus (see Figure 4.4) has little melodic development; the lines either maintain one pitch or move to one other note. The last three measures display chromatic motion from C to F and back. This chorus leads into the tenor saxophone solo by Paul Gonsalves (Figure 4.11). This solo illustrates Gonsalves’ ability to play the blues well. It is infused with the half step movements that are typical of the piece as a whole. The second chorus of the solo is more unified and interesting than the first. It begins with a highly structured flourish of notes (Figure 4.12). This phrase begins on the downbeat of measure I1 and ends with the F in the first beat of measure I4. The D ♯ in the third beat of measure I2 is structurally important as it is the top of the contour and

Tenor Sax (solo)

Figure 4.11 Gonsalves solo from “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

Figure 4.12 Flourish in Gonsalves’ solo in “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

occurs approximately halfway through the flourish. The repetition of the A_1 motive in the example serves to delay the arrival at this pitch. Motive A is transformed into A' to lead to the $D \flat$. The return to F is almost scalar, which is evident from the reduction. Gonsalves uses similar figures to end each chorus. As Figure 4.11 shows, the ending of the second chorus is prepared by a sequence of the figure.

Trombones

Figure 4.13 Trombone countermelody to Gonsalves’ solo in “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

The trombone countermelody under Gonsalves’ solo (Figure 4.13) serves to outline the tonality, however it is not without embellishment and color notes. For example, in the last four

measures the trombones play a chromatic line from A \flat to c¹ and then back down to A \flat . This all leads to a recapitulation of the reed melody to close the piece.

Tonality and Harmony

Consistent with the blues form, each tonal area uses only three chords – tonic, subdominant, and dominant. The F minor sections (Figure 4.14) follow the standard pattern – four measures of tonic, two of subdominant, two of tonic, two of dominant, and two of tonic – but the A \flat sections (Figure 4.15) begin on the subdominant and alternate with the tonic every two measures before arriving at the dominant in the ninth measure.

Figure 4.14 shows two staves of musical notation in F minor (three flats). The top staff has a treble clef and a common time signature. Above the staff, the chord progression is labeled: Fm (measures 1-4), Bbm (measures 5-6), Fm (measures 7-8), C7+9 (measures 9-10), and Fm (measures 11-12). The bottom staff has a treble clef and a common time signature. Above the staff, the chord progression is labeled: Fm (measures 1-4), C7+9 (measures 5-6), and Fm (measures 7-12). Both staves contain rhythmic notation represented by diagonal slashes.

Figure 4.14 F minor chord progression from “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

Figure 4.15 shows two staves of musical notation in A \flat major (three flats). The top staff has a treble clef and a common time signature. Above the staff, the chord progression is labeled: D \flat 7 (measures 1-4), A \flat (measures 5-6), and D \flat 7 (measures 7-12). The bottom staff has a treble clef and a common time signature. Above the staff, the chord progression is labeled: A \flat (measures 1-4), E \flat 7 (measures 5-6), and A \flat (measures 7-12). Both staves contain rhythmic notation represented by diagonal slashes.

Figure 4.15 A \flat major chord progression from “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

Ellington obviously was not content to adhere to these traditional chords. One of his favorite embellishments was the addition of the ninth, which can be seen clearly in the opening piano vamp

Figure 4.16 shows a piano vamp in F minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. The notation is for the piano part, with a treble and bass clef. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with eighth notes and dotted rhythms, including a box labeled 'A3' above the first measure. The left hand (bass clef) features a bass line with chords and eighth notes. The vamp consists of four measures.

Figure 4.16 Piano vamp from the beginning of “Oclupaca” by Duke Ellington. Copyright © 1968.

(Figure 4.16). The ninth consistently appears at the bottom of each piano chord except the dominant. This continues into the reed choruses, now with the ninth in the dominant harmony. In the fourth reed chorus the ninth moves into the trumpets and the piano over the F minor chords. During the shout chorus that leads to the tenor sax solo, the ninth slips into the second tenor sax and fourth trumpet over the F minor chords. It shifts to the first tenor and third trumpet, by virtue of sustained pitches, over the B \flat minor and C 7 chords. During the solo choruses the ninth appears in the second alto sax over the D \flat chords and the first trumpet and first tenor sax over the E \flat 7 . The trombone countermelody also contains the ninth of the D \flat chord as the pinnacle of the line. The B \flat is also the ninth of the A \flat chord.

Rhythm

Ellington maintains simplicity of rhythm in “Oclupaca.” The overarching rhythmic character of the piece is the juxtaposition of short and long note values and the syncopation which results. The head motive features an eighth note followed by a double-dotted half note. This rhythmic idea occurs often in the piece, for example the end of the brass chord in measures C9 and 10 and the trombone soli in measures F1-12. Of course Ellington’s piano fills and Paul Gonsalves’ solo add considerable rhythmic diversity to the work, but as a whole the piece is rhythmically simple.

There are two surprising elements about the rhythm. The first is the general lack of Latin rhythms in the winds. The rhythm section gives the piece a definite Latin feel, but their rhythms are not carried through into the winds. The second is the shift from this Latin feel to a swing feel for the shout chorus and tenor sax solo. One aspect of the Latin influence which does carry into the winds is the treatment of the eighth notes, which are played straight except for the swing section.

Conclusions

“Oclupaca” is a piece about tone color and melody wrapped up in the blues. The eleven blues choruses are structured tonally into an ABA’ form. It is significant that even in the later years of his career Ellington continued to embrace the idiom of the blues. In 1968 free jazz had been around for a few years and many musicians saw the blues form as archaic and limiting. Ellington continued to hold onto his conception of his music as the music of his people and saw the blues as a significant part of that heritage.

The genius of “Oclupaca” lies in the mature Ellington’s scoring. Every aspect of the work seems carefully crafted in such a way as to bring out the desired mood. In many ways it seems like

a tone painting of the resort-like atmosphere Acapulco; it is, in general, a very laid back and relaxed piece. The focus is on the reeds, which are naturally less harsh than the brass, particularly the tenor and bari saxes with a single clarinet written in its woody middle register. The brass are relegated to mainly supporting roles throughout the work; when they are highlighted they play only motivic figures and not a true melody.

The sparse texture, along with the blues harmonic progression keeps the basic harmonies and sound uncomplicated. Throughout the work the winds are written with only one or two simultaneous textural layers, with the instrument families voiced so as to create a subdued orchestral sound. While the harmonies are simple and straightforward, Ellington colors the basic chords to both heighten the harmonic interest and add a little exoticism to the harmony.

The melodic character of the piece is highly motivic; the written melodies are not really lyrical, but rather consist of motivic repetition and variation. For example, the head emphasizes consecutive ascending and descending half-step motion. Throughout the work the motivic usage conforms to the blues form and chord progression. The first eight measures generally divide into two-measure segments; the second, and fourth segments are usually direct repetitions of the first because they correspond to the tonic chord in the progression. The third segment falls on the subdominant chord, so the motive is slightly altered. The final four measures constitute a conclusion/response to the statements of the first eight measures. Ellington also places a lot of emphasis on the raised sixth and seventh scale degrees in the minor sections; he also emphasizes the raised fourth throughout.

Ellington uses very simple rhythmic figures throughout the work; the winds play straight eighth-notes over a Latin rhythm in the rhythm section. The syncopations which result from the juxtaposition of short and long note values, as well as the rhythmic diversity of Ellington's piano fills and Gonsalves' solo keep "Oclupaca" from becoming monotonous. In addition, the shift to a swing feel during the shout chorus and tenor sax solo provides some variation to the otherwise hypnotic rhythms of the piece.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Form

Each of the pieces uses traditional formal structures as the foundation of the form. The form used in both “East St. Louis Toodle-O” and “Cottontail” is the 32-bar “song” form. This form was used extensively by the Tin Pan Alley composers; it was quite common for dance band composers to use this popular song form in their compositions. In “East St. Louis Toodle-O” the first instance of the “song” form features the full 32 measures, the second uses 16, and the final one is only eight. If we accept the theory that Miley adapted his theme to other songs with which he was familiar, it is likely that the 32-bar form was patterned upon such pieces. “Cottontail,” on the other hand, uses the form in its entirety except for the initial chorus, which is only twenty-four measures long. It is obvious that even though Ellington used this standard form, he did not feel bound to use it strictly. Still, the use of this popular song form reveals Ellington’s awareness of the musical world in which he worked. Rattenbury indicates that the use of this form may have also had economic roots as well as artistic ones. By writing in this popular song form and agreeing for his music to be distributed by the publisher Irving Mills, Ellington established a steady income through royalties.⁴⁵

The form used in “Oclupaca” is a twelve-bar blues. This ties directly into Ellington’s vision of his music as the music of his people. While Tin Pan Alley was certainly an influence, Ellington’s music shows clear signs of an immersion in the blues. The form is in many ways different from the song form of the other two pieces. First, the song form is made up of four self-contained harmonic sections whereas the blues form is a harmonic entirety which cannot be satisfactorily divided into complete smaller units. As a result, each of the choruses in “Oclupaca” appears in full without the formal segmentation which was found in the other two works.

Regardless of the form used for the individual choruses, Ellington was not content to let his works be a series of unrelated choruses. The overarching structure of his works may not be clear on the first look, but it does exist. In “East St. Louis Toodle-O,” the superstructure is the alternation and progressive diminution of the 32-bar song form related sections with the asymmetrical eighteen bar sections; in “Cottontail,” it is the alternation of solo and ensemble, as well as reeds and brass, within the frame of the combo-like head. “Oclupaca” is tonally divided into an ABA’ form.

⁴⁵ Ken Rattenbury *Duke Ellington: Jazz Composer*. p. 86.

Thus, it does not seem that Ellington really sought to break new ground formally in these works. He seemed content to use fairly standard forms as vehicles for some of his other compositional developments. Although he did not focus on formal innovations, he did use the forms in ways which added to the overall aesthetic of the piece.

Instrumentation

One facet of Ellington's orchestration worth noting is relative importance of the brass and reeds and how this changed over the course of his career. In "East St. Louis Toodle-O," the brass are clearly dominant as thematic carriers. The work is framed by Bubber Miley's solo trumpet and also features a trombone solo and brass soli. The reeds do play an important role, but lack the prominence of the brass. They, in addition to the trombone and piano, create the dark and earthy character of the ostinato which Miley's "gutbucket" trumpet enhances. The other reed emphases are two solos by Harry Carney and Rudy Jackson.

"Cottontail" is an example of Ellington writing for choirs of instruments, particularly brass versus saxes. The two families are fairly balanced within the work, with a slight edge going to the saxes. With the exception of the head (the instrumentation of which is ahead of its time) there are no mixed sectional voicings. Ellington even maintains the brass/sax contrast in the solo choruses by using opposite-family accompaniments. The contrast is further emphasized by the alternation of the sections in which they are featured.

"Oclupaca" has a definite reed focus; only 24 out of the 142 measures do not use the reeds. In this piece it is mood and color which are most important. The scoring for clarinet and low saxes creates a distinct sound. The brass are relegated to a mainly accompanimental role and are not featured at all during this work; they always appear as accompaniment to the reeds or piano. This is indicative of much of Ellington's later work. During these later years the personnel in the reed section was far more stable than was the brass. Therefore, Ellington was more familiar with the sound of his reed players and wrote music which was based around that sound.

Another factor is the prominence of Ellington's piano. In "East St. Louis Toodle-O" and "Cottontail," the piano functions as an accompanimental instrument. "Oclupaca" uses the piano in exposed roles throughout. In fact the entire piece could be viewed as an interaction between the piano and the orchestra; the only choruses in which the piano does not play are the "shout" chorus and the two tenor sax solo choruses.

Ellington was always looking for new sounds and colors for his orchestra. In the early years he wrote for distinctive players — Bubber Miley, Joe Nanton, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Juan Tizol. In the later years, many of these distinct voices, particularly in the brass section, were no longer with the orchestra, so Ellington had to create a distinct sound in other places. In addition to the alto and bari sax sounds of Hodges and Carney, Paul Gonsalves' versatile tenor saxophone sound became a central pillar for Ellington's orchestrations.

Texture/Harmony

Ellington's music is constructed, to a large degree, around the presentation and contrast of textures, and this is reflected in these three works. Ellington used these different approaches to texture to create different colors and moods. "East St. Louis Toodle-O" and "Cottontail" are largely based around the contrast of solo and ensemble textures. In "East St. Louis," these textures correspond to the sectional divisions: sections with the ostinato and sections without the ostinato. These ostinato sections are distinguished by the presentation of blues-influenced solos over the moaning and wailing sound of the ostinato. The accompanying solos, particularly Bubber Miley's, have a very human quality, as if the soloists were attempting to reproduce human vocal sounds with their instruments. The distinction in "Cottontail" is more a matter of solo versus soli sections, which typify the block chordal writing used in jazz orchestras at the time. "Oclupaca" is the simplest texturally of the three. The wind parts are written so that there are rarely more than two textural layers occurring together, and they are written as a call and response. Like the head of "Cottontail," the head of "Oclupaca" is written in unison.

As a result of these textural contrasts, the harmonies are frequently altered from chorus to chorus. The solos which sound over the ostinato in "East St. Louis Toodle-O" create a number of unexpected harmonies and harsh dissonances while the sections without the ostinato are fairly "pure" harmonically. The block chordal style of "Cottontail" and "Oclupaca" lends itself to the use of harmonic extensions greater than the seventh and ninth as well as added tones, particularly added sixths.

One element of both texture and harmony that bears noting is the voicings used for the chords. The ostinato from "East St. Louis Toodle-O" uses simple chord voicings – the lowest notes in the bass and bari sax doubled in the alto sax. The brass soli features the instruments voiced with the lowest pitch in the trombone and the highest in the first trumpet. "Cottontail" and "Oclupaca" do not necessarily hold to such simple voicings. Ellington frequently uses color tones, like the

seventh, ninth, or an added tone, in the middle or even bottom of a section. This is particularly common with the bari sax. He also tends to space the sections much closer together in the later two pieces.

Melody

Ellington's growth as a composer can be directly illustrated in the amount of composed music which appears in each piece. In "East St. Louis Toodle-O" Ellington is responsible for writing the brass soli and possibly the ostinato and Miley's theme, whereas he is responsible for most of the music in the later two pieces. The melodies which appear in these three works are not generally conjunct, diatonic melodies; they are characterized by leaps and chromaticism. The melodies in "Oclupaca" and Miley's melody in "East St. Louis Toodle-O" focus on the repetition and variation of motivic ideas, whereas many of the other melodic ideas rely less on these elements.

Tonality and Harmony

Each work is clearly tonal and centered around one or two related tonal areas. Some of the chords and chromatic melodic lines stretch those tonal centers, but they are never broken. "Cottontail" remains in B \flat major throughout, while the other two pieces shift from a minor key to its relative major. In "Oclupaca," the modulation is effected by a chromatic line in the bass during the last measure of the "shout" chorus which leads to D \flat , the root of the subdominant chord in the new key, on the downbeat of the first measure in A \flat . The bass is also responsible for the modulation back to F minor at the end of Gonsalves' solo; he outlines a C major triad, the dominant of F minor, in the last measure of the solo which resolves to the tonic on the downbeat of the final chorus. The modulations in "East St. Louis Toodle-O" are centered around three E \natural quarter notes. These resolve by a half-step to E \flat to lead into the major sections and are part of C major chords which shift mode to lead into the minor sections.

Rhythm, Meter, and Tempo

Tempo, as an aspect of rhythm, plays a major role in the character of Ellington's music. Of the three pieces in this study, "Cottontail" is the one most distinct in tempo. Both "East St. Louis Toodle-O" and "Oclupaca" are performed around 125 beats per minute whereas "Cottontail" is around 235.

The later two pieces rely on idiomatic rhythmic figures. Even though “Cottontail” precedes the heart of the bebop movement, those rhythms define much of the character of the piece. “Oclupaca” relies on Latin rhythms in the rhythm section to provide an underpinning to the wind parts.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this study, I specified four developments that I expected to see in a chronological progression through the pieces in this study. They were:

1. Greater harmonic complexity
2. Greater emphasis on tone color
3. Greater emphasis on the reeds and less emphasis on the brass
4. Greater emphasis on composition and less emphasis on improvisation

The pieces in this study have served to demonstrate these developments. As seen in the previous pages, there is greater harmonic complexity in the later two works than in the earliest one. The three pieces also show a progression from the brass dominated sound of “East St. Louis Toodle-O” to the reed dominated sound of “Oclupaca.” “East St. Louis Toodle-O” is based around improvised solos while the later two pieces integrate improvisation into the composed structure. I believe it is also fair to say that in “Oclupaca,” Ellington is more concerned with the sound of the orchestra than creating a catchy melody that people could remember. The only assumption not supported by these pieces is the greater emphasis on tone color. The reason this is not supported is that “East St. Louis Toodle-O” is very much about tone color and the orchestral sound. It is different from “Oclupaca” in that it is more dark and earthy, but many of the same effects are evident.

It is impossible to make sweeping generalizations about a composer’s style based on three pieces of music out of the thousands Ellington wrote in his fifty-year career. Obviously a person would need to study a much larger sample from these time periods; this study serves as a starting point. In addition to a larger sample of works, future studies would do well to consider the functions of various pieces as well. For example, in the middle and late periods it might be useful to distinguish between which pieces were dance pieces, which pieces were concert pieces, and which served as both. It might also be beneficial to examine some of Ellington’s arrangements of pre-

composed music, such as *The Nutcracker Suite* or *Mary Poppins* to see what “Ellingtonian” touches were applied to these pre-established structures. It might even be beneficial to study a single piece across time through different recordings. Any study of Ellington’s music must include the players; he was not simply turning out stock arrangements, but writing for specific forces, and the author believes that is in some way reflected in each composition.

Duke Ellington was a composer first and a band leader second. Those who declare him to be the first jazz composer have a great deal of evidence to support them. Whether he was writing a dance piece or a concert piece Ellington put a great deal of craft into the work. His use of tone color and orchestration paved the way for many who would follow him, including Charles Mingus and Sun Ra. It is the author’s wish that Duke Ellington’s music will gain the scholarly attention it deserves.

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Kentucky Jazz Repertory Orchestra – produced original transcription of *East St. Louis Toodle-O* used in Duke Ellington series