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The Long-Playing Ellington: Analyzing Composition and Collaboration in the Duke Ellington Orchestra

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The Long-Playing Ellington:
Analyzing Composition and Collaboration in the Duke Ellington Orchestra
by
Darren LaCour

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2016
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Darren LaCour
May 2016

For Juliette, my favorite of these “babies”

For Emily, who always eclipsed this project’s significance

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Darren Anthony LaCour

Doctor of Philosophy in Music

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Professor Paul Steinbeck, Chair

This dissertation examines four albums released by Duke Ellington and His Orchestra in the LP era, highlighting the intertwined roles composition and collaboration play in the realization of the sonic products. The first chapter analyzes 1951's *Masterpieces by Ellington*, the band's first 12-inch LP and one of the first jazz albums to explore the possibilities of the long-playing record as a medium. I balance discussion of Ellington's compositional techniques in *The Tattooed Bride*, an eleven-minute concert work, with an examination of interaction as it occurs on the extended arrangements of three standards that constitute the album's remaining tracks. Chapter 2 looks at *Duke Ellington, His Piano, and His Orchestra at the Bal Masque*, a 1959 concept album that depicts the Ellington band in the guise of a supper-club orchestra. I look at Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's arrangements of the preexisting material for insights into their creative process while also looking at the role of three other collaborators: Dick Vance, an outside arranger contracted for three arrangements on the album; Columbia records producer Irving Townsend, who splices fake applause at the beginning and end of each track to simulate a live recording; and the intended audience, who can choose whether or not to imaginatively engage with the album's simulated concert concept. In Chapter 3, I address *The Ellington Suites*, a 1976 posthumous

release of pieces Ellington wrote to commemorate different people and places. After a detailed look at Ellington's treatment of compositional parameters in *The Queen's Suite*, I provide a comprehensive history and analysis of Ellington's place-themed suites, offering a way of using place to hear these pieces as collaborations with members of his orchestra. In the final chapter, I focus on two multimedia collaborations for which Ellington provided the scores: an unfinished documentary film by Sam Shaw on Edgar Degas and a successful ballet choreographed by Alvin Ailey. The last chapter in particular reveals Ellington's reliance on recording technology as a compositional practice, using tape as a sketchbook to work out, develop, and preserve ideas. Though composition and collaboration may seem opposed, they are reciprocal trajectories in addressing the music of Duke Ellington and His Orchestra.

Introduction

Writing for *The Village Voice* in 1999, Gary Giddins discussed “The Long-Playing Duke,” whose impressive body of work left a “labyrinth” of material for the uninitiated listener to wander through. Though his title points to Ellington’s later work for the long-playing record, Giddins also exploits the phrase’s double-meaning to encapsulate more of Ellington’s career and his legacy, an understandable approach during Ellington’s centennial. In the end, Giddins points to a total of twelve Ellington LPs, mainly in his concluding ranked list that serves as a “10-step survey of that last, long-belittled labyrinth within the labyrinth: the mature Ellington, the wise Ellington, the all-encompassing Ellington.”¹

Giddins’ characterization of Ellington’s later works as “long-belittled” is finally, seventeen years after Ellington’s one-hundredth birthday, becoming out of date. For decades, Ellington scholarship and biography focused on Ellington’s origins and swing-era successes, culminating with the Blanton-Webster band of the early 1940s.² Such a perspective sadly overlooks the thirty years of music that followed, which, for all its difference, showcased a constantly innovating group of musicians. Modern day scholars have finally begun to turn their attention to this later work.³ Those who look at Ellington’s albums tend to focus on a small

¹ Gary Giddins, “The Long-Playing Duke,” *Village Voice*, April 27, 1999, <http://www.villagevoice.com/music/the-long-playing-duke-6421848>.

² Gunther Schuller’s *Early Jazz* and mammoth study *The Swing Era* contained the definitive accounts of Ellington’s career during the period until Mark Tucker’s meticulously researched *Ellington: The Early Years*. Tucker’s work was the first study to use the Duke Ellington Collection at the Smithsonian Archives Center, but it only serves as a replacement for Schuller’s first volume, ending in 1930. Ken Rattenbury’s *Duke Ellington: Jazz Composer* casts Ellington’s “mature period” around 1940, perpetuating longstanding bias in Ellington criticism and scholarship that the Blanton-Webster band marked the peak of Ellington’s achievements. Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz : Its Roots and Musical Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Ken Rattenbury, *Duke Ellington, Jazz Composer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Mark Tucker, *Ellington: The Early Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

³ Harvey Cohen presents a comprehensive account of Ellington’s career, steeped in the archives and oral histories. See Harvey G. Cohen, *Duke Ellington’s America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). David Schiff

subset of Giddins' list, especially *Ellington at Newport*, *Such Sweet Thunder*, and *The Far East Suite*.⁴ The narrow canonization of Ellington post-war output limits the insights we can gain from Ellington's body of work: insights into his creative processes, the shifting music industry, and the many collaborators with whom Ellington worked to realize his artistic vision.

The present dissertation expands the breadth of our knowledge of Ellington through a close reading of four long-playing records. Giddins mentions two of the albums in his article, but only one of them has been addressed in the scholarly literature, and even there only briefly as an early pioneer of new technology.⁵ That 1951 album *Masterpieces by Ellington*, discussed in Chapter 1, is Ellington's first experiment on the 12-inch format, and it signaled a radically new approach to the extended playing time.⁶ In Chapter 2, I look at *Duke Ellington, His Piano, and His Orchestra At the Bal Masque*, a characteristic album from Ellington's prolific period with the Columbia Records label in the late-1950s.⁷ Chapters 3 and 4 consider posthumous releases of Ellington's stockpile material, recordings he personally funded with no intention for commercial release. Pablo Record's *The Ellington Suites*, from 1976, serves as the case study in Chapter 3.⁸ The album compiles three suite-form compositions Ellington recorded in 1958, 1971, and 1972,

presents Ellington as the essential musical figure in the twentieth century, spanning his full career. See David Schiff, *The Ellington Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

⁴ For more on *Ellington at Newport*, see John Fass Morton, *Backstory in Blue: Ellington at Newport '56* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Darren Mueller, "At the Vanguard of Vinyl: A Cultural History of the Long-Playing Record in Jazz" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2015). For accounts of *Such Sweet Thunder*, see the special issue of *Borrowers and lenders: The journal of Shakespeare and appropriation*, I, no. 1 (2005), as well as Schiff, *The Ellington Century*. For discussions of *The Far East Suite*, see Mark Lomanno, "Ellington's Lens as Motive Mediating: Improvising Voices in the Far East Suite," *Jazz Perspectives* 6, no. 1–2 (2012): 151–77; Travis A. Jackson, "Tourist Point of View? Musics of the World and Ellington's Suites," *The Musical Quarterly* 96, no. 3–4 (December 2013): 513–40.

⁵ For an example, see Richard Osborne, *Vinyl: A History of the Analogue Record* (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 102.

⁶ Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, *Masterpieces By Ellington*, Columbia CL 825, 1951, LP. Reissued as *Masterpieces by Ellington*, Columbia COL 469407 2, 1990, compact disc.

⁷ *Duke Ellington, His Piano, and His Orchestra at the Bal Masque*, Columbia CL 1282, 1959, LP.

⁸ Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, *The Ellington Suites*, Pablo 2310-762, 1976, LP. Reissued as *The Ellington Suites*, Original Jazz Classics OJCCD-446-2, 1990, compact disc.

creating a bridge from the time period discussed in the first two chapters to the end of the composer's career. The final chapter examines *The Private Collection, Volume Five: The Suites (New York, 1968 & 1970)*.⁹ The two pieces included on this release are Ellington scores for collaborative projects, an abandoned documentary film and a successful ballet. Together, the four albums provide an overview of Ellington's musical output during the latter half of his life, necessarily incomplete but broad in scope.

My discussion of each album splits into two reciprocal trajectories, the first focused on uncovering Ellington's compositional techniques in his later works, the second centered on the role collaboration plays in the realization of these recordings. Put differently, each chapter puts Ellington in the spotlight and then turns up the house lights to reveal the supporting players surrounding the bandleader, be they musicians, producers, or even the audience. Though the trajectories of this project may seem opposed, the tension reflects the reality of the music performed by Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. Ellington's entire career was shaped by his public image as a genius composer, but it was also defined by the talented members of his band, not to mention the industry players around him.

As a music theorist, I am particularly interested in Ellington's compositional techniques. Previous studies of Ellington as composer tend to focus narrowly on Ellington's early work, neglecting any shifts that may have occurred as his career continued.¹⁰ Each chapter therefore addresses some aspect of Ellington's compositional practices. For Chapter 1, I examine Ellington's treatment of motives and form in *The Tattooed Bride*. Though the piece is often mentioned in passing as the epitome of Ellington's motivic writing, my analysis is the first

⁹ Duke Ellington, *The Private Collection, Volume Five: The Suites, New York 1968 & 1970*, Saja Records 91045-2, 1987, compact disc.

¹⁰ Rattenbury's work is the most obvious example, since it purports to provide an overview of Ellington's compositional practice but neglects most of his music. Rattenbury, *Duke Ellington, Jazz Composer*.

extensive exploration of the work's structure and integration.¹¹ In Chapter 2, I examine Ellington's (and his writing partner Billy Strayhorn's) arrangements of preexisting tunes. Although performance of standards was critical to Ellington's career, few studies have considered his arrangements in any detail, dismissing the practice as of little importance when compared to his original compositions.¹² In fact, as my analysis shows, Ellington approached these arrangements as a compositional process. Chapter 3 takes the familiar approach of examining Ellington's compositional "miniatures," but instead of using the customary repertoire of the 1930s and 1940s (pieces such as "Ko-Ko," "Harlem Airshaft," and "Concerto for Cootie"), I look at the movements of *The Queen's Suite*. My analysis revisits some familiar ideas of Ellington's compositional style, such as his "on-the-man" writing and his tendency to revise his material, adding nuance to our understanding of these practices from his post-war output while also examining his approaches to other compositional parameters, including repetition, non-functional harmony, riffs, and grooves. The multimedia collaborations in Chapter 4 provide a backdrop to explore how the process of recording became an integral part of composing in Ellington's career. The four albums show that expanding our appraisal of Ellington's later output presents more substantive material to be mined for its insights into his working practices and signature sound.

My second analytical frame, collaboration, produces additional insights when applied to these records. Ellington's early work has been noted for its collaborative nature, as band

¹¹ The most detailed presentation of motivic techniques in Ellington's music is Edward Green, "'It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Grundgestalt!': Ellington from a Motivic Perspective," *Jazz Perspectives* 2, no. 2 (2008): 215–49.

¹² Two studies of Ellington's arrangements are Andrew Berish, "Leisure, Love, and Dreams in Depression America: Duke Ellington and Tin Pan Alley Song," *The Musical Quarterly* 96, no. 3–4 (December 2013): 339–68; Ryan Raul Bañagale, *Arranging Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue and the Creation of an American Icon* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 96–118. I address both in Chapter 2.

members brought melodies to rehearsals and worked out arrangements collectively, even if history does not credit them.¹³ Ellington's long-lasting partnership with Strayhorn is another key collaboration within the Ellington orchestra, as the two often exchanged musical ideas, arranged one another's tunes, and at times completed the others' compositions. Building on this acknowledged—if historically minimized—centrality of collaboration within the musical output of the Duke Ellington Orchestra, throughout the dissertation I take “collaboration” in an even broader sense of “working together.” Thus, I reframe relationships that may traditionally be characterized as employer/employee (Ellington's relationship with the members of his band) or consumer/producer (the audience and Ellington) as collaborations that bring the recorded products to fruition. Though loosely defined, collaboration, when used in this dissertation, cues a shift in perspective that problematizes the tendency to hear Ellington's voice as the sole artistic agent on these albums. Collaboration functions as a foil to singularly focused “genius” narratives of Ellington as creator, providing balance to my own examination of his compositional style.

In Chapter 1, I approach collaboration in terms of interaction. Though interaction is a common method of analyzing jazz performance, it has not been applied to Ellington's music or to big band music generally.¹⁴ I consider not only the in-the-moment interaction between band

¹³ A firsthand account of this collaborative composition can be found in Rex Stewart and Claire Gordon, *Boy Meets Horn* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991). James Lincoln Collier's widely disparaged biography uses these anecdotes to create a portrait of Ellington as talentless and conniving, using others' work as his own. Terry Teachout's biography, though more charitable in its assessment of Ellington, faults the bandleader for robbing his musicians of credit (and royalties) on some of his most successful compositions. My work attempts to withhold such moral pronouncements while fairly attributing some of Ellington's success to those with whom he worked. See James Lincoln Collier, *Duke Ellington* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Terry Teachout, *Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington* (New York: Gotham Books, 2013).

¹⁴ For the foundational studies of jazz as interaction, see Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). For more recent studies, see Robert Hodson, *Interaction, Improvisation, and Interplay in Jazz* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Paul Steinbeck, “‘Area by Area the Machine Unfolds’: The Improvisational Performance Practice of the Art Ensemble of Chicago,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 2, no. 3 (2008): 397–427; Garrett Michaelsen, “Analyzing Musical Interaction in Jazz Improvisations of the 1960s” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2013). Michaelsen's work in particular informs my approach in Chapter 1.

members on *Masterpieces by Ellington*, but also the historical interactions between old recordings and former members of the orchestra. The interactive perspective could be applied to the remaining albums, but my approach to collaboration looks to other players in Chapter 2. I illuminate the roles Dick Vance, an outside arranger, Irving Townsend, the Columbia Records producer, and the intended audience play in realizing the virtual concert proposed by the concept album *At the Bal Masque*. In Chapter 3, my discussion of *The Goutelas Suite* and *The UWIS Suite*—two pieces Ellington dedicated to particular places—uses the historical and biographical encounters with these places as a speculative filter through which we can hear these pieces as collaborations. Finally, in Chapter 4, I look at two explicit partnerships. I provide the most comprehensive account to date of Ellington’s collaboration with choreographer Alvin Ailey and conductor Ron Collier on the ballet *The River*. I also reconstruct Ellington’s collaboration with film producer Sam Shaw and journalist Herbert Mitgang on the abandoned film *Degas’ Racing World*, based on the exhibition catalog that inspired the film and the previously untapped archival script.

Much of this dissertation relies on archival sources from the Duke Ellington Collection and the Ruth Ellington Collection, both housed in the Smithsonian Institution’s Archives Center at the National Museum of American History. Acquired from the Ellington estate in the late 1980s, the collections contain a combined total of approximately 333 cubic feet of material, over half of which is music manuscripts, primarily in the form of parts for individual players and short scores. Though the collection is cataloged, pieces are mixed across eras, and the organization’s inconsistent titling system requires additional work on the part of the researcher. For instance, Ellington’s arrangement of “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” for *At the Bal Masque* (discussed in Ch. 2) survives in the Duke Ellington Collection under the title “Woof”; until my

research, this piece had not been properly identified. At times my analysis will refer to the physical documents, which in their layout and shorthand often require close study to decipher.

Despite the vast resource, only a handful of Ellington studies have made extensive use of the collections.¹⁵ Mine is the first work of music theory to be steeped in Ellington's scores and parts, granting me authority in describing Ellington's compositional practices. Most of my musical examples have been generated from the extant scores and parts from the archives, held in the Duke and Ruth Ellington Collections at the Smithsonian Institution.¹⁶ That said, I do consult published transcriptions and scores, when available, though I always compare these materials to the archival documents. Specifically, I make use Bill Dobbins' transcription of "Mood Indigo" from *Masterpieces by Ellington* and David Berger's transcriptions of *The Tattooed Bride*, "Sunset and the Mockingbird" from *The Queen's Suite*, and "Loco Madi" from *The UWIS Suite*. When my musical examples are drawn from these sources, I reference them by transcriber; I give full bibliographic information in the bibliography under the heading "Transcriptions."

Ultimately, my contributions are threefold: I expose an understudied repertoire of Ellington's music, apply new analytic techniques to his music, and consult archival sources in more depth than any previous study of Ellington's music from this period. A final question remains, however: why recordings? The Ellington orchestra did much more than record—the

¹⁵ Walter van de Leur has mined the archives to expose Billy Strayhorn extensive and rarely credited work on the Ellington band's output. See Walter van de Leur, *Something to Live For: The Music of Billy Strayhorn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). John Howland has used the archival sources to illustrate Ellington's debt to, and departures from, symphonic jazz in some of his extended compositions. See John Howland, "*Ellington Uptown*": *Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, & the Birth of Concert Jazz* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009). Previously mentioned book-length studies that make extensive use of the collections include Tucker, *Ellington: The Early Years*; Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America*; Schiff, *The Ellington Century*. Finally, Terry Teachout's recent biography also makes use of the archival sources, though he only devotes four of sixteen chapters to Ellington's postwar period and shows a particular interest in the bandleader's romantic life. Teachout, *Duke*.

¹⁶ I abbreviate the collections DEC and REC throughout the dissertation, primarily in the musical examples.

band performed most nights (sometimes twice) of its fifty-year existence. Recording only represents a small body of the orchestra's work. In part, my use of recordings derives from a longstanding practice of recounting jazz's history through shellac, vinyl, and magnetic tape, a form of canonization dating back to the earliest discographies. On the other hand, recordings offer a kind of immediate access to the musicians, and represent our best documentation of the Ellington orchestra. Finally, as this dissertation reveals throughout, recording became, for Ellington, an increasing part of his creative process as well as a way for him to shape his legacy. These records tell a story, a story of composition and collaboration.

Chapter 1: *Masterpieces by Ellington*

1.1 Introduction

In 1948, Columbia introduced the long-playing record, a new technology that allowed up to twenty-five minutes of continuous music per side. The medium allowed classical music, with its more characteristic long-form pieces, to be presented with fewer breaks for switching sides. Jazz musicians could now record longer than three-and-a-half minutes, opening avenues for new tempos and longer solos, but labels primarily used the technology to release collections of preexisting recordings at a premium price rather than feature longer recordings of individual pieces.¹ Unlike many other jazz and popular artists, Ellington had long been writing pieces that exceeded the bounds of the three-minute pop tune, starting with 1930's "Creole Rhapsody" and including "Reminiscing in Tempo" (1935) and "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue" (1937). At his first concert at Carnegie Hall in 1943, Ellington premiered his forty-five-minute "tone parallel to the history of the American Negro," *Black, Brown, & Beige*. The orchestra performed yearly engagements at the venue for the next five years, and Ellington and Strayhorn always presented a new "concert work."

The orchestra's emphasis on extended pieces made them a strong candidate for recordings on the new technology, but Columbia did not see much commercial potential in such endeavors.² Columbia's first Ellington LP was instead a 10-inch compilation of shorter, popular hits in 1948, part of the label's effort to build a strong catalog of music.³ In the words of Columbia Records producer George Avakian, "A company survives on its catalog, it does not

¹ For an excellent history of the early LP in jazz, see Darren Mueller, "At the Vanguard of Vinyl: A Cultural History of the Long-Playing Record in Jazz" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2015).

² Harvey G. Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 285–86.

³ Ellington had recently signed with Columbia after years with RCA-Victor and a brief stint with Musicraft.

survive on its hits.”⁴ After this initial album, Columbia released Ellington’s *Liberian Suite* on another 10-inch LP later that year. Written to commemorate the nation’s centenary, the work opens with a four-and-a-half-minute movement titled “I Like the Sunrise,” followed by five separate dance movements, ranging from three to five minutes in length.

When the band went into the studio in December of 1950 with Avakian, the goal was to create enough material for a 12-inch LP. The resultant effort was released on Columbia’s classical imprint, Columbia Masterworks under the title *Masterpieces by Ellington*. The forty-seven-minute album only featured four tracks: “Mood Indigo,” “Sophisticated Lady,” *The Tattooed Bride*, and “Solitude.” Three of the tracks were lengthy arrangements of classic Ellington tunes that originally filled a single three-minute side of a 78-rpm disc. Scholars consider *The Tattooed Bride* the album’s only extended composition, as Ellington’s written score consistently translates into eleven minutes of music in all recordings. I define the “extended composition” more explicitly later in the chapter, but in essence scholars tend to reserve the term for Ellington’s formally complex pieces. Though “Mood Indigo,” “Sophisticated Lady,” and “Solitude” rival *The Tattooed Bride* in length, they are structured as a series of repetitions of the shorter song forms upon which they are based. Critics celebrate *Masterpieces by Ellington* as one of Ellington’s strongest albums, and it historically marks the first occasion Ellington shaped his musical content to specifically match the medium.⁵ When Ellington returned to Columbia Records in the late 1950s, he focused intensely on concept albums, a precedent set by the album at hand.

Masterpieces by Ellington is the result of collaboration and composition. This chapter focuses on both aspects, first considering the collaborative effort undertaken to realize the

⁴ Cohen, *Duke Ellington’s America*, 290.

⁵ For an example of positive critical assessment, see Gary Giddins, “The Long-Playing Duke,” *Village Voice*, April 27, 1999, <http://www.villagevoice.com/music/the-long-playing-duke-6421848>.

extended “concert arrangements” of the three Ellington hits, and then examining the compositional techniques at work in *The Tattooed Bride*. The analysis sets the tone for the rest of the dissertation, which simultaneously seeks to reveal Ellington’s compositional voice while also foregrounding the surrounding players who were so crucial to the recorded product. These two streams reflect the essential tension of the Duke Ellington Orchestra, a collective of strong individual voices presented as the vision of one man.

1.2 Collaboration in “Mood Indigo,” “Sophisticated Lady,” & “Solitude”

Walter van de Leur remarks that the band’s first 12-inch LP for Columbia would be more aptly named *Masterpieces by Ellington—Arranged By Strayhorn*.⁶ Indeed, Strayhorn tackled much of the arranging for the three classic Ellington tunes, and he also appeared prominently as a soloist on two of the tracks. The *Masterpieces* arrangements have particular weight in van de Leur’s narrative, because they provide a rare instance of the two composers working together on the same arrangements and because Strayhorn abandoned his usual attempts at development across choruses, respecting Ellington’s tendency to delete and reorder passages during recording sessions.⁷ Given Strayhorn’s indispensable role in creating these tracks, he figures prominently in the ensuing analysis.

Another crucial collaborative role falls to the members of the orchestra, especially the soloists selected to fill out these extended arrangements. Table 1.1 provides a list of personnel on the *Masterpieces by Ellington* album, which may be helpful to refer to throughout the analytic passages. To discuss these soloists and their solos, I focus on theories of interaction, drawing on

⁶ Walter van de Leur, *Something to Live For: The Music of Billy Strayhorn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 117.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 110–13.

Few studies have applied theories of interaction to large jazz ensembles.⁹ Because big band jazz requires coordination of a greater number of players, it typically has more notated music and fewer openings for improvisation. When a player solos, the arranger has often created background figures for other members of the ensemble to play. The conversation, to use a common metaphor for jazz performance, tends to be more scripted. On *Masterpieces by Ellington*, however, the tracks are expanded to such a degree that at times the active ensemble is pared down to a small combo. Close listening and analysis reveals that the players are interacting in real time just as one might find in smaller ensembles.

My analytic approach to interaction builds directly on the work of Michaelsen.¹⁰ Michaelsen develops a taxonomy for multiple levels of interaction, codifying a variety of phenomena implicit in Monson's seminal book *Saying Something*, which provides an ethnographic treatment of jazz improvisation.¹¹ The first level of interaction is the most immediate, person-to-person interaction that occurs in real time during a performance. A soloist might respond to a rhythmic gesture from another member of the ensemble, for instance. At the second level, a jazz performance interacts with its referents, or existing models and utterances outside the particular performance. Most often this takes the form of the tune itself, from which a soloist can borrow, elaborate, quote, or distort. This second level also includes previous performances, known recordings, or even a soloist's previous solo on the same tune. At the third interactional level, a performer negotiates the expectations and assumptions about his role within the ensemble. For instance, a drummer is charged with keeping time and comping; but at any given moment in a performance that performer can choose not to fulfill that role. The fourth and

⁹ For the most in-depth examination, see the ethnographic treatment in Alex Stewart, *Making the Scene: Contemporary New York City Big Band Jazz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

¹⁰ Michaelsen, "Analyzing Musical Interaction in Jazz Improvisations of the 1960s."

¹¹ Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*.

final level of Michaelsen's theory of interaction concerns style. A particular performance's adherence to and divergence from a particular style, as well as any stylistic borrowings, may be said to constitute another form of interaction.

The recorded performances of the three reimagined Ellington tunes on *Masterpieces by Ellington* operate on all four levels. On the first level, I point to passages where performers seem to be responding to one another, through unexpected embellishments or shared musical phrases.¹² In addition to the interpersonal interaction in the performances, I focus particularly to the second level of interaction, considering how these extended arrangements interact with and build on previous recordings by the orchestra. Throughout the recording, members of the Ellington ensemble also interact with their role, diverging from their instrument's function within the band.

Taken as a whole, the album itself engages in a stylistic interaction, Michaelsen's fourth interactional category. For instance, the album was released on Columbia's Masterworks label, the brand's classical imprint. In the words of cultural historian Harvey Cohen,

A highbrow mood prevailed on the cover, which pictured Ellington in a tux with tails next to an upright piano. The same mood surfaced in the liner notes with their talk of "edification" and the "finest Ellington scores," as well as their detailed comparisons of Ellington to Gershwin, Stravinsky, Debussy, and Respighi.¹³

The cover image and liner notes work together with the title to present a refined, highbrow, and sophisticated collection. Finally, there are the tracks themselves, with an average length of eleven minutes, rivaling symphonic movements. Provocatively, three three-minute pop tunes are transformed into vehicles for serious, careful listening.

¹² I should clarify that though my language suggests intentionality, I am not actually making claims about the performers' thoughts and actions. Following Michaelsen, my analysis "enters on the perceptions of the listener, rather than those of the performer" (p. 65). The shifted perspective makes a cleaner break between my work and ethnographic studies of interaction in jazz performance like Monson and Stewart, who interview performers and work as and among musicians to develop a framework that reflects how performers conceptualize and talk about interaction. See Michaelsen, "Analyzing Musical Interaction in Jazz Improvisations of the 1960s," 24–27, 46–54, 64–70; Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*; Stewart, *Making the Scene*.

¹³ Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America*, 291–92.

My analysis of each tune begins by tracing the tune's history through its life in the bands' book. These short histories demonstrate the mutability of each composition and contextualize the recordings from the *Masterpieces* LP. After each history, I move into an analysis of each track. The analyses move fluidly between the interactional levels, focusing on the most salient instances of interaction. For "Mood Indigo" I undertake the most extensive analysis, proceeding through the full arrangement. My analysis of "Sophisticated Lady" focuses on Billy Strayhorn's orchestration of the fifth chorus as well as the ways three soloists interact with the published melody to the tune. Melodic interaction also occupies the focus of the "Solitude" analysis, as well as a look at how preexisting arrangements interact directly with the assembled arrangement performed on the album. Taken together, these analyses show that even van de Leur's proposed renaming of the album would be inadequate. Perhaps the more cumbersome *Masterpieces by Ellington—Arranged by Strayhorn—In Collaboration with His Orchestra* would be even more apt.

1.2.1 "Mood Indigo"—A History of a Hit

Leading up to *Masterpieces by Ellington*, the Ellington band recorded "Mood Indigo" a number of times. In this subsection, I provide an overview of these extant recordings, with the ultimate aim of showing how Ellington treated each session as an opportunity to do something new with his source material. Ellington's adjustments include formal experiments, new orchestrations and harmonizations, and opportunities for different soloists to interpret the melody. Considering that the band also performed the piece every night, it should come as no surprise that Ellington and his musicians actively freshened up their interpretations of the tune. The modified arrangements also reflect the commercial pressures of providing new labels and record buyers with a fresh product, and as the members of the Ellington orchestra changed so too must

the soloists. None of these details are unique among swing-era jazz ensembles, but I contend that this more practical and detailed portrayal of the workaday life of the Ellington band—and specifically, its recorded legacy—balances the traditional depictions of the ensemble as an avenue of expression for Ellington the composer.

With the original release of “Mood Indigo” in 1930, Ellington landed his first major commercial success. The tune would attach itself to his name for the rest of his career. Originally recorded by a seven-piece small group and broadcast from the Cotton Club later that evening, Ellington later claimed, “Wads of mail came in raving about the new tune, so Irving Mills put a lyric on it.”¹⁴ This laconic account conveys the initial popularity of the piece while leaving out crucial information. Original record logs list the title as “Dreamy Blues.” The title shift to “Mood Indigo” has been attributed to both Ellington and Mills. Barney Bigard’s musical input on writing the tune goes unmentioned, as does its possible derivation from Bigard’s clarinet teacher Lorenzo Tio. Mitchell Parrish claimed to have written the lyrics while under Mills’ employ.¹⁵ From its inception, the tune arose from collaboration, even if the simplistic narrative credits Ellington alone for its genesis.

Ellington recorded the number several times for different labels during the final months of 1930, initially in small group settings under names such as the Harlem Footwarmers and the Jungle Band.¹⁶ Each of these recordings feature a 16-bar **AA'BA** main theme, arranged as a three-part chorale for trumpeter Arthur Whetsel, trombonist Joseph “Tricky Sam” Nanton, and clarinetist Barney Bigard. By giving the clarinet the lowest notes in the harmony in its chalumeau register and setting the muted brass above them, Ellington produced a unique sound.

¹⁴ Duke Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), 79.

¹⁵ For a comprehensive summary of the contested facts about the origins of “Mood Indigo,” see Terry Teachout, *Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington* (New York: Gotham Books, 2013), 106–110.

¹⁶ Richard Crawford, *Jazz Standards on Record, 1900-1942: A Core Repertory*, CBMR Monographs, no. 4 (Chicago: Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago, 1992).

This unorthodox orchestration was compounded by sympathetic resonance from the microphone, further complicating listener's apperception of the timbre.¹⁷ The only departure from the chorale texture during the theme statement comes in the contrasting **B** section, where each member of the trio articulates a melodic snippet before returning to the opening **A** segment. After the sixteen-bar chorale, Bigard takes a solo chorus, playing a new theme over the same changes. Though he changes occasional notes and phrasing between various recordings, this lyrical line has a definite shape and was reproduced on subsequent recordings and sheet music. Whetsel provides his own interpretation of the second theme during the third chorus, after which Ellington plays a four-measure interlude on the piano to segue back into a restatement of chorale to close the piece.

The formal experiments on the piece began soon afterward. Ellington produced a full-band orchestration of "Mood Indigo" for a December 10, 1930 session, which Victor Records heralded as "the popular and concert record-of-the-month for February 1931."¹⁸ The large band arrangement preserved the minimal chorale texture that opens and closes the original small group version, but in an interesting formal twist, this version presents the piece "backwards." After the initial chorale, Ellington plays his solo piano interlude, followed by a trumpet solo for Whetsel, and then comes Bigard's lyrical rendition of the second theme before the chorale rounds out the side. This reversal in the order of solos effectively baits any listener familiar with the small group version, forcing the listener to wait an extra chorus before hearing Bigard's clarinet melody. Ellington reimaged and reorganized "Mood Indigo" from the beginning.

The commercial success of these instrumentals prompted Mills to fit a lyric to "Mood Indigo," which was copyrighted in 1931 with the following lyrics for the chorale:

¹⁷ For further discussion of this "mike-tone" and Ellington's deliberate crafting of the composition in response to it, see Chadwick Jenkins, "A Question of Containment: Duke Ellington and Early Radio," *American Music* 26, no. 4 (December 1, 2008): 433–36.

¹⁸ John Edward Hasse, *Beyond Category: The Life and Genius of Duke Ellington* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 153.

You ain't been blue,
No, No, No,
You ain't been blue,
Till you've had that mood indigo,
That feelin' goes stealin'
Down to my shoes,
While I sit and sigh:
"Go 'long , blues!"

Adding lyrics to a popular instrumental converted a record into sheet music, opening a new and lucrative stream of royalties for the publisher.¹⁹ Mills occasionally published piano solo versions of Ellington's up-tempo numbers, but the languid tempo of "Mood Indigo" necessitated a lyric. The sheet music version transposes the piece into A-flat from the B-flat featured on recordings, supposedly to simplify the piano voicings of the chromatic lines.²⁰ Initial runs of the sheet music featured Duke Ellington on the cover, with alternate versions highlighting conductor/violinist Victor Young as well as violinist Harry Kogen.²¹ The added lyrics and celebrity cover images provide hints of the life "Mood Indigo" had outside of the Ellington orchestra.

Reviews of Ellington performances through the 1930s indicate that "Mood Indigo" often served as the finale. Toward the end of the decade Ellington began incorporating the piece into a medley of his hits that he would feature during performances for the rest of his career. A concert review from a late-1930s European tour mentions "Mood Indigo" as Ellington's best-known composition.²² Advertisements and artist profiles that appeared in the trade presses always mentioned "Mood Indigo" as one of Ellington's compositions, though the list eventually began

¹⁹ Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America*, 143–45.

²⁰ In their article on "Mood Indigo," Don Peak and Tor Magnusson assert that the original piano sheet music appears in B-flat major, and suggests that the A-flat sheet music is from a 1956 reprinting. I have seen vocal sheet music from original 1931 printings in A-flat, which contradicts their claim. Don Peak and Tor Magnusson, "'Mood Indigo': Some Thoughts Concerning the Lyricist(s)," *IAJRC Journal* 34, no. 1 (January 1, 2001): 36–38.

²¹ A copy of the sheet music in the Sheet Music Collection at Gaylord Music Library, Washington University in St. Louis features Harry Kogen. The same artwork with different artists photographs can be seen online at the Dooji Collection (<http://ellingtonweb.ca/Hostedpages/DoojiCollection/DoojiCollection-SheetMusic.htm>, accessed 15 Dec 2013).

²² Schulz-Koehn, *The Billboard* 51.19 (May 13, 1939): 11.

to expand in the early 1940s. As late as 1945, Victor decided to start creating duplicate-sided records for hits to maximize value for jukebox operators; of the fifteen hits selected for the initial trial of this system, “Mood Indigo” was the only Ellington tune.²³ In “Mood Indigo,” Ellington found a workhorse of a song, one that endured in popularity for most of his career and was closely identified with the band and his sound.

Before the *Masterpieces by Ellington* LP, the orchestra only recorded two vocal versions of the song. Ellington’s star singer Ivie Anderson provided the orchestra’s first vocal recording at a 1940 session for Columbia, which also produced new recordings of “Sophisticated Lady” and “Solitude.” Tenor saxophonist Ben Webster, one of Ellington’s biggest instrumental stars of the era, was also a featured soloist on this recording. Five years later, on May 14, 1945, Billy Strayhorn provided a new arrangement of the song.²⁴ Though it features singer Kay Davis in the second chorus, she sings a wordless vocal on the second theme for the initial phrases. Strayhorn provides mild formal experimentation in the third and final chorus of the arrangement: he excises the tune’s bridge, replacing it with a piano break that repeats after the chorus to close the track.

Two early 1940s live recordings suggest that Ellington preferred to keep “Mood Indigo” as an instrumental. At a dance concert in Fargo, North Dakota on December 7, 1940, the piece takes the following form: piano introduction, chorale chorus, piano interlude, solo chorus for muted trumpet, solo chorus for piano, elaborate full-band chorale chorus. Interestingly, Bigard’s second theme never makes an overt appearance, although the clarinet countermelodies in the second chorus and Ellington’s piano solo occasionally touch on portions of it. At the band’s historic engagement at Carnegie Hall on January 23, 1943, “Mood Indigo” closed the nearly three-hour event. Ellington’s most popular and enduring work provided a fitting end to the full

²³ “One Tune---One Band Disks: Victor Preems a New Twist,” *The Billboard* 57.46 (Nov 17, 1945): 13, 80.

²⁴ Strayhorn’s short score and parts are found in the DEC, Series 1, Box 227, Folder 13. The band plays the choruses in the reverse order of what the score indicates.

night of music. The four-chorus arrangement here closely follows that of the Fargo concert. The main differences lie in subtle reed background figures during the trumpet solo in the second chorus, which replace the clarinet countermelodies, and a stripped down fourth chorus, which hews closer to the original statements instead of including the full ensemble. Most importantly, although the concert settings would allow for an indefinite number of choruses unlike the technical restrictions of a recording, the live performances do not approach the scope of the arrangement on *Masterpieces by Ellington*.

This tour of the Ellington Orchestra's recordings of "Mood Indigo" through 1945 has demonstrated how the piece continued to be reimagined. Most versions preserve the initial chorale harmonization of the main melody, although Strayhorn's arrangement omits this section (the slow-moving counterpoint from the chorale texture appears during Sears' solo, but his improvisation obscures the familiar chorale theme). The piano gained an increasingly prominent role, expanding from a brief interlude to full solo chorus statements. Ellington occasionally engaged with the work as a song, but on one of the two extant vocal recordings he employs wordless vocals rather than the standard lyrics included with the sheet music, treating the voice as another instrument.

All told, we can hear the 1950 recording from *Masterpieces by Ellington* drawing upon this twenty-year history of "Mood Indigo."²⁵ It is treated mainly as an instrumental but also

²⁵ Of course, "Mood Indigo" enjoyed large dissemination outside of the Ellington band's recordings of the piece, as "definitive" as we might claim those to be. A small sample includes: a 1931 recording of the tune by Cab Calloway, another Mills artist; vocal recordings by the Three Keys (1932) and the Boswell Sisters (1933); an up-tempo dance band recording by the Richmond, Indiana dance band Harry Lange and his Orchestra (1931); and an inventive rendition by Jimmie Lunceford's band (1934). Additionally, Mills printed stock arrangements of the tune (a 1931 arrangement of "Mood Indigo" by Jimmy Dale for Gotham Music Service, a division of Mills Music, does not exploit Ellington's scoring for the chorale, despite being an in-house arrangement). Finally, the most prominent appearances of "Mood Indigo" within the popular entertainment press occurred in dance routines at vaudeville shows: from 1932 to 1941, *Billboard* mentions dance routines to the tune seventeen times, often described as "modernistic" and accompanied by appropriately-hued stage lighting. For many of these dancers, "Mood Indigo" was their final number, which speaks to their confidence that the piece could effectively end a performance. For

includes three vocal choruses at the center of the arrangement, paying homage to its conception as well as its reception. Band members reference iconic solos and soloists, as its twenty-year history standardized certain melodic interpretations. *Masterpieces by Ellington* presents a fresh take on the twenty-year old “Mood Indigo,” though vestiges of the decades remain.

1.2.2 *Masterpieces by Ellington*, Track 1: “Mood Indigo”

The *Masterpieces* recording of “Mood Indigo” clocks in at fifteen minutes and twenty-nine seconds, the longest track on the album. Table 1.2 presents the form of the arrangement. The band repeats the 16-measure chorus structure a total of fifteen times, with only a few transitional measures inserted. The arrangement gives several soloists the opportunity to provide their own interpretation of the melody, and Billy Strayhorn provides two sections of radically imaginative arrangements: the first in his contrapuntal reworking and reharmonization of the theme in the sixth through eighth choruses, the second in the extended waltz-time rendition of the theme that begins after the thirteenth chorus and lasts through his piano transition after the fifteenth chorus. In what follows, I analyze the interactions taking place in this recording, which include the interpersonal interaction between players; the soloists’ interaction with the referents of published melody, past performance, harmonic framework, and past performers; and stylistic interactions.

This version of “Mood Indigo” begins, as so many other versions, with a chorale statement of the main theme. Cast in B \flat major, Ellington has changed little from previous

more on the Calloway recording, see Alyn Shipton, *Hi-de-Ho: The Life of Cab Calloway* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 55. For a thorough discussion of the Boswell Sisters’ white identity and their “black” sound, see Laurie Stras, “White Face, Black Voice: Race, Gender, and Region in the Music of the Boswell Sisters,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 1, no. 02 (May 2007): 207–55. Stras mentions this recording of “Mood Indigo” on p. 246, n. 129. Lunceford’s arrangement is noted in Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 208.

Table 1.2. Formal outline for “Mood Indigo,” track one on *Masterpieces By Ellington*.

Section	M.	Musical Features	Key
Intro	1	Piano and bass introduction	B \flat
Chorus 1	5	Main trio theme for muted trombones and bass cl.	
Chorus 2	21	Clarinet solo, rhythm section comping	
Chorus 3	37	Clarinet solo, muted brass backing	
Chorus 4	53	Alto solo, rhythm section comping	
Chorus 5	69	Alto solo, rhythm section comping	
Chorus 6	85	Contrapuntal reworking of theme	
Chorus 7	101	Piano solo, reharmonization of main theme	
Chorus 8	117	Tenor saxophone solo, full band arrangement, piano transition	B \flat ->E \flat
Chorus 9	133	Vocal chorus, rhythm section accompaniment	E \flat
Chorus 10	149	Vocal chorus with second theme, brass and reed backing	
Chorus 11	165	Vocal chorus, reed backing	
Chorus 12	181	Plunger muted trombone solo, rhythm section comping	B \flat
Chorus 13	197	Plunger muted trombone solo, rhythm section comping	
Interlude	212	Piano transition to 3/4 meter; reed vamp	B \flat ->D
Chorus 14	222	Contrapuntal reed theme in waltz time	D
Vamp	254	Four measure vamp	
Chorus 15	258	Modulating waltz-time theme statement	
Retransition	286	Solo piano move back to 4/4 and B \flat	B \flat
Chorus 16	305	Original trio theme with added piano and clarinet	
Coda	318	Piano cadenza over held trio chords	

iterations, giving little clue as to the odyssey that will follow. This version of the chorale is arranged for two trombones and bass clarinet. Example 1.1 reproduces this chorus, which may serve as a helpful reference point for future choruses as the band transforms this theme.

Throughout my analysis, I parse the 16-measure theme as an **AA'BA** form, and I will refer to first four measures of the theme as **A**, the second four measures as **A'**, the four-measure bridge section as **B**, and the final four measures as **A**. I have provided the standard chord changes above the staff as well.

Following the opening chorale, Choruses 2 and 3 feature Russell Procope as soloist on clarinet. Both choruses abound in second-level interactions. In Chorus 2 (Ex. 1.2), Procope channels Barney Bigard’s second theme, but against this model he adds his own interpretive

Example 1.1. Chorale theme for “Mood Indigo” in Chorus 1, arranged for muted trombones and bass clarinet (lowest voice except for m. 15). Chord symbols are given above the theme. All examples for “Mood Indigo” drawn from Bill Dobbins’ transcription.

5 $B\flat$ C^9 Fm B^9+ $B\flat$ $B\flat$ C^9 $G\flat^7$ F^7

13 $B\flat$ $B\flat^7$ $E\flat^6$ C° $B\flat$ C^9 Fm B^9+ $B\flat$

Example 1.2. Chorus 2 from “Mood Indigo,” interaction between clarinetist Russell Procope (RP), pianist Duke Ellington (DE), and bassist Wendell Marshall (WM). Dobbins transcription.

B

21

25

(cont'd)

gloss, frequently in the form of virtuosic fills. In keeping with Bigard’s theme, Procope emphasizes blue notes throughout his solo, frequently substituting $D\flat$ for D , and he extends this concept into modal mixture by alternating G and $G\flat$. In the third chorus (Ex. 1.3), Ellington’s

Example 1.2 (cont'd). Chorus 2 from “Mood Indigo.”

The musical score consists of three systems, each with three staves: RP (Right Piano), DE (Double Bass), and WM (Walking Bass). The key signature is B-flat major and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (measures 29-31) shows a complex melodic line for RP with sixteenth-note runs and triplets, while DE and WM provide harmonic support. The second system (measures 32-34) continues the melodic development with a quintuplet and a triplet in the RP part. The third system (measures 35-37) features a descending melodic leap in the RP part and a rhythmic pattern in the WM part. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

orchestration provides the interactional focus, as he adapts the main chorale theme for muted brass. The melody appears only in traces (the rhythmic pattern in m. 37, the descending leap in m. 39, which Ellington includes in the preceding bar as well), but Ellington preserves the underlying harmonic framework, anchored by Marshall’s strong bass line. The voicings he employs, often spaced in fourths, cover over the melody in the harmonies where it is included at all. The new

Example 1.3. Chorus 3 (AA'B) from “Mood Indigo.” Ellington’s brass orchestration (for two muted trumpets and two muted trombones) uses the referent harmonic progression and melody as a model. Dobbins transcription.

The image displays a musical score for Chorus 3 of "Mood Indigo" by Duke Ellington, transcribed by Dobbins. The score is organized into three systems, each with three staves: RP (Right Piano), Brass, and WM (Wendell Marshall). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The first system (measures 37-40) features a C time signature and a key signature change to B-flat major. The second system (measures 41-44) continues the progression. The third system (measures 45-48) concludes the chorus. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, triplets, and sixteenth-note runs. Chord symbols are placed above the RP staff, and dynamic markings like *tr* (trills) are present. The WM staff shows a consistent bass line with some triplet figures.

extensions signal a departure from previous arrangements of “Mood Indigo” and provide a glimpse of how “far out” the ensuing arrangement will go.

The next two choruses return to a small group texture of soloist with rhythm section, providing a clear example of the interpersonal interactions taking place throughout the arrangement. As Johnny Hodges solos, Ellington and bassist Wendell Marshall respond to his playing but also create contrasting rhythmic feels, a classic element of interactive performance.²⁶

²⁶ See Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*, 26–72.

Example 1.4. Chorus 4 from “Mood Indigo,” interactions between Johnny Hodges (JH), Duke Ellington (DE), and Wendell Marshall (WM). Dobbins transcription.

D
53

JH
DE
WM

57

JH
DE
WM

61

JH
DE
WM

65

JH
DE
WM

For most of the initial chorus, Ellington relies on a rapid descending arpeggiation figure that leads into G3 or A3, eventually making its way down to F3 at the end of each **A** phrase (see Ex. 1.4). The persistent arpeggios prompt strong arpeggiation figures in the first three measures of Hodges' solo. Hodges anchors his lines with Gs and As, a response to the interplay between those two pitch classes in the piano part. When Ellington shifts to a slower-moving, almost compound line for the accompaniment to the bridge, Hodges responds with a similar compound idea (m. 61-62). They fall into such a solid echo with one another that Ellington's quick leap up to F-E \flat in m. 63 sounds like the continuation of a descending line initiated by Hodges in the preceding measures. Later in the bar, Hodges continues the descent from E \flat , down to D \flat in m. 64 which is corrected to D \natural as the **B** theme ends.

In the second chorus of Hodges' solo (Chorus 5), the most noticeable difference comes from the shift in accompaniment rhythm (Ex. 1.5). Ellington begins playing rapid staccato chords that push the chorus into a double-time feel. His chords precipitate a temporary stylistic shift from the languid swing tempo to a more upbeat and peppy march-like groove. Marshall tries to join in on the feel in the chorus's second bar, but he and Ellington do not lock in right away. Ellington makes his rhythms crisper in the third bar, and Marshall locks in, avoiding the triplet rhythms he often uses on beat 4 for most of the chorus. Hodges also responds rhythmically in m. 71 with a faster blues riff that locks into the new rhythmic structure. Ellington's rhythmic preparation for the **B** section suggests a stop-chorus, and Hodges takes the opportunity offered by Ellington's space in m. 77 to return to the slower triplet feel. Marshall continues to walk, responding to Hodges' rhythmic return by including his triplet pickup on beat 4. In response to their apparent slow-down, Ellington enters unexpectedly in m. 78 to reassert the double-time feel. Marshall responds with an even-eighths figure for the second half of the bar and maintains the

Example 1.5. Chorus 5 from “Mood Indigo,” heightened interaction between Hodges, Ellington, and Marshall. Dobbins transcription.

The musical score consists of three systems, each with three staves. The staves are labeled JH, DE, and WM. The key signature is B-flat major. The first system starts at measure 69 with a boxed 'E' above the staff. The second system starts at measure 73. The third system starts at measure 77. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and rests.

(cont'd)

Example 1.5 (cont'd). Chorus 5 from “Mood Indigo,” heightened interaction between Hodges, Ellington, and Marshall.

The musical score consists of three staves: JH (Hodges), DE (Ellington), and WM (Marshall). The key signature is B-flat major. The score is divided into two systems, starting at measure 80 and 82. The JH staff shows a melodic line with triplets and a final triplet. The DE staff shows a piano accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The WM staff shows a bass line with eighth notes and a final triplet.

feel for the remainder of the chorus. Hodges’ answer to this rhythmic intrusion is a repeated, rapid-fire blues lick with $\flat\hat{5}$ and $\flat\hat{3}$ that obscures the metric grid, leading Ellington to come in early and miss the downbeat of m. 80. Marshall’s solid bass line helps Ellington realign for beat 2, and the bassist adds another straight eighth fill to stress that he is committed to the new feel. Ellington insists on the double-time feel for the first two measures of the final A before relenting with slower chords to close Hodges’ solo. Hodges walks the line between the two feels, including faster fills to start his ideas but preferring to keep his blues licks more relaxed. Overall, Hodges’ solo, especially the second half, provides a key demonstration of the interpersonal interactions at play in this version of “Mood Indigo.”

Chorus 6 features a full band arrangement by Billy Strayhorn. The melody stays in the trumpets, but it is overshadowed by the ideas Strayhorn writes around it. The A section features a contrapuntal duet between Paul Gonsalves on tenor sax and Jimmy Hamilton on clarinet. The trombones add a unison line with quarter note triplets that stand out against the held notes in the theme, cross-scored for trumpets and baritone saxophone. If Ellington's third chorus initiated a departure from the original tune, Strayhorn's arrangement here furthers that experimentation.

Strayhorn's first orchestral reinterpretation of "Mood Indigo" segues into his piano solo for the seventh chorus (Ex. 1.6). Throughout his solo, Strayhorn is interacting with the model harmonic progression for "Mood Indigo." His deviations and coloration all depend on that original framework, and his departure occasionally throws his accompanying bass player for a loop. There are plausible reasons for Marshall's apparent confusion: although Strayhorn bases his solo on the ensemble reharmonization that he writes in Chorus 8, his short score for that chorus only includes bass indications for the first six measures. Of these six measures, five consist of a tonic pedal. Marshall's bass part is lost, so we can only make inferences from Strayhorn's short score, but extant bass parts from the Duke Ellington Collection are sparse and frequently have entire sections of blank measures. As we will see in the analysis of Strayhorn's solo, Marshall begins by playing the usual chord changes, then attempts to adapt to Strayhorn's harmonic substitutions.

In his piano solo, Strayhorn voices the neighboring chord in the theme's first measure as an EMadd6 that resolves not back to B \flat but instead to Gm7 (m. 101). That chord resolves not to the C9 of the theme but instead to an E \flat M chord (m. 102).²⁷ His chord choice surprises Marshall, who articulates the tune's changes for the first five beats before stepping down to a tonic pedal in

²⁷ With the bass' C, the chord could be called a Cm7, but Strayhorn's ensuing arpeggio and voicings, especially when coupled with Marshall's corrected B \flat , create a definite E \flat M7 chord.

Example 1.6. Chorus 7 from “Mood Indigo,” Billy Strayhorn (BS) piano solo, which interacts with the referent progression, exploring new keys and harmonic regions. Dobbins transcription.

101 **G** B \flat C 9 F m B $^9+$

104 B \flat B \flat 12 10 3

106 C 9 G \flat 7 6

108 F7 10 6 8 va 5 B \flat 3

(cont'd)

Example 1.6 (cont'd). Chorus 7 from “Mood Indigo,” Billy Strayhorn piano solo.

m. 102, as if he then realizes that Strayhorn’s solo is based not on the model progression but instead his adaptation for Chorus 8. Strayhorn also keeps a B \flat pedal for m. 103 and 104, walking the soprano voice up chromatically from the G5 in m. 102. Excluding the pedal in m. 103, Strayhorn plays a C \sharp m7 that moves to an F \sharp m11, two harmonies foreign to the key. The chromatic borrowing creates brilliant, lush chords. These resolve to a B \flat Madd9, with Strayhorn’s doubling of the ninth dominating the voicing (m. 104).

In the A' phrase Marshall begins to move again, apparently understanding where Strayhorn’s harmonic scheme has been indicated on his part. Strayhorn replaces the tonic B \flat

with a GmM7 chord (m. 105) and follows this surprising harmony with a borrowed ii-V progression to get to G \flat in m. 107. The ultimate goal aligns with the harmonic scheme of “Mood Indigo,” although Strayhorn uses G \flat M7 instead of G \flat 7. This subtle tweak means G \flat does not have the same drive to get to F7, so Strayhorn inserts another ii-V progression, borrowed from F minor and featuring D \flat s in m. 108. When the bridge arrives in m. 109, Strayhorn resolves to FM7. As a result, he begins the bridge off-tonic.

For the bridge, Strayhorn adapts the transformation of chord quality that Ellington has written into the theme, but instead of B \flat M becoming B \flat 7, Strayhorn takes FM7 and turns it into F $^{\circ}$ 7 (m. 110). Strayhorn’s third-less voicing and pentatonic fill through the chord’s upper extensions project C \flat major rather than F $^{\circ}$ 7, even against Marshall’s F pedal. Strayhorn voices a clear D-minor triad in the right hand in m. 111, although his bass figuration suggests that he may have been thinking of the Dm as upper Lydian extensions to the E \flat chord that belongs in its place. Marshall’s persistent F undercuts such a hearing, however. Strayhorn’s $^{\circ}$ 7 voicing in m. 112 *could* work with the C $^{\circ}$ triad that normally occupies that spot, even if the D \flat is an unusual note to add, but Strayhorn’s bass F eventually prompts Marshall to return to that note.²⁸

Strayhorn begins the reprise of A with B \flat 6/9, bringing out the added C and G in his chord (m. 113). E \flat M6 replaces C7 again in m. 114, and Marshall continues to emphasize B \flat in his bass line. Strayhorn’s C \sharp m7 and F \sharp m7 right hand voicings emerge again in m. 115, but this time he supports them with an E \natural in the bass. These chords move finally into a wash of B \flat major pentatonic for the final measure of the chorus, though Strayhorn omits the tonic from his initial downbeat chord voicing. The main theme is never far off, but Strayhorn’s chord choices and

²⁸ Usually $^{\circ}$ 7 chords are extended with Locrian \sharp 2 rather than the parent Locrian scale, so the \flat 9 here would be an unusual addition.

voicings create a fresh interpretation. Strayhorn explores the same chord substitutions in the subsequent Chorus 8, arranging them for the full band.

The modulatory piano conclusion of Chorus 8 prepares the three vocal choruses of the tune, which are in E \flat major. Singer Yvonne Lanauze sticks closely to the pitch content of the melody and adds subtle rhythmic shifts. In general, Lanauze lags behind the beat, consistently an eighth behind, although she often starts her phrases even further behind the beat. In her second vocal chorus, Lanauze sings the alternate lyric with the melody based on Bigard's clarinet theme. She returns to the initial melody for her final chorus and takes a similarly varied rhythmic approach, lengthening her vocal deliveries in response to the long held notes from the backing saxophone choir. Overall, Lanauze delivers a fairly subdued and conservative interpretation of "Mood Indigo," with a clear respect for its established history. Unlike earlier vocalists, who invented their own lyrics to Ellington's theme, Lanauze sings the originally published lyrics. At this stage of the arrangement it provides balance, stepping back from the more radical elements of Strayhorn's preceding choruses.

The vocal choruses end and the arrangement shifts abruptly back to B \flat for Tyree Glenn's plunger muted trombone solo. By using a plunger and "ya-ya" technique, Glenn is interacting with the historic sounds of the Ellington band, especially former plunger specialist Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton. Like much of Nanton's plunger muted solos, Glenn builds his solo by repeating short, simple melodic patterns, and as in many of Nanton's solos, blue notes appear frequently. Examples 1.7 and 1.8 present the two choruses of Glenn's solo, along with annotations adapted from Kurt Dietrich's transcription of the solo from his book *Duke's 'Bones: Ellington's Great Trombonists*.²⁹ The transcription shows Glenn's mute effects ("ya," "wa," "yee-a," and "a")

²⁹ Kurt Dietrich, *Duke's "Bones: Ellington's Great Trombonists* (Rottenburg: Advance Music Rottenburg, Germany, 1995).

Example 1.7. Chorus 12 from “Mood Indigo,” Tyree Glenn (TG) plunger-muted trombone solo. Effects are indicated below the staff to show the sonic inflections Glenn produces, with additional annotations for open (o) and closed (+) mute positions. Dobbins transcription; annotations adapted from Kurt Dietrich, *Duke’s Bones: Ellington’s Great Trombonists*.

181 **L** open slowly
 TG ya ya ya ya ya ya ya wa close (+) wa ya ya ya ya ya ya
 BS
 WM
 186
 TG ya ya yee -a ya ya ya ya ya ya ya ya + o + + + o + o wa ya ya + wa
 BS
 WM
 (cont'd)

along with indications of open (o) and closed (+) mute positions. In his first chorus (Ex. 1.7), Glenn begins **A** with two simple, blues inflected riffs that bear strong similarity to Nanton’s riff-based solos. Hearing Glenn’s homage to Nanton, the pianist validates and eggs him on after this first phrase with a shuffle rhythm, complete with a blues inflection on the B \flat chord. For the rest of the chorus, Glenn continues to employ small, riff-like fragments to construct his solo, each segment building on previous ideas and adding new content. The pianist responds by playing the same neighboring chord figure for the duration of the bridge, even though he alters the voicings for mm. 191-92. Glenn’s concluding **A** phrase takes the initial segment from **A'** and the second

Example 1.7 (cont'd). Chorus 12 from “Mood Indigo,” Glenn plunger-muted trombone solo.

segment from **A**, providing a blues-inflected cadence on $\hat{1}$ to conclude the first chorus of his solo.

The pianist ends the chorus with a tremolo on the two thirds, and a descending cascade that ends with an aggressive triplet pickup on G3.

Glenn responds to the aggressive gesture by tightening the plunger and adding growls to his solo (Ex. 1.8). The basic contour trajectory of the **A** and **A'** sections is the same, with the growls adding timbral interaction to the previous chorus’s version. I represent the rougher timbre of the growls with boldface annotations of Glenn’s “ya-ya” effects. The rhythmic section lays out for his bridge statements, responding to his heightened inflection from the first half of the chorus by granting him space to “show his stuff.” In the bridge, Glenn stops simply interacting with the ghost of Nanton and steps into assert himself as a plunger mute virtuoso, playing a rapid,

Example 1.8. Chorus 13 from “Mood Indigo,” Glenn plunger-muted trombone solo. Annotations show the timbral properties of the solo; the harsher growl timbre is represented by boldface text annotation. Dobbins transcription; annotations adapted from Dietrich.

M

197

TG *closedtight* ya ya ya ya ya ya **yaya ya** ya ya ya ya **yaya** ya ya ya yee a

begin flutter

BS

WM

203

TG ya ya ya ya ya ya ya ya + **multiple tonguing, rapid opening and closing of plunger** a - ya

end flutter

BS

WM

207

TG as before a - ya

BS

WM

(cont'd)

Example 1.8 (cont'd). Chorus 13 from “Mood Indigo,” Glenn plunger-muted trombone solo.

209

TG

ya ya ya ya ya yee - a wa close (+) wa wa wa

BS

WM

open slowly

sixteenth-note-triplet passage. The rapid-fire pattern is all on a single repeated pitch, but the varying accentuation and quick plunger work produce changes in timbre, with Glenn rising to the occasion to prove his mettle. His point proven, Glenn reverts back to his previous licks to conclude the solo, gently slowing down with the rhythm section.

Following Glenn’s solo, at the piano Strayhorn shifts into 3/4 meter, another high-level stylistic interaction. He begins to rock between Cm11 and F9 chords (ii-V in B \flat), transforming “Mood Indigo” from a slow, brooding ballad to a swaying waltz. The departure is underscored after the F9 is reinterpreted as a tritone-substituted dominant to Em—suddenly the reeds enter on a vamp that alternates a ii-V progression in D major, a remote key from the original tonic. The waltz-time transition also seems a difficult one for the reeds to make, as the vamp sounds uncertain and tentative. Carney’s syncopated second measure seems to create the most difficulty.

The vamp leads immediately to Strayhorn’s adaptation of the “Mood Indigo” theme into triple-meter, firmly in the distant key of D major. In this version, every four measures of 4/4 is translated into eight measures of 3/4.³⁰ This chorus is arranged for the reeds, who during the A

³⁰ The translation suggests a modulation to 6/4, but the parts in the Duke Ellington Collection show that Strayhorn wrote it in 3/4.

phrases have an elaborate contrapuntal texture, an intra-piece interaction with Strayhorn's arrangement for the sixth chorus. Strayhorn dresses up the harmonies, replacing the II9 with a III13♭5(no 9) and the V7 with a V7♭13♭9♭5.³¹ To close the chorus, Strayhorn recasts A material in a more familiar chordal guise, unfolding over a dominant pedal. This chorale interacts provocatively with the model though, because this opening neighbor should occur over tonic harmony. Strayhorn indeed seems to briefly treat A as tonic, but the phrase slinks back to D, which is confirmed with the bass progression.

The vamp returns, augmented by a deep growl from one of the trumpets, an undulating figure from a trombone, and cymbal hits from Sonny Greer to mark beat two of each bar.³² The vamp continues into the next chorus, where trumpeter Harold "Shorty" Baker plays a distorted version of the theme (Ex. 1.9 shows Baker's melodic line above Harry Carney's baritone saxophone part, which articulates the bass notes throughout the chorus.) Van de Leur describes this solo as being "on the wrong scale steps," an apt characterization. Baker's melodic line has been derived from the piece's main neighbor motive, but it starts on B♭4, $\hat{6}$ of the key instead of $\hat{3}$. The "wrongness" is enhanced but smoothed-over by the off-tonic ii-V alternation, but B sits as the 5th of the Em11 instead of the chord's third as in the original tune. Over the first eight measures of this chorus, Baker continues to stress the B-centricity of his line, altering the melody's peak to C♯5 instead of an anticipated D5. Ultimately, the theme is recognizable but distorted.

³¹ I use Roman numerals here because the key has shifted; the chords in question are C9 and F7 (original key) and E13♭5(no 9) and A7♭13♭9♭5 (new key).

³² Greer's relative silence on this track up to this point could be interpreted as a level three interaction—Greer is backing away from his expected role as time-keeper, only faintly providing slight drum hits throughout the track. The sudden breakthrough of forceful cymbal strikes functions like a renewed embrace of his role within the band. At the same time, his emphasis on beat two creates some tension with the more typical practice of marking downbeats.

Example 1.9. Shorty Baker's (SB) modulating waltz-time theme statement, given above Harry Carney's (HC) baritone saxophone line to show the gradual shift back to B \flat major. Dobbins transcription.

The musical score consists of three systems, each with two staves. The top staff is for Shorty Baker (SB) and the bottom staff is for Harry Carney (HC). The music is in 3/4 time and B major (two sharps).
 - System 1 (measures 258-267): SB plays a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. HC plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes with rests.
 - System 2 (measures 268-275): SB continues the melody with some longer notes and ties. HC continues the accompaniment, with some notes tied across measures.
 - System 3 (measures 276-285): SB concludes the phrase with a final cadence. HC provides a bass line that includes chromatic movement, as described in the text.

The ground begins to give way on even this skewed interpretation of the melody over the next four measures, because the vamp shifts to a bass alternation between D and A (mm. 266-69). The reeds and trombones shift their figures up a diatonic step, and Baker follows suit, playing the neighbor figure around C \sharp 5. After this altered vamp, the accompanying instruments begin a chromatic walk down, shifting the bass note every two measures (mm. 270-83). The chromatic descent creates a further shift in Baker's cadence, as D5 steps down to C \sharp 5 and then leaps up to E \flat 5 over the bass's change to C \natural 2. Over the next eight measures, as the bass walks chromatically from B \natural 1 to A \flat 1, Baker plays a modification of the four-measure neighbor figure on the fifth of the chord, then leaps to the chordal seventh when the bass steps down. This pattern sequences down a step over A1 to A \flat 1. The pattern is set to repeat again over G1, but the bass breaks its walk down and jumps up to C \natural 2, prompting an alteration to Baker's concluding two bars. Baker steps up to E \flat 5 from D5, and then instead of holding it for two measures changes it to E \flat 5 for the

section's final bar. This prepares an elaborate piano transition by Strayhorn back to the original ballad tempo and the original key.

Following a piano cadenza, Strayhorn cedes the piano bench to Ellington, who seamlessly begins a chromatic walk up into the dominant that prepares the final chorus in B \flat major. The last chorus returns to the trio orchestration from the first chorus, with an added call-and-response dialogue between Ellington and Procope (Ex. 1.10). Here is another example of the dynamic interaction taking place, even in a big band setting. Ellington plays a lower-neighbor elaboration of A4, which Procope echoes and concludes with an idiomatic clarinet run. Ellington tries to match his speed in the repeat of the figure, but Procope again bests him. Ellington decides to harmonize his line, which he knows Procope cannot do; the clarinetist matches the third tremolo between A4 and C5 but then replicates his previous concluding run. In m. 311, they forgo call-and-response but still produce some remarkable moments of interaction, such as the parallel sixths and octaves on beats three and four of m. 311 and beat one of m. 312.³³ Following this exchange, the trombone's bridge melody cuts through the texture, pushing the duetting musicians into the background. The trio of bass clarinet and muted trombone bring the piece to a close, with Ellington interspersing dramatic cadenzas between the final held chords, ultimately ending with diatonic planing into the final B \flat M7.

In the preceding analysis, I have adopted Michaelsen's "improvisational" approach to musical analysis, moving through the music and shifting my discussion to the most salient moments of interaction. Sometimes the interaction was between players responding to one another in the moment, other times it was a soloist's interaction with a referent (be it the original melody, a previous solo, or past member of the band), other times I have focused on Billy

³³ On a 1957 live recording, Procope and Ellington engage in a very similar exchange in the last chorus of "Mood Indigo," which suggests that if the exchange was not pre-arranged, it became standardized. I did not find manuscript evidence of this exchange in the DEC, however.

Example 1.10. Chorus 16 from “Mood Indigo,” first eleven measures. Against the original trio orchestration, Ellington and Procope engage in a call-and-response dialogue. Dobbins transcription.

Strayhorn’s transformative orchestration and arranging. Like Michaelsen, I stress that these interactions are viewed from the position of the analyst, not the intentions of the performers.

Given the piece’s twenty-year history, we can hear this particular “Mood Indigo” recording reflecting back on the many renditions and performances that came before. We have

the obvious references to the first recordings in Ellington's chorale orchestration in the first and final choruses and Procope's homage to Barney Bigard in Chorus 2. Ellington's third chorus arrangement points to some of his experiments with the tune in the decades that followed the initial wave of recordings. Lanauze's reverent rendition of the song's original lyrics point to its origins and status as a standard, while Strayhorn's bolder reinterpretations bring the twenty-year-old tune into the modern, post-war period. His waltz-time setting of the tune was particularly novel, predating the "bop waltz" that emerged later in the 1950s.³⁴

In addition to the historical interactions taking place, the real-time interactions show this recording to be a clear product of collaboration. Glenn's muted trombone solo, for instance, interacts in real time with the rhythm section and establishes an imitation of and then separation from a historical member of the band. Hodges provides a particularly unique and original solo to enrich the piece's melodic identity. Marshall's role in grounding the ensemble and keeping time cannot be overstated, especially since Sonny Greer sits out for much of the track. Marshall is also instrumental in some of the key interactive moments during the recording, responding to both pianists. Strayhorn's collaboration as an instrumentalist is just as critical as his role as arranger, with the resulting track a true hybrid of the orchestra's two composers. Ellington might have been the face of "Mood Indigo," but the fifteen-minute recording on the *Masterpieces by Ellington* LP was audibly a product of all eighteen musicians in the studio, with a special emphasis on the subset of soloists discussed above.

³⁴ Barry Kernfeld. "Beat." *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 2nd ed..Oxford University Press, accessed March 10, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/J033600>.

1.2.3 “Sophisticated Lady”—Dressing Up a Tune

Ellington found another popular success in 1933 with the recording of “Sophisticated Lady.” Constructed in 32-bar AA'BA'' song form, the tune is marked by large leaps, a chromatic “walk down” above planing dominant seventh chords in the A sections, and the unusual modulation down a minor second for the bridge. These traits, along with a harmonic plan that often casts the melody as an upper extension, have led critics to conclude that the composition reflects its title as a “sophisticated” ballad.³⁵ Perhaps more than any other Ellington hit, “Sophisticated Lady” finds its origins in collaboration. According to trombonist Lawrence Brown, “I had a theme which I played all the time which is the first eight bars. And Otto Hardwick played...the release.”³⁶ Admirers of Ellington tend to brush aside Brown’s claim, deflecting any contested authorship by insisting that Ellington’s genius was responsible for the successful molding of any ideas that came from his band. David Berger exemplifies this attitude: “Sonny Greer once told me that actually Otto Hardwick wrote it. Lawrence Brown claims to have written the bridge... Whatever Hardwick’s and Brown’s contributions may have been, it is Ellington’s arrangements and leadership that brought this gem to the attention of the music world.”³⁷ In fact, the initial pressings of the tune did attribute authorship to Hardwick, Brown, and Ellington, clear evidence of the collaborative nature of the tune. As the tune became popular, the bandleader offered his sidemen fifteen dollars each to buy their rights to the tune.³⁸ Eventually, Irving Mills and lyricist Mitchell Parish came to share Ellington’s credit on the song.

³⁵ For examples, see David Schiff, *The Ellington Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 97; Teachout, *Duke*, 113.

³⁶ Lawrence Brown, oral history interview, Institute of Jazz Studies, qtd. in Teachout, *Duke*, 113.

³⁷ David Berger, rehearsal notes to “Sophisticated Lady (1957),” Jazz at Lincoln Center Library (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 2006). Note that Berger does not take the sidemen’s claims seriously enough to properly attribute the contested credits, since Brown claimed credit for the A sections, not the bridge.

³⁸ Teachout, *Duke*, 113.

The first issued take was recorded on February 15, 1933. Some critics were not as receptive to Ellington's new composition, with John Hammond and Spike Hughes dismissing the tune in the pages of *Melody Maker*.³⁹ Despite their disparaging opinions of "Sophisticated Lady," the tune was a commercial and popular success for Ellington. As the tune began to gain popularity, the orchestra returned to the studio to cut the side again on May 16, 1933. By late 1933, the tune began to appear in reviews for vaudeville shows, demonstrating that performers wanted to leverage its popularity in their acts. Sheet music distributors began advertising stock arrangements of "Sophisticated Lady" in trade publications in late 1933.

The band produced four studio recordings of "Sophisticated Lady" prior to the *Masterpieces by Ellington* session, each displaying some sort of adjustment or modification.⁴⁰ Generally, Ellington seemed interested in trying new soloists on each recording. For instance, at the original February 1933 session, he changes soloist after each eight-measure phrase of the first chorus. During the rotation of soloists throughout the seventeen-year period, Carney received an opportunity to play through the tune on baritone saxophone, faithfully invoking the tune while connecting the pitches with his instrument's idiomatic stepwise fills. Ellington tapped Carney to provide a conservative rendition of the melody to open the *Masterpieces by Ellington* arrangement. That said, the originally credited composers—Ellington, Hardwick, and Brown—tend to be featured on most extant recordings. In 1940, Ellington began to close his arrangements

³⁹ See John Hammond, "American News: The 'Duke's' Lapse From Grace," *Melody Maker* 7, no. 83 (November 1932): 899. [Spike Hughes], "'Mike's' Report," *Melody Maker* 9.6 (July 1, 1933): 2. In his article, Hughes attributes authorship of "Sophisticated Lady" to Ellington and his sidemen.

⁴⁰ Independent Ellington researcher Peter MacHare's online database of recordings by the Ellington orchestra (depanorama.net) also shows numerous radio broadcasts of "Sophisticated Lady" during this period. Though some have been issued on disc, most remain out of print, inaccessible, or lost to history. For many of these recordings, Ellington was joined by the network's orchestra and occasionally members of his own band. My reference recordings are studio takes from February 15, 1933; May 16, 1933; February 14, 1940; and May 14, 1945; in addition, I draw on the live recording from Fargo, North Dakota on November 7, 1940. No doubt the band played the tune in many more arrangements than those I discuss, as the eighteen folders of manuscripts in the Duke and Ruth Ellington Collections attest. Peter MacHare, "A Duke Ellington Panorama," July 24, 2008, <http://www.depanorama.net>. Accessed 2 March 16.

Example 1.11. First half of Ellington’s arrangement for the second chorus of “Sophisticated Lady” on 16 May 1933. Composite score based on extant parts in the DEC, Series 1, Box 352, Folder 11. The published melody and chord changes are given above Ellington’s arrangement.

The musical score is divided into four systems, each with a vocal line and a saxophone line. The key signature is B-flat major (three flats). The chord changes are as follows:

- System 1 (Measures 1-5): Bbm7, (Δ7) Bbm7, Gb7, F7, E7, Eb7, A♭maj7, Ab7, G7, Gb7, F7, Bb7.
- System 2 (Measures 6-11): Bbm7, Eb13, Cm7, F7(b9), Bbm7, (Δ7) Bbm7, Gb7, F7, E7, Eb7, A♭maj7.
- System 3 (Measures 12-13): Ab7, G7, Gb7, F7, Bb7.
- System 4 (Measures 14-15): Bbm7, Eb13, Ab6, Am7b5, D7.

with a solo by Brown. At the November 7, 1940 Fargo concert, Ellington adapted the arrangement so that the band played the bridge melody while Brown continued his solo, an adaptation he reused for the *Masterpieces by Ellington* recording, where Brown was also featured as the final soloist.

Ellington experimented with an elaboration of his chromatic melody at the recording of “Sophisticated Lady” on May 16, 1933. For the second chorus, Ellington writes an ensemble figure for the reeds that hints at the main theme and moves through the changes but never states the melody explicitly. I have assembled the three extant reed parts into a composite score shown

in Example 1.11, and the published melody is included above the staff for reference. Ellington's elaboration touches on the theme harmonically, and some of its melodic gestures approximate the tune, but in other places his saxophone figuration appears to counterpoint the original tune. For instance, his downward arpeggios in mm. 1 and 3 of **A** run contrary to the upward arpeggios of the tune, and he counters the chromatic walk down passages from **A'** with an ascending arpeggio in m. 10 and a virtuosic arpeggio around the walk down pitches in m. 12. On *Masterpieces by Ellington*, Strayhorn takes the premise of this melodic elaboration and dramatically outdoes it, as we shall see.

1.2.4 *Masterpieces by Ellington*, Track 2: "Sophisticated Lady"

Many of the elements that appear in the arrangements reappear in the *Masterpieces by Ellington* recording of the tune. For instance, Carney's reserved interpretation of the melody sounds similar to the 1940 session, and Brown takes the final solo on the track just as he had on the recordings from 1940. Billy Strayhorn also takes Ellington's 1933 reed chorus as a point of departure for his own reimagined chorus. The historical resonances of "Sophisticated Lady" thus emerge even more explicitly on *Masterpieces by Ellington* than the resonances of "Mood Indigo" do. The version of "Sophisticated Lady" from *Masterpieces by Ellington* is eleven minutes and thirty seconds long. Its formal outline is given in Table 1.3. Unlike my discussion of "Mood Indigo," which considered the full arrangement, I wish to narrow my focus to two second level interactions in this arrangement: first, Strayhorn's departure from the model in his reworked fifth chorus, and second, the three instrumental soloists' gradual elaboration of the published melody over the course of the arrangement.

Table 1.3. Formal diagram for “Sophisticated Lady,” track two on *Masterpieces By Ellington*.

Section	Length	Musical Features
Introduction	≈4	Solo piano introduction
Chorus 1	32	Bass clarinet solo (AA'B); piano solo (A')
Chorus 2	32	Trumpet solo with reed backing (A) and muted brass (B)
Chorus 3	32	Vocal chorus
Interlude	8	Solo piano
Chorus 4	32	Solo piano; band enters abruptly in m. 30
Chorus 5	30	Elaborate orchestration (elided with Interlude)
Interlude	9	Repeated vamp
Chorus 6	31	Trombone solo (elides with next section)
Ending	11	Elaboration of previous interlude (8 mm.); solo piano

Strayhorn’s Fifth Chorus Arrangement

Most of the choruses of “Sophisticated Lady” highlight a soloist’s interpretation of the melody, but one chorus relies on strong ensemble work and does not feature the tune prominently at all. Billy Strayhorn follows his solo piano chorus with an inventive orchestration of the tune, as he did in “Mood Indigo.” The fifth chorus of “Sophisticated Lady” is so drastically reimagined that its identity only gradually emerges. Not all the parts are extant in the DEC, but I have constructed a score for the passage based on the existing manuscripts, given as Appendix A. In their variety, voicings, and detail, they show Strayhorn’s original interpretation of Ellington’s tune, adding depth to the collaborative recording of “Sophisticated Lady.”

Strayhorn’s fifth chorus arrangement actually interrupts his solo piano chorus in the antepenultimate bar. The brass enter with a loud, dissonant dominant, attacked on the fourth beat. The saxophones begin a semitone trill on the downbeat, held through the rest of the bar. The brass reattack their chord on the fourth beat, joined by a high clarinet. The saxophones then shift to a rapid, descending chromatic figure. The abrupt entrances, fortississimo attacks, and wash of

sound create a jarring, disorienting moment in the arrangement. One can imagine home listeners jumping for the volume knob after the sudden outburst crashes through the serene piano texture.

On the downbeat of the fifth chorus, the band arrives together on a chord, though the voicing does not signal a $B\flat m7$: the saxophones are spaced in perfect fourths and the trumpets in a diatonic second cluster built from $C4$. Strayhorn disguises the iconic chromatic walk down through ascending figuration for each instrument. The arrival on $A\flat M7$ in measure three swoops into a different voicing. By the fourth measure, the descending dominant chord progression comes through more clearly, and the arrangement slowly begins to sound like “Sophisticated Lady”: the band breaks from unison texture as the brass articulate the chord changes and the saxophones play a unison melodic figure based around the melody’s characteristic leaps.

Strayhorn alters Ellington’s harmonic plan for the bridge, writing the arrangement in D major rather than G major. Thus instead of modulating down a step for the bridge, as Ellington’s tune prescribes, Strayhorn modulates a tritone away. The bridge opens with loosely imitative entrances, culminating on a sustained $E\flat 9+$ chord, substituted for $A7$. Hamilton’s solistic response is actually a part of Strayhorn’s written arrangement. Baker handles the melodic statement through the second phrase of the bridge, with the saxophones clearly outlining the chord progression. At the end of the phrase, the band slips into an $F7$ chord, which prepares the return of the **A** material as dominant of $B\flat m7$.

For the final section of this chorus, **A'**, Strayhorn draws on the tune most explicitly and recognizably. Baker handles the first melodic phrase, but he passes it off to Procope for the second melodic idea. At the end of measure 30, the melody evaporates and Strayhorn introduces a two-measure vamp figure, directed primarily by the arranger at the keyboard. The segment marks the functional end of the chorus as the vamp creates a nine-measure interlude into the final

chorus. Strayhorn reuses the vamp material as a coda for the entire arrangement, where he assigns the piano's riffs to other band members in imitation.⁴¹

As he did on several chorus of "Mood Indigo," Strayhorn takes Ellington's tune and completely reimagines it. The sheer volume of the band's initial entrance creates a marked moment in the track, and the measures that follow explore new musical territory, with "Sophisticated Lady" emerging as the chorus progresses. Ellington's tune may govern the overall shape of Strayhorn's arrangement, but Strayhorn also includes a myriad of original musical ideas. Once again, we see the role that collaboration plays on this finished musical product. In taking Ellington's original text and weaving in his own musical voice, Strayhorn creates a unique, daring, and satisfying musical statement.

For all its inventiveness, Strayhorn's arrangement bears something in common with the saxophone phrases in Ellington's 1933 arrangement of the tune (Ex. 1.11, p. 46). Both sections obscure the piece's melody, dressing up the changes in elaborations and new melodic figuration that at times run contrary to the published version. While Ellington relegates the experimental content to the reed sections, Strayhorn boldly scores his complex figures for the full band. In effect, Strayhorn's busier arrangement "outdoes" Ellington's eighteen-year-old arrangement. Considering the two together adds a deeper element to the *Masterpieces by Ellington* recording, as we see Strayhorn interacting with and building on Ellington's previous work.

Unlike conventional jazz practice, where a chorus begins close to the model and gradually departs as the chorus progresses, Strayhorn takes the opposite approach—the initial A phrase obscures the tune the most, and the referent of "Sophisticated Lady" becomes clearer as the chorus progresses. In this way, Strayhorn's fifth chorus presents a high-level stylistic

⁴¹ Walter van de Leur hears precursors to Strayhorn's 1960 *Nutcracker Suite* arrangement in this passage. van de Leur, *Something to Live For: The Music of Billy Strayhorn*, 119.

interaction as well, a departure from genre practices to provide a fresh hearing of Ellington's seventeen-year-old song. The soloists featured on the track from *Masterpieces by Ellington*, however, adhere to genre expectations, increasing complexity as the arrangement unfolds.

Solos

The melody to "Sophisticated Lady" is beloved by instrumentalists and feared by singers because of its large leaps and the complexity of its underlying harmonies. Yvonne Lanauze later admitted to Patricia Willard, "'Sophisticated Lady' is a hard song for a novice, and that's what I was."⁴² Though she admits to struggling through the bridge, Lanauze delivers a faithful rendition of the iconic melody. The horn players also follow the melody's trajectory rather closely, though each one adds his own idiosyncratic intricacies. In what follows, I will consider each section of the **AA'BA''** tune comparatively, drawing attention to the ways each soloist interacts with the referents, which in the case of Baker's and Brown's solos also includes the preceding solos on the same track.

Example 1.12 shows the **A** section of the tune and a transcription of each performer's solo. Carney states the published melody all but exactly on bass clarinet. His main departures come from his rapid runs into target notes, a byproduct of the facility with which one can perform such figures on the instrument. Additionally, although he provides the downbeats of mm. 7-8 with the appropriate G² and G^{b2}, respectively, he anchors those pitches with a trill on F³ instead of the E^{b3} called for in the melody.

Baker, though he had been in the band since 1938, did not take a solo in previous recordings of the tune, which may be why he also sticks closely to the melody. His primary

⁴² Patricia Willard, liner notes to Duke Ellington & His Orchestra, *Masterpieces by Ellington*, compact disc (Columbia COL 469407 2, 1990).

Example 1.12. Comparison of the melodic content for the solos of Carney, Baker, and Brown on “Sophisticated Lady,” A section. Transcription by the author.

A

The image displays a musical score for the A section of "Sophisticated Lady" in B-flat major. It is divided into two main parts. The first part, labeled 'A', contains the 'Published Melody' and three transcriptions of solos: Harry Carney, Shorty Baker, and Lawrence Brown. The second part, starting at measure 5, contains transcriptions of solos for Carney, Baker, and Brown. The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of two flats. Chord symbols are placed above the staves: Ebm7, Bbm7, (Ab7), Bbm7, Gb7, F7, Eb7, E7, Abmaj7, Gb7, and F7. The solos feature numerous triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a bracket) and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte). The 'Published Melody' is written in treble clef, while the solos are written in both treble and bass clefs. The second part of the score includes a 'Melody' line in treble clef and three solo lines in bass clef, with a 'tr' (trill) marking above the Carney solo line.

Published Melody

Harry Carney

Shorty Baker

Lawrence Brown

Melody

Carney

Baker

Brown

5

Chord symbols: Ebm7, Bbm7, (Ab7), Bbm7, Gb7, F7, Eb7, E7, Abmaj7, Gb7, F7, Bbm7, Eb13, Cm7, F7(b9)

Dynamic markings: p, f, tr

Triplet markings: 3

interpretive gestures arise from delaying and then rushing the melody's pickup figures. More adventurously, he sustains the E \flat 5 from m. 4 for two beats instead of one, causing a rushed completion of the chromatic walk down that lags behind the chord changes. Baker also uses the C minor harmony in m. 7 to guide his pickup into that bar as well as the following. Note that the target G4 and G \flat 4 are delayed, and he does not include the melody's high E \flat 5 but instead uses the lower octave.

Lawrence Brown has the most experience performing solos on "Sophisticated Lady," as he wrote the A phrases and was featured as a soloist on most recordings. Given his experience with the tune, it is not surprising that he takes the most liberties in his solo; that said, his A segment is the most conventional of his phrases. He opens his solo by soaring into a high register before stating the initial F3. Perhaps taking a cue from Baker's solo, Brown delays the pickup ascent, but he does not rush the figure, instead arriving on G \flat 4 late. He adds his own variant of Baker's held notes during the chromatic walk down. His final two bars also channel Carney's emphasis on F. Brown delays the arrival of G3 and G \flat 3 off the downbeat and quickly slides up into F4. Each player puts his own stamp on the initial A segment, though in all cases that section hews most closely to the published melody.

The A' melody in the published sheet music is the same save the final two bars (see Ex. 1.13). Carney's solo is similarly structured. He transfers the cadential figure from m. 15 up an octave, eliminating the seventh leap across the barline. In the final bar of the section, Carney steps down to G, reflecting the descending half-step key change that occurs in the bridge. Carney's only other departure is to build an ascending chromatic triplet figure in m. 12, dressing up the chromatic descent with contrary elaboration. A similar idea first appeared in Brown's solo

Example 1.13. Comparison of Carney, Baker, and Brown’s melodic statements for A’ of “Sophisticated Lady.” Transcription by the author.

The musical score is divided into two systems, starting at measures 9 and 13. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb).

System 1 (Measures 9-12):

- Melody:** Starts with a box labeled 'A'' above measure 9. Chords: Bbm, (Ab), Bbm7, Gb7, Eb7, E7, F7, Abmaj7, Ab7, G7, Gb7, F7.
- Carney:** Bass clef. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 10.
- Baker:** Bass clef. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 10.
- Brown:** Bass clef. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 10.

System 2 (Measures 13-16):

- Melody:** Chords: Bb7, Bbm7, Eb13, Ab6, Am7b5, D7.
- Carney:** Bass clef. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 14.
- Baker:** Bass clef. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 14.
- Brown:** Bass clef. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 14.

on the May 1933 recording, and successive soloists adapted variations on it in the years that followed.⁴³

Baker's solo continues in the same vein as his solo from **A**: rushed pickup figures leading to slight rhythmic misalignment. In **A'**, Baker consistently delays the downbeat arrival of the odd-numbered bars, which are all long notes. He borrows from himself, too: he uses the motive from m. 4 (in **A**) and applies it to m. 10. Content with how his rhythmic variation sounded over both descending chromatic progressions, in m. 12 of **A'** he plays along with the changes, though his strict adherence to the chord changes causes him to delay the octave F5-F4 leap an eighth note into the next bar. Baker's concluding fills once again build on a C minor triad. He more closely follows the ii-V into G that comes in m. 16 by recycling the G4 to G \flat 4 motion that closed **A**, though here G \flat 4 functions enharmonically as F \sharp 4, the leading tone to the new key.

Brown borrows Carney's ascending chromatic idea from m. 12 and deploys it in m. 10 of **A'**, delivering it with a quicker rhythm that lags behind the beat because it was delayed. For the second chromatic walk down, Brown plays a compound line, switching between a held A \flat 4 and the chromatic line below from E \flat 4 to C4. The A \flat 4 resolves to F4 in its own chromatic line, and then Brown concludes the line on A \flat 3 instead of the F3 the melody suggests. His rhythmic interpretation of the melody varies here, and he adds a melodic E \flat 4–D \sharp 4 line in m. 16 to segue into the bridge.

Although Carney cadenced in a higher register in **A'**, he drops to the bass clarinet's low register to start the melody in the bridge (see Ex. 1.14). Carney adds chromatic slides between the first three descending leaps, a tradition that goes back to Barney Bigard's and Otto

⁴³ Ellington also adopted the arpeggiation idea for his saxophone arrangement from May 1933 (see Ex. 1.11, p. 46).

Example 1.14. Comparison of Carney, Baker, and Brown's solo lines during the bridge (B) of "Sophisticated Lady." Transcription by the author.

B

17

Melody

Carney

Baker

Brown

21

Melody

Carney

Baker

Brown

Chords: Gmaj⁷, Em⁷, Am⁷, Bm⁷, E⁷(b⁹), Am⁷, D⁷, D⁷(b⁹), Em⁷, Am⁷, D⁷, Gmaj⁷, Em⁷, Am⁷, D⁷

(cont'd)

Example 1.14 (con't). Comparison of Carney, Baker, and Brown's solo lines during the bridge (B) of "Sophisticated Lady."

Musical score for Example 1.14 (con't) showing Carney, Baker, and Brown's solo lines during the bridge (B) of "Sophisticated Lady". The score is in B-flat major and 4/4 time. It features three systems of staves: Melody, Carney, Baker, and Brown. The Melody staff includes chord markings: Gmaj7, Bb7, Cm7, Bbm7, Cm7b5, and F7(b9). The Carney, Baker, and Brown staves show their respective solo lines with various rhythmic patterns and articulations. Carney's line includes a triplet of eighth notes. Baker's line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth-note triplet. Brown's line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth-note triplet.

Example 1.15. Comparison of Baker and Brown's concluding melodic statements on "Sophisticated Lady" (A') Transcription by the author.

A'

Musical score for Example 1.15 showing Baker and Brown's concluding melodic statements on "Sophisticated Lady" (A'). The score is in B-flat major and 4/4 time. It features three systems of staves: Melody, Baker, and Brown. The Melody staff includes chord markings: Bbm7, Eb7, Bbm7, Eb7, Gb7, F7, Eb7, Abmaj7, Gb7, G7, and F7. The Baker and Brown staves show their respective concluding melodic statements with various rhythmic patterns and articulations. Baker's line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth-note triplet. Brown's line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth-note triplet.

Hardwick's solos in the first recordings of the piece. Carney adds a few more chromatic decorations and minor rhythmic shifts but otherwise follows the published versions very closely.

Baker's bridge solo occurs during a double-time feel, helped by off-beat pep figures in the trombones, an arrangement Ellington used frequently. Baker buries the melody in a series of arpeggiations. In m. 18, he moves through the chords ahead of the beat, and so he inserts an E minor arpeggio before locking into the melody at the end of the bar. The rapid move through the changes and early arrival resemble previous solos, especially earlier solos by Ellington, where the pianist speeds through the melody and adds an additional figure to compensate. Baker thinks chordally for the turnaround, directing his main line to A4 (present in both Am7 and D7 \flat 9) while also outlining the E4 to E \flat 4 shift that occurs between the two chords. Baker repeats the first two measures of his solo, then turns to the melody for the final two measures. He creates rhythmic shifts in measures 23 and 24, but in the latter he shifts the F4 up to an F5. Instead of leaping down to G \flat 4 from E \flat 5, he uses E \flat 5 as a starting point to climb chromatically into F5 to start A".

Again, Brown's solo departs the most from the melody, but in the bridge the differences are more pronounced because the saxophones are playing the bridge melody as a background accompaniment to his solo. His first bar supports the prevailing harmonies with elaborations of D \sharp 4. The second measure opens with a leading tone to a 3-5-7-9 arpeggio that dips down to B \flat 4, which is \flat 9 and \flat 13 of the Am and D7 harmonies, respectively. The remaining two bars also point to B \flat 4, approached from D \sharp 5 while he moves from F \sharp 4 to E \flat 4 in a compound line.⁴⁴ He continues the compound idea as he begins the next phrase, outlining the governing harmonies. He approaches the melody's B \sharp 3 in m. 23 from an upper chromatic run rather than a half-step below. He concludes the bridge with a virtuosic, bluesy line. The arrangement recalls the

⁴⁴ The lower line's descent to E \flat 4 is implied by the remaining instruments, but Brown does not state it in order to hold the B \flat 4.

treatment of Brown's solo during the 1940 Fargo concert, but here he plays continuously throughout the bridge, whereas at the earlier date he allowed more space for the melody to emerge.

In the final A'' section, Carney drops out, allowing Ellington, who was comping during the bridge, to provide a solo piano statement of the tune. As such, only Baker's and Brown's solos remain for comparison in Example 1.15 (see p. 57). Baker opens A'' with the F5 mentioned above, which he brings down midway through the measure. His chromatic walk down returns to the upper register without any pickup figure, and he tends to lag just behind the beat. For the second walk down, he approximates his pass through the original A, holding E \flat 5 for two bars and then rushing the remaining descent. He uses a bebop scale to connect the octave Fs in m. 29. His final departure comes in his concluding figure, where he arpeggiates up through the tonic ninth chord, letting B \flat 5 ring out for more than four beats.

Brown takes more liberties, interjecting descending arpeggios during the first walk down at loose rhythmic intervals. Similar arpeggios appear during the second walk down. He makes much of the C4 and F4 alternation that concludes the walk down in m. 28, forgoing its resolution to the low F3 in order to connect linearly to the C4 and E \flat 4 alternation that comes in m. 30. In his final touch, Brown places a low E \flat 3 on the fourth beat of m. 30 instead of an E \flat 4, saving the higher pitch for the final cadence. The off-tonic ending relates to Strayhorn's coda, which has Brown playing E \flat 4 in the manner he does at the solo's end. Thus his solo transitions seamlessly into the coda. Strayhorn's additional music prevents Brown from ending with a high A \flat 4 as he had on previous closing choruses.

In the solo choruses to "Sophisticated Lady," we hear all three performers interacting directly with the published melody. Ellington has arranged the soloists in such a way so that the

interpretations of the existing melody become looser as the arrangement progresses. This is both a reflection of a general jazz practice of soloists trying to “out-do” one another while also tapping into aspects of each soloist’s style—Carney’s tendency toward conservative melodic renditions, Baker’s inexperience soloing on the tune with the band, and Brown’s long history with the piece. Furthermore, and especially in the case of Brown, the musicians are interacting with past performances of the tune, taking inspiration from comfortable licks they introduced previously or drawing on other performers’ interpretations. That said, all three soloists owe much to the swing-era tradition of embellishing the existing melody. As we will see in the analysis of the last standard, “Solitude,” not every member in the Ellington orchestra was bound to that style of interpretation.

1.2.5 “Solitude”—A Song for Singers

“Solitude” followed a similar path to become a popular standard as “Mood Indigo.” The band first recorded “Solitude” in January of 1934 as an instrumental. It took several months for the tune to generate buzz in the popular music marketplace. Benny Goodman and his Music Hall Orchestra cut a side on September 11, a day before Ellington revisited the piece for a Brunswick session. In November, Jimmie Lunceford and his Orchestra recorded the first vocal version of the tune. Finally by December, the tune seems to have entered the popular sphere, with another recording by the Mills Blue Rhythm Band and a mention in a review of Don Redman and his Orchestra at the Academy in New York. The Mills Blue Rhythm Band’s side would be the one non-Ellington recording to make the charts in March of the following year.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Joel Whitburn, *Joel Whitburn’s Pop Memories, 1890-1954: The History of American Popular Music* (Menomonee Falls, Wis.: Record Research, 1986). It is unclear how Whitburn and his research team calculated their chart numbers, especially during this time period when the trade presses were not tracking record sales and “hit” status was conferred by radio plugs and sheet music sales. Schuller (and Schiff, though he probably derives his information

“Solitude” arrived just as Irving Mills spun off a new branch of his music publishing business as Milsons Music Publishing Corporation, to be headed by his son Sidney. The younger Mills had proven his business acumen by predicting the success of “Moon Glow.” Heeding his son’s advice, Irving Mills published the tune (after adding his name to the credits) and “Moon Glow” ranked No. 1 for a time on the popular charts. “Solitude” was Sidney’s first publishing responsibility in the new company. As usual for Mills’ organizations, he turned it into a song.⁴⁶ Ellington received full credit for the music. Eddie De Lange provided lyrics; Irving Mills claimed a cut in credit for lyrics as well.

In my solitude you haunt me
With reveries of days gone by
In my solitude you taunt me
With memories that never die
I sit in my chair, I’m filled with despair
There’s no one could be so sad
With gloom ev’rywhere, I sit and I stare,
I know that I’ll soon go mad
In my solitude I’m praying
“Dear Lord above, Send back my love.”

De Lange’s lyrics aptly fit Ellington’s somber melody. More importantly, as David Schiff has pointed out, the lyrics are “dreamy, romantic, and racially nonspecific.”⁴⁷ Unlike the dialect- and blues-inflected lyrics to “Mood Indigo,” the lyrics to “Solitude” reflected the efforts of the Mills’ organization to brand Ellington as a serious composer.⁴⁸

In December of 1934, Sidney Mills described “Solitude” as a song “which we are still plugging and which to all appearances looks as tho [sic] it will soon become a popular

from Schuller) proposes that “Solitude” was a much bigger hit for Benny Goodman than it was for Ellington. I found no evidence in *The Billboard* or *Variety* that was the case. It seems to be a plausible claim, though it would need to be verified through business records.

⁴⁶ This information derives from an article Sidney Mills penned for *The Billboard*. Sidney Mills, “Music Publishing as a Career,” *The Billboard* 44.48 (Dec 1, 1934): 34.

⁴⁷ Schiff, *The Ellington Century*, 94.

⁴⁸ For an extended discussion of this marketing plan, see Cohen, *Duke Ellington’s America*, 59–82.

favorite.”⁴⁹ The tune only began appearing at the bottom of the sheet music sellers and radio plugs charts at the end of March 1935. The trade press observed something quaint about the way Milsons Music was pushing the tune: “The way Duke Ellington’s tune ‘Solitude’ is now showing up is remindful of the old-time pre-radio plug when a firm worked on a number for months before letting go and then the song would continue to ride for many months to come.”⁵⁰ According to the press, the song channeled an earlier time, suggesting that its popularity was carried by its musical and lyrical merits rather than recording and radio artists’ attempts to keep current with the popular trends.

Perhaps due to Milsons’ comparatively hands-off approach to plugging the song, “Solitude” never topped the charts for radio or sheet music sales. It did become a staple on the vaudeville circuits, however, and unlike “Mood Indigo,” which was covered by dance orchestras and featured on dance routines, “Solitude” remained in the realm of singers. Long after it vanished from the sales charts, *The Billboard* and *Variety* reviews of performances regularly included the Ellington tune. By October 1936, “Solitude” was referred to as “that old favorite.”⁵¹ A 1938 feature on Ellington revealed that “his greatest satisfaction from his writing came with the award of a first prize of \$2,500 by ASCAP for ‘Solitude,’” a testament to the song’s popularity and commercial success.⁵² Any feature on Ellington listed “Solitude” along with “Mood Indigo” as his signature compositions, even as the list grew longer.

In February of 1940, Ellington recorded his first vocal version of “Solitude,” during the same session he first recorded a vocal “Mood Indigo.” This was to be Ellington’s last recording session with Brunswick/Columbia before signing an exclusive contract with RCA-Victor in

⁴⁹ Sidney Mills, “Music Publishing as a Career,” 34.

⁵⁰ *The Billboard* 47.14 (Apr 6, 1935): 12.

⁵¹ P.D., “New Acts-Bands Reviews: Nyra Nash,” *The Billboard* 48.43 (Oct 24, 1936): 20.

⁵² “Portraits of Record Artists: Duke Ellington,” *The Billboard* 50.44 (Oct 29, 1938): 72.

March, so the former label likely wanted to build a stock of Ellington evergreens that it could count on for continued sales after his departure.⁵³ Columbia wasted no time, however, and released the records in May.

As with the previous two tunes, Ellington's last studio recording of "Solitude" prior to the *Masterpieces by Ellington* session was in May 1945. In this arrangement, Ellington makes use of his full cadre of vocalists, as if compensating for all the instrumental recordings of the tune the band had done previously. Fierce and staccato brass attacks start the introduction, after which Ellington leads into the tune with a piano interlude. Soprano Kay Davis sings through the first phrase, her operatic delivery interacting playfully with the band's easy swing backgrounds. Davis moves to a wordless vocal for the second phrase, and Joya Sherill weaves scatted vocal counterpoint against her as Ellington plinks out the theme at the keyboard. Hodges takes the melody for the remainder of the chorus. Ellington intensifies the vocalise by adding Marie Ellington (no relation) during the bridge and Al Hibbler to the last A. Next, Hibbler sings the song's final phrase. The reeds guide the band to the coda, where Davis' wordless vocal returns to close the arrangement. The instrumentalists recede to the background on this recording, but Ellington ultimately uses his singers as instruments. Even on an ostensibly vocal recording of "Solitude," Ellington subverts the expectations of a traditional performance of the song, having his vocalists sing two total lines of lyrics and wordless counterpoint to fill in the arrangement.

1.2.6 *Masterpieces by Ellington*, Track 4: "Solitude"

For a composition that had such a long history as a song, it may seem surprising that Ellington did not include Lanauze for a vocal chorus of "Solitude" at the *Masterpieces by*

⁵³ Cohen points out that Ellington's exclusive contract with Brunswick/Columbia ended in 1939, so for the February session Ellington was in-between exclusive contracts. Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America*, 70.

Ellington session.⁵⁴ The bandleader evidently felt an instrumental rendition of the tune was most appropriate. The long notes and small pitch collection that make up the melody of “Solitude” provide a firm scaffolding for rhythmic and melodic improvisation by the soloists on this track, and each provides a gloss on the theme. In my discussion below, I focus on Paul Gonsalves’ tenor saxophone solo in the third chorus, a marked moment in the arrangement. Afterward, I turn to the manuscript sources of the Duke Ellington Collection to piece together the arrangement heard on this track, revealing that Lanauze’s absence should not suggest the tune’s legacy as a vocal piece has no bearing on the instrumental recording.

Gonsalves

In contrast to most of the other horn solos on *Masterpieces by Ellington*, Gonsalves references the tune’s melody only obliquely.⁵⁵ The melody of “Solitude” leaves ample room for experimentation and embellishment, and Ray Nance, Jimmy Hamilton, and Lawrence Brown’s instrumental solos do depart from the written tune to some degree. But Gonsalves’ solo stands out in the arrangement: backed only by the rhythm section, the tenor saxophonist’s solo is bookended by abrupt modulations to and from A \flat major, setting the passage apart from the D \flat major key that governs the remainder of the track. Gonsalves’ solo is also the most stylistically interactive, as he draws on bebop idioms while improvising on the ballad.

In the transcription of Gonsalves’ solo (Ex. 1.16 and Ex. 1.17), I have included the published melody as a referent to the content Gonsalves includes in his solo. Even his initial

⁵⁴ There may have been time constraints on Lanauze’s availability, but because the four tracks for the album were recorded on the same day and she was present for the “Mood Indigo” and “Sophisticated Lady” recordings, her absence on “Solitude” appears to be for artistic rather than logistical reasons. In an interview with Willard for the CD reissue of the album, Lanauze also described Ellington and Strayhorn’s piano roles on each of the tracks, which suggests she was present for the full session.

⁵⁵ Johnny Hodges’ solo in “Mood Indigo” (discussed above) also departs from the written melody more than most of the other solos on the album.

Example 1.16. Author’s transcription of the first half (AA) of Paul Gonsalves’ tenor saxophone solo in the third chorus of “Solitude.” The published melody and chord changes are given at the top for comparison.

The image displays a musical score for Example 1.16, comparing a published melody with Paul Gonsalves' transcription. The score is organized into three systems, each with a 'Melody' staff (treble clef) and a 'PG' (Paul Gonsalves) staff (bass clef). The key signature is B-flat major (three flats), and the time signature is 4/4.

- System 1 (Measures 1-4):** The 'Published Melody' staff shows a sequence of notes with a box labeled 'A' above the first measure. Chords are indicated above the staff: A♭maj7, Fm7, and B♭7. The 'Paul Gonsalves' staff features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets (marked '3') and a pickup figure.
- System 2 (Measures 5-8):** The 'Melody' staff continues with notes and chords: B♭m7, E♭7, A♭maj7, E+7, and E♭7. The 'PG' staff shows a continuation of the rhythmic pattern with triplets.
- System 3 (Measures 9-12):** The 'Melody' staff shows notes and chords: A♭maj7, Fm7, B♭7, and (F7). The 'PG' staff continues with triplets and a pickup figure.
- System 4 (Measures 13-16):** The 'Melody' staff shows notes and chords: B♭m7, E♭7, A♭maj7, A♭maj7, and A♭7. The 'PG' staff continues with triplets, a sextuplet (marked '6'), and a pickup figure.

pickup figure, which includes the E♭–F–G ascent from the piece’s melody, obscures the referent because it is preceded by an E♭7+ arpeggio, its rhythms have been shifted, and it includes a melodic elaboration. The latter figure becomes a motive that Gonsalves continues to work with throughout his solo; note especially the “neighbor-third” figure that closes each gesture. The abrupt key change to A♭ major for Gonsalves’ solo chorus also erects a barrier to the apprehension of his solo as melodic paraphrase, since the rest of the arrangement trains the listener to expect a stepwise climb to C to start the chorus.

The **A** sections of the “Solitude” melody focus on a small number of long, held notes. Gonsalves’ touches on most of these pitches during his solo, but he rarely holds them for the full duration, nor does his arrival usually coincide with the placement of the melody’s pacing. Consider the first phrase. Gonsalves emphasizes G and A \flat , but he decorates them with a motivic neighbor-third figure. Rather than cadence the **A** sections on C, the third of the tonic chord, Gonsalves instead focuses his lines on other tonic chord members—E \flat , A \flat , and G. The tenor player also works through a chromatic arpeggiation figure in the sixth bar of each **A** section.

During the bridge (see Ex. 1.17), Gonsalves touches on the characteristic third figure, but he mainly plays through the changes, outlining a D \flat M7, D $^{\circ}$, and E \flat m7 to A \flat 7. His second phrase in the **B** section seems to operate on a chord substitution principle: he substitutes D \flat 7 and G7 in his arpeggiation in m. 22 to lead into a substituted Cm of m. 23, which works as a ii with the F7 \flat 9 that he arpeggiates later in the bar. He does not articulate the chord’s transition to B \flat m7, but elides that into the E \flat 7 that brings the tune back to **A**. His substitutions draw on bebop practices in their exploration of higher extensions and expanded repertory of available chord possibilities.

The final **A** of Gonsalves’ solo is the most intense, as he continues the buildup established over the past three formal units. He begins with the most overt thematic reference in his solo, slowing the stepwise pickup to approximate the melody’s rhythm and aligning the strong beats. After this quotation, however, he makes no further reference to the melody of “Solitude,” instead playing fast scalar passages and arpeggios to articulate a modified interpretation of the tune’s chord progression. He does preserve the general phrasing, although he tends to cram the ends of phrases and delay their onset. He dwells on the F minor chord from m. 26, inserting an E \sharp 7+(\sharp 9) arpeggio as a tritone substituted dominant for B \flat 7 in m. 27 and 28,

Example 1.17. Author's transcription of the second half (BA) of Gonsalves' solo in "Solitude."

The musical score is organized into five systems, each with a Melody line and a PG (Piano/Guitar) line. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The systems are labeled with measure numbers: 17, 21, 25, 28, and 31. A box labeled 'B' is placed above measure 17, and a box labeled 'A' is placed above measure 25. The PG line includes complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and quintuplets. Chord symbols are provided above the melody line for each measure.

System 1 (Measures 17-20): Melody: $D\flat maj^7$, D° , $A\flat^6/E\flat$ (triplet), $E\flat m^7$, $A\flat^7$. PG: Triplet patterns.

System 2 (Measures 21-24): Melody: $D\flat maj^7$, D° , $A\flat^6/E\flat$ (triplet), $F7\flat^9$, $B\flat m^7$, $E\flat^7+$. PG: Triplet patterns.

System 3 (Measures 25-27): Melody: $A\flat maj^7$, $B\flat m^7$, B° , $A\flat maj^7/C$, $D7\flat^5$, $D\flat maj^7$. PG: Triplet patterns.

System 4 (Measures 28-30): Melody: $B\flat^7$, F^7 , $B\flat m^7$, $E\flat^7$. PG: Quintuplet and triplet patterns.

System 5 (Measures 31-32): Melody: $A\flat maj^7$, $(B\flat m^7)$, $E\flat^7$. PG: Triplet pattern.

but each time he returns to the F minor chord. F minor briefly becomes F major in m. 29, which transforms into the expected $B\flat m^7$ and lands on an anticipatory $E\flat^4$ for m. 30. The chromatic fifth-arpeggio figure returns later in that measure, leading Gonsalves to a cadence on C^4 , which he walks down to $A\flat^3$ through the neighbor-third motive. The saxophonist adds another scalar

and arpeggio hybrid phrase to lead into the next section of the arrangement, where the band returns to provide background figures for Nance's trumpet solo.

Gonsalves was of a younger musical generation than the longer-tenured members of the Ellington band, and he often showed his propensity to employ the bebop idiom in his solos. Typically the style emerged in up-tempo numbers, but the newcomer's chromatically inflected passagework in his solo to "Solitude" shows that he could incorporate modern elements into his ballad playing as well. Ellington sought to tap into this stylistic interaction, mimicking the preferred bebop small combo ensemble by resting most of the band during the tenor solo. Gonsalves' adventuresome departure from the simple melody of "Solitude" prompts similar departures from the remaining soloists on the track. Gonsalves' solo still sounds most divorced from the tune, however, because Nance, Hamilton, and Brown all have more explicit thematic references built into the background orchestrations. It is to those background orchestrations that I now turn.

Manuscripts

The music manuscripts in the Duke Ellington Collection occupy approximately one hundred sixty-six cubic feet and provide a wealth of insights into Ellington and Strayhorn's arranging and compositional processes as well as a glimpse of the band's working practices. The manuscripts for "Solitude" lead me to two conclusions. First, the arrangement for *Masterpieces by Ellington* derives from several preexisting arrangements, many of them for vocalists. Second, the arrangement for *Masterpieces by Ellington* was originally conceived at a much greater length, complete with a drastic key change from D \flat to G. Below, I provide details from the "Solitude"

manuscripts, alongside the manuscripts for “Mood Indigo” and “Sophisticated Lady” that lead me to these conclusions.

Because it was in the band book for so long, scores and parts for “Solitude,” “Mood Indigo,” and “Sophisticated Lady” each occupy several folders in the DEC. The parts often appear in groups, though usually incomplete, and stray parts are scattered among the folders. In the absence of dates or session indications, the best way to identify a time frame for a particular arrangement is based on the names on the instrumental parts, a distinguishing feature of Ellington Orchestra arrangements that provides documentary evidence of his “on the man” writing style.⁵⁶ This method is not fail safe, as arrangements from the later years of the band do not carry the same personalization.⁵⁷ Even charts from the 1940s onward occasionally show chair indications rather than musician’s names, most commonly for the trumpet parts. What these three arrangements from *Masterpieces by Ellington* have in common is a collection of circled numbers in red pencil that indicate performance order. The jumbled order of the numbers across the multiple pages that constitute each part show that the band was reordering the arrangements on the fly.

The arrangements for “Mood Indigo” and “Sophisticated Lady” are easier to pinpoint because they have a greater number of preserved parts, a clearer ordering of sections, and in the case of “Mood Indigo,” short scores that correspond to segments of the arrangement. For both tracks, it is apparent that the parts were created and used for the *Masterpieces by Ellington* recording session.

In the case of “Solitude,” the documents are more opaque. A formal map of the five-chorus performance is given in Table 1.4. From the table, we see that only three choruses require

⁵⁶ For more on Ellington’s “on the man” writing, see Chapter 3.

⁵⁷ This may be due to a variety of factors: the personnel was less stable in the band’s final years, and I suspect Mercer Ellington may have been compiling a band book for posterity and rental.

Table 1.4. Formal outline for “Solitude,” track four on *Masterpieces By Ellington*.

Section	Length	Musical Features	Backing
Introduction	4	Solo piano	N/A
Chorus 1	32	Orchestral presentation (baritone sax B)	Full band
Chorus 2	32	Solo piano chorus	N/A
Chorus 3	32	Tenor saxophone solo	Rhythm section
Chorus 4	32	Solo trumpet	Full band
Chorus 5	32	Clarinet solo (AA); Trombone solo (BA)	Full band
Tag	4	Repeat final measures of Chorus 5	Full band

orchestral backing—the second chorus is a piano solo and as mentioned above Gonsalves’ solo in the third chorus only receives backing from the rhythm section. The first chorus corresponds to the circled number 5 on the seven extant parts. Of those, trombonist Quentin “Butter” Jackson has written 129 in the upper right of the page, showing that the tune is number 129 in the band book. Ray Nance’s trumpet solo in the fourth chorus finds its backing figures marked with a circled number 7 on those same seven parts. The parts also carry a different label for this chorus: “Hibbler(’s) Ch.,” which suggests that this section was originally a vocal arrangement for Al Hibbler, the band’s male vocalist from 1943-51. Jackson’s part also survives in a separate, cleaner version, with the number 94 written in the corner as well as a larger 129 traced in black and red marker. Interestingly, the two choruses are identified as “Solitude—Instrumental” and “Solitude—Vocal.” Harry Carney’s bass clarinet and baritone saxophone part also survives in this cleaner version, which is notable since his part is absent from the seven mentioned above.

The shared final chorus between Hamilton and Brown is found on seven separate surviving parts, numbered with a circled 6, with two of the parts including “Voc(al)” in the title, suggesting that this arrangement was also born as background orchestration for vocal performance. Johnny Hodges’ part also has the number 129 written across the upper right of the page, identifying it as the same number from the band book as Jackson’s parts did. Amid the

parts in the DEC, there is also a set of nine parts in G major marked with a circled number 3, as well as a bass clarinet and baritone part marked with the number 1, but neither of these choruses appear in the *Masterpieces* track.

The numerous references to vocalists—especially Hibbler—show that parts of the “Solitude” arrangement was taken from preexisting vocal settings that had not previously been recorded. Ellington and Strayhorn repurpose the material for the instrumental solos on *Masterpieces by Ellington*, but the piece’s long history as a song nonetheless manifests on the album in this indirect way. The circled number markings on these manuscripts, especially given their similarity to markings on the other two arrangement for the session, also suggest that “Solitude” was originally conceived as at least a seven-chorus arrangement, with the numbers giving the musicians a road map to navigate the multiple pages of parts. Whether for time constraints or musical shortcomings, the final performance does not follow these written indications, instead proceeding through sections 5, 7, and 6 while inserting two choruses without the orchestra. While it may be easy to imagine Ellington as the sole authority over such decisions, it is far more likely that the reordering and elimination of various components of the arrangement emerged as a collaborative dialogue throughout the rehearsal and recording session.

1.2.7 Conclusions

Reception of the Duke Ellington Orchestra has tended to narrowly focus on the genius of its namesake. This attitude in large part has its origins in the marketing plan Mills Music concocted in the 1930s, which deliberately portrayed Ellington as a serious composer. Columbia’s LP *Masterpieces by Ellington* builds directly on this tradition, displaying Ellington’s image alone on the cover, a gesture that works in tandem with the album title to suggest his sole

authorship of the music. As the histories and analyses of “Mood Indigo,” “Sophisticated Lady,” and “Solitude” have shown, other voices in the band are critical to these recordings.

In foregrounding the rest of the ensemble, I have tried not to diminish Ellington’s role but instead augment the contributions of his band members. My focus on interactions transforms discussion of the music into a discussion of music-making: the recorded product available to our ears was not one set down on paper but one negotiated in real-time, collaboratively. My discussion of soloist’s particular interpretations of the tunes’ melodies highlights the unique voices contributing to the sound of the Ellington band.

Because much of Ellington’s music was written, scholars have avoided talking about recordings of the band in terms of interaction and improvisation. My analysis demonstrates that interaction is a viable method for approaching big band jazz, especially when the arrangement reduces to a small subset of performers. Though the Ellington band possessed many qualities that set it apart from other jazz ensembles, most especially the compositional aims of its namesake, it shares many other traits with those groups, and so a shared analytical approach can be used to provide overlooked insights into the recorded products of the Duke Ellington Orchestra.

For the three standards included on *Masterpieces by Ellington*, and especially “Mood Indigo” and “Sophisticated Lady,” which owe their origins to contributions from band members, it is wholly appropriate to frame them in the light of collaboration. Strayhorn has his hands all over these tracks in the form of his arrangements and his piano playing. As the band entered the studio to record its most extensive arrangements of these tunes, collaboration proved essential in expanding the pieces to fit the spacious playing-time afforded by the LP.

1.3 Composition of *The Tattooed Bride*

The remaining track on *Masterpieces by Ellington* might be the most deserving of the album's title: critic Max Harrison suggests that *The Tattooed Bride* "may eventually emerge as [Ellington's] unacknowledged masterpiece."⁵⁸ Though it too has marked moments of group interaction as well as ample opportunities for individual musicians to contribute through improvised solos, I wish to turn the focus of the chapter to Ellington as composer. The inclusion of *The Tattooed Bride* on this album alongside three "concert arrangements" of his most well-known tunes suggests that Ellington wanted listeners to take this piece seriously, despite its amusing title and program.

I turn first to "extended composition," examining the term scholars and critics often use to discuss Ellington's longer pieces such as *The Tattooed Bride*. I then move into a discussion of the track as it appears on *Masterpieces by Ellington*, giving a formal overview and then detailing the piece's core motives. Next, I consider sections of the piece more closely, revealing how Ellington deploys the motives throughout the course of the work. I briefly note the importance of two soloists on the recording before moving into a final consideration of the piece's slow introduction, which offers an abstract summary of the composition and establishes its tone as a concert work. While collaborative aspects discussed in the first part of this chapter could also be considered for *The Tattooed Bride*, Ellington's positioning and construction of the piece merit close consideration from a compositional perspective.

⁵⁸ Max Harrison, "Some Reflections on Ellington's Longer Works," in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 392.

1.3.1 “Extended Composition”

At a concert in Zurich, Switzerland on May 2, 1950, Ellington identified *The Tattooed Bride* as “an extended composition,” distinguishing it from the other selections on the night’s program, which included “Take the ‘A’ Train,” “Rockin’ in Rhythm,” and “Creole Love Call.” With this remark, Ellington perpetuated a distinction created in the wake of his 1934 recording of “Creole Rhapsody,” an eight-minute composition that took up two sides of a 78-rpm disc. Reviewer Warren W. Scholl, writing for the *Music Lovers’ Guide*, felt “when [Ellington] expands to larger forms, he is out of his field,” suggesting this longer work was cut from a different cloth than Ellington’s shorter compositions.⁵⁹ Critic John Hammond espoused a similar point of view following Ellington’s thirteen-minute *Reminiscing in Tempo* from 1935. Whether referred to as “extended compositions,” “extended works,” or “extended forms,” critics and scholars continue to treat any Ellington composition that exceeds the traditional formal scope of standard pop tunes as a distinct grouping.

Cultural historian Harvey Cohen has masterfully situated the early appraisals of Ellington’s longer compositions in light of the expectations and commercial pressures on a popular artist in the 1930s.⁶⁰ The roughly three-minute time allotment on each side of a 10-inch 78-rpm record was one such restriction, as was the increased cost and consequently lower profit potential for printing sheet music for more intricate compositions. Irving Mills, Ellington’s manager during the 1930s, advocated for the recording and release of Ellington’s early extended

⁵⁹ Warren W. Scholl, “Duke Ellington—A Unique Personality,” in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 104.

⁶⁰ Cohen, *Duke Ellington’s America*, 75–79.

compositions, although he revealed in a *Downbeat* article in 1952 that he, like many critics, felt such efforts did not represent Ellington's true musical strengths.⁶¹

The critical discourse around Ellington's long-form compositions came to a head in 1943 following the Ellington Orchestra's first concert at Carnegie Hall, where Ellington presented his 50-minute, three-movement "tone parallel" *Black, Brown, and Beige*.⁶² Many critics, including Hammond, felt that Ellington was "deserting jazz."⁶³ Because the piece was beyond the scope of most jazz performances, the critics judged it according to the musical standards of classical music, generally finding it deficient in its treatment of form. Numerous scholars have since offered rehabilitating and more appropriate evaluations of the work, taking it on its own terms and often considering Ellington's programmatic intentions.⁶⁴ John Howland, for instance, considers how Ellington used two formal models when writing "extended jazz compositions": the first "adaptations of the multithematic, novelty/stride and symphonic jazz episodic models," the second the suite model of "an ordered collection of largely unrelated instrumental movements."⁶⁵ The first category applies to *Black, Brown, and Beige*, as well as *The Tattooed Bride*, while the extended compositions discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation fall into the second category.

⁶¹ Irving Mills, "I Split with Duke When Music Began Sidetracking," in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 274–76.

⁶² Ellington often referred to his programmatic longer works as "tone parallels" rather than "tone poems." For more on this distinction, see Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Literary Ellington," *Representations*, no. 71 (2002): 1–29.

⁶³ John Hammond, "Is the Duke Deserting Jazz?," in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 171–73.

⁶⁴ Examples include Brian Priestly and Alan Cohen, "Black, Brown & Beige," in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 185–204; John Howland, "*Ellington Uptown*": *Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, & the Birth of Concert Jazz* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 143–199; Schiff, *The Ellington Century*, 200–47; Lisa Barg and Walter van de Leur, "'Your Music Has Flung the Story of 'Hot Harlem' to the Four Corners of the Earth!': Race and Narrative in Black, Brown and Beige," *The Musical Quarterly* 96, no. 3–4 (December 2013): 426–58.

⁶⁵ Howland, *Ellington Uptown*, 181.

Despite the critical backlash that followed *Black, Brown, and Beige*, the Ellington Orchestra returned to Carnegie Hall for an eight-year run of nearly-annual concerts there. Each time, Ellington and Strayhorn provided a new “extended composition,” and sometimes two, to mark the occasion. Thus these longer works became cemented as a part of Ellington’s reputation as a serious composer, something initially established by the Mills Music marketing plan from the 1930s. As Ellington put it in 1964, “the concert hall is the logical place for performing extended compositions. But you cannot exist by playing there only.”⁶⁶ *Masterpieces by Ellington* turned the record buyer’s home into a concert hall, offering one of Ellington’s latest extended compositions alongside “concert arrangements” of three beloved tunes.

1.3.2 *Masterpieces by Ellington, Track 3: The Tattooed Bride*

Formal overview

The Tattooed Bride consists of a single movement, which distinguishes it from other, multimovement extended compositions such as *Black, Brown & Beige* or Ellington’s numerous suites. Despite being a single movement, *The Tattooed Bride* owes much to the three-part form of symphonic jazz. In his book *Ellington Uptown*, Howland has made a persuasive case for the influence of this idiom on Ellington’s extended compositions, up to and including *A Tone Parallel to Harlem*, which premiered in 1950 at the Metropolitan Opera House.⁶⁷ *The Tattooed Bride* receives only a brief mention in the final chapter of Howland’s book as he traces the trajectory of Ellington’s annual concerts at Carnegie Hall in the 1940s.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Duke Ellington, “Reminiscing in Tempo,” in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 361.

⁶⁷ Although it did not take place in Carnegie Hall, Howland considers the 1950 concert the conclusion of Ellington’s Carnegie Hall concert series.

⁶⁸ Howland’s book is an excellent resource for those who wish to contextualize *The Tattooed Bride* in a broader spectrum of compositions dating back to the 1920s.

The score and parts to *The Tattooed Bride* in the Duke Ellington Collection reveal the works' tripartite structure, with each component bearing a separate title. The first part of the work is "Kitchen Stove," the second is titled "Omaha," and the concluding part is titled "Aberdeen." Some musicians have written "Tattooed Bride" on some or all of these parts, and most have a written indication of the order they are to be played: the copyist has written "to Omaha" at the end of "Kitchen Stove," just as "to Aberdeen" appears at the end of "Omaha." The three components are assigned unique numbers in the band book, but curiously the sequence of numbers does not match the performance sequence: "Kitchen Stove" is number 282, "Aberdeen" is number 283, and "Omaha" is number 284, even though "Aberdeen" is the third part of the composition.

Because the three parts of *The Tattooed Bride* are titled and numbered separately, some may suggest that Ellington has simply joined three tunes together under a single title. Ellington's working sketches do show that he thought of the sections as discrete components, but the musical materials shared between them also display efforts of large-scale organization. According to William Timmer's extensive discography of Ellington recordings, only "Aberdeen" was ever performed in isolation, and this was only in the early 1950s, several years after the piece's premiere.⁶⁹ Thus, although the three parts have unique titles and numbers, they were presented as a single work.

Table 1.5 presents a basic formal outline of *The Tattooed Bride*. The three parts of the piece are each boxed and labeled vertically along the left side. As the letter designations in the diagram show, *The Tattooed Bride* consists mainly of non-repeating formal areas, but each part has a repeating chorus structure. The choruses in "Omaha" are the most conventional, as

⁶⁹ Wilhelm Ernst Timmer, *Ellingtonia: The Recorded Music of Duke Ellington and His Sidemen*, 5th ed. (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 2007).

Table 1.5. Formal overview of *The Tattooed Bride*.

	Formal Area	M.	Area Type	Length	
	A	Introduction	1	Slow, “symphonic” introduction	10
Kitchen Stove	B	Rhythm intro	11	Presentation of first theme	8+8+4
	C	Chorus 1	31	<i>AABA</i> chorus	8+8+8+6
	D	Episode 1	61	Type 1 [†] (contrasting)	8+6
	E	Episode 2	75	Type 2 (developmental)	12+12
	C'	Chorus 2⇒ Episode 3	99	Type 1 (developmental)	22
	F	Transition (“Charge” vamp)	123	Type 1 (faster tempo)	8
	Omaha	G	Chorus 1	131	<i>AABA'</i> chorus
H		Transition	163	Type 3	12
G'		Chorus 2	175	<i>AABA'</i> chorus (trb solo)	8+8+8+8
I		Transition	207	Type 4	4+4
J		Episode 4	215	Type 1 (developmental)	24
J'		Episode 4 (repeat)	239	Type 1 (with cl. solo)	24
F		Episode 5 (“Charge” vamp)	263	Type 1 (contrasting)	8
Aberdeen	K	Transition	271	Type 3 (ritardando)	4+6+4+4
	L	Chorus 1	289	<i>ABAC</i> chorus (slow)	8+10+8+10
	M	Saxophone cadenza	325		6
	L'	Chorus 2	331	<i>ABAC</i> chorus with shift to faster tempo at midpoint (cl. solo)	8+10+8+8
	L''	Chorus 3	365	<i>ABAC</i> (cl. solo)	8+8+8+8
	N	Coda	397		8

Ellington uses a standard 32-bar *AABA'* structure and repeats it in full during the second chorus.

A similar principle underlies the choruses in “Kitchen Stove,” but in the only full chorus,

Ellington truncates the final *A* section to six measures instead of the usual eight. The only other chorus repetition in “Kitchen Stove” gets interrupted by motivic development, so we never hear

a standard 32-bar chorus. In “Aberdeen,” Ellington uses a 32-bar *ABAC* chorus form as a model,

lengthening some of the eight-measure phrases to ten-measures. Because the *A* sections repeat

[†] In Type 1 areas, Ellington layers the piece’s motives in a fragmented texture. Type 2 areas closely resemble Type 1 areas, but Ellington inserts a brief chordal passage that disrupts the continuous motivic deployment. Type 3 areas are reserved for transitions that start with motivic content and focus into chordal statements to prepare the following formal area. Type 4 transitions start with a chordal passage and split into a motivic passage. These Types are discussed more fully later in the chapter.

and the tempo is so slow for this section, it is tempting to parse this as a 18-bar *AB* form, but because Ellington changes the harmonic and melodic scheme for sections *B* and *C*, the *ABAC* parsing makes the most sense. Ellington shifts to a faster swing feel midway through the second chorus, and at that point clarinetist drops Ellington's composed melody for an improvised one over shout-like outbursts from the brass and quick riffs from the saxophones. Although chorus structures make up a large portion of the music in *The Tattooed Bride*, two of the three parts contain *episodes* that develop motives from the choruses, often over a harmonic background adapted from the chorus itself. Ellington has also created a number of *transition* areas that, while regularly containing some motivic material from the choruses, function to set up a more substantial formal area. Overall, motivic construction guides the piece's form, and so before examining these episodes and transitions more closely, we must turn to the piece's core motives.

Motivic construction

Before several performances, Ellington revealed to audiences that *The Tattooed Bride* has a program. He gave his most detailed description of that program at a March 22, 1952, dance concert at Crystal Gardens in Salem, Oregon:

Requests are flying. We have one that we find possibly at this hour a little difficult to cope with. It's one of our concert numbers, it's called *Tattooed Bride*. *Tattooed Bride* as I said is one of our extended things, one of our little more ambitious things that we do in the concert hall. *The Tattooed Bride* is—we'd like to have you go along with us in the story—and *The Tattooed Bride*, immediately after the introduction, portrays the discovery of the prospective bridegroom, a very agreeable fellow so we try to establish a rather agreeable tempo there. Then as we increase the tempo, a little further into the number it becomes quite fast, and that represents the elopement, the flying away, and we find ourselves in some sort of a...well we try to show their...um...[dramatic pause, chuckles from audience]...optimism...well anyway we run into a rather *contrapuntal anticipation*. And then there comes a slower part, and Jimmy Hamilton comes to the

microphone with his clarinet. Now this is the scene where the tattooed bride is discovered to be the tattooed bride, on the occasion of her honeymoon in Aberdeen, South Dakota.⁷⁰

Many of Ellington's spoken introductions to the piece fit this model, though they usually lack some of the details. At the piece's premiere on November 11, 1948, at Carnegie Hall, Leonard Feather's program notes sketched a slightly different narrative:

Described by the composer as a musical striptease, this is one of the most curious pieces of program music ever delineated by the Duke. The story which it tells in music involves a weekend honeymoon spent at a seaside resort by an energetic young man and his bride. The young man apparently expends his energy through the medium of long hikes along the boardwalk, liberal bouts of swimming and other recreational activities, after which he returns home and goes to sleep exhausted. After three nights of this sort of thing he declares that this is the best vacation he has ever had. At this point we might insert a row of asterisks, which would be the printed equivalent of Jimmy Hamilton's climactic long-held note on the clarinet, indicating that the husband has finally found out that his wife is tattooed.⁷¹

Both stories share the bridegroom's delayed discovery of his new wife's body art, but Feather's version attributes the delay to the man's cluelessness rather than the passionate courtship Ellington detailed in 1952.

Much can be gained from engaging with Ellington's programmatic descriptions, especially when they concern race and history, as in the case of *Black, Brown, and Beige* or *Harlem*. Here, however, I wish to focus on the introduction Ellington gave to the piece at its premiere, which addressed not the programmatic narrative of the piece but rather its compositional structure:

The tattooed bride is quite different from all other tattooed people because rather than having, for instance, an anchor here, an initial there and so forth and so on, she was tattooed with only a repetition of many Ws, it seemed, you know? Different sizes and shapes and places. And you know if you take a pencil and write a W you get the sound of "za-zu-za-za." You know, just like [members of the orchestra take turns playing the

⁷⁰ Duke Ellington and His Orchestra *At the Crystal Gardens, Salem, Oregon, 1952*, Hep Records HEP 92/93, compact disc.

⁷¹ Leonard Feather, program notes to November 11, 1948 Carnegie Hall concert. Reprinted in liner notes to Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, *Carnegie Hall, November 11, 1948*, Vintage Jazz Classics VJC-1024/25-2, compact disc.

piece's up-down stepwise motive]. That's the way we rehearse it. And so we've taken that musical figure and by repetition present it to you now as *The Tattooed Bride*.⁷²

Ellington rarely gave listeners musical cues to listen for throughout a piece, but for this composition he described the motive, had his musicians illustrate the motive, and vaguely hinted at how the motive was used in the piece. At a later concert, Ellington explained, "We use a four-tone melody... as a theme and we develop it." These remarks suggest that whatever erotic subtext guided the unfolding of the piece, there was also a musical logic guiding it as well. Stefano Zenni takes Ellington's remarks at face value, positing that *The Tattooed Bride* "is based entirely on the repetition and transformation" of this motive, "an M-shaped structure of ascending and descending intervals, which is also inverted, a W-shaped motive."⁷³ As *The Tattooed Bride* is not the thrust of Zenni's article, he does not substantiate his claims. My analysis of the motivic relationships in *The Tattooed Bride* brings a critical lens to bear on the oft-repeated observations about the composition.

One reason *The Tattooed Bride* hangs together so well is that Ellington works the central motive, *m*, into each of the piece's main themes (Ex 1.18). The alternating whole-step pattern, set to the characteristic rhythm of four repeated eighth-notes, the last syncopated onto the third beat of the bar, appears in each theme, but the motive is not the first melodic figure in any of the themes. In "Kitchen Stove," the motive is preceded by a similar but rhythmically varied pattern a half-step higher. In "Omaha," motive *m* follows a down-up fourth motive (*x*) that outlines the minor-mode tonic triad. Ellington precedes the presentation of motive *m* in "Aberdeen" by a derivative motive based around a minor third instead of a major second. Note that in "Kitchen Stove" and "Omaha" Ellington follows motive *m* with a semitone descent.

⁷² Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, *Carnegie Hall, November 11, 1948*, Vintage Jazz Classics VJC-1024/25-2, compact disc.

⁷³ Stefano Zenni, "The Aesthetics of Duke Ellington's Suites: The Case of Togo Brava," *Black Music Research Journal* 21, no. 1 (2001): 7–8.

Example 1.18. Ellington, *The Tattooed Bride*, themes with motives identified. All examples for *The Tattooed Bride* are based on the archival score in DEC, Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

a) “Kitchen Stove”

b) “Omaha”

c) “Aberdeen”

The three parts share more than just motive *m*, as Ellington gradually incorporates material that resurfaces as thematic content in later sections. As an example, consider the opening to Episode 1 (**D**), which follows the first chorus in “Kitchen Stove” (Ex. 1.19). Ellington introduces a down-up fourth figure (motive *x*) in the saxes that prepares the motive that opens “Omaha.” The trombones recapitulate the idea in the next four-measure phrase. The trumpets continue the rhythmic gesture initiated by the other two instrumental groups, and motive *x* is temporarily abandoned, smoothed over as another aspect of ensemble riff construction. When “Omaha” begins with its prominent B \flat –F fourth, however, we hear it as a development of the previous uses of the interval.

If we isolate the last measures of Episode 2 (**E**, see Ex. 1.20), we see the bassist closing the section with another instance of motive *x*. Thus the bass riff points backward to the opening measures of Episode 1 while also pointing ahead to “Omaha.” Ellington also weaves in another

Example 1.19. Beginning of Episode 1 (D) of *The Tattooed Bride*, a developmental Type 1 episode. Ellington introduces motive *x* and continues the motivic rhythm in the trumpets. DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

61 *x motives*

Saxes

Bari

Tpts

Tbn

66

Saxes

Bari

Tpts

Tbn

x motives

rhythmic continuation

x motives

Example 1.20. Last three measures from Episode 2 (E) in *The Tattooed Bride*, a Type 2 developmental episode that previews motives from later in the piece. DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

96 *y*

Saxes

Tpts

Tbn

Bass

w

x

forward-pointing motive in the trombones. An apparent inversion and rhythmic retrograde of motive *m*, I will call this down-up figure motive *w*. Example 1.21 presents this motive along with its developing variants throughout the rest of the piece. Motive *w* begins to emerge through the subsequent episode (**C'**, see Ex. 1.21b), derailing the second chorus before layering to create the transitional “Charge” vamp into “Omaha” (**F**, see Ex. 1.28). In “Omaha,” motive *w* guides the brass background figures during Brown’s solo in Chorus 2 (**G'**, see Ex. 1.21c) and the transitional **I** (Ex. 1.21d), and it appears during the motivic fragmentation of **Episode 4** (**J**, Ex. 1.24). Naturally, it also reappears during the reprise of the “Charge” vamp in “Omaha” (**F**). Ellington preserves the rhythm but varies the contour to create the backing figures in “Aberdeen” (see Ex. 1.21e). The altered *w* motive in “Aberdeen” resembles the version that the bass played in the failed second chorus of **C'** (Ex. 1.21b, m. 106).

Returning to Example 1.20, we see another motivic idea that appears consistently across all three parts of the piece: motive *y*, the syncopated descending arpeggio, particularly as it appears in the reeds. Example 1.22 presents the motive in isolation along with several other instances of the figure. In its first presentation at the end of **E**, Ellington has the reeds begin with a chromatically lowered pitch and sweep down quickly through the other chord members before landing a seventh away from the starting pitch (Ex. 1.22a). Ellington elaborates this basic structure for an important segment of the theme to “Omaha”: the lick starts on a chromatically lowered pitch, fits the rapid passage to a stepwise connection between chord tones, extends the arpeggio, and finally lands on a chord member a seventh away, written as a diminished octave (Ex. 1.22b). The same figure also appears in the bridge section to the “Omaha” chorus, repeated twice in quick succession (Ex. 1.22c). Ellington later embellishes the motive further at the end of **I** (Ex. 1.22d) and combines this version with its earlier “Omaha” presentation to initiate **K**

Example 1.21. Iterations of motive *w* in *The Tattooed Bride*. DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

a) initial presentation, end of E

98



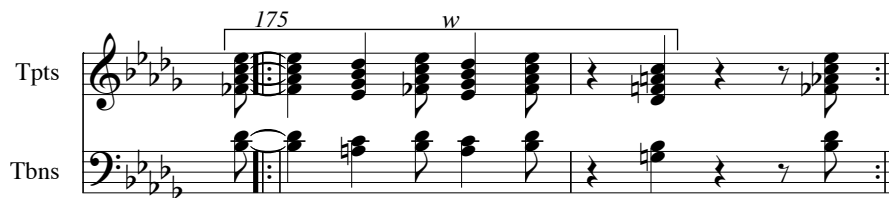
b) development during C'

105



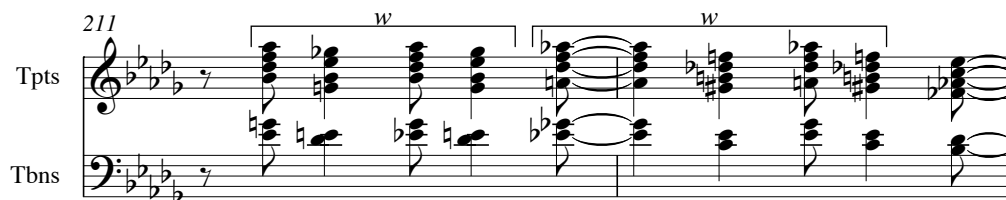
c) guiding background figures at G'

175



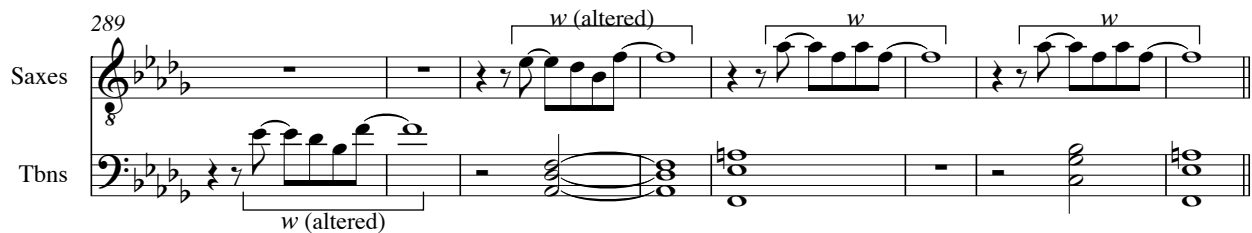
d) guiding background figures at I

211



e) as background riffs during "Aberdeen," L

289



Example 1.22. Iterations of motive *y* in *The Tattooed Bride*. DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

- a) initial presentation, end of **E** b) in main theme to “Omaha,” **G**, section A c) in main theme to “Omaha,” **G**, section B

Saxes

d) end of transition at **I**

e) initiating transition at **K**

Saxes

f) underlying saxophone cadenza at **M**

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari

g) as background figure during final “Aberdeen” chorus at **L''**

Saxes

(Ex. 1.22e). To preserve continuity across the three divisions of the piece, Ellington bases the saxophone cadenza (**M**) between the choruses of “Aberdeen” on this motive as well (Ex. 1.22f), and it makes a final appearance during the out chorus (**L''**, see Ex. 1.22g).

Finally, Ellington creates a distinct diatonic motive (z) during “Kitchen Stove” that constitutes an important building block of the piece—the ascending tetrachord, which Ellington first introduces during the rhythm section introduction (**B**, Ex. 1.23a). He holds the motive in reserve until the abandoned second chorus (**C''**), where he then passes it throughout the ensemble to create a saturated echo effect (Ex. 1.23b). Though it never reappears in the piece, we might view the drawn out diatonic and chromatic climbs that occur in the following measures to be a transformation of the motive. By extension, similar ascending figures that appear in “Omaha” and “Aberdeen” may also have their motivic origins in this simple figure.

When engaging in motivic analysis, an analyst runs the risk of considering all musical gestures to be somehow derived from a core motive. In the case of the core motives of *The Tattooed Bride*, however, that is precisely the point. Ellington utilized a very simple motivic idea—repeated neighbor notes—and built an entire composition. Through repetition, he prepares listeners to accept similarly presented undulations as motivic transformations. By taking a similar approach to background riffs and subsidiary motives, Ellington successfully maps a unified musical statement through a range of tempos and moods.

Creating episodes and transitions

Having cataloged the piece’s core motives, I now turn to the episodes and transitions Ellington crafts for *The Tattooed Bride*. These formal areas lack the predictability of the song forms nested within the piece but also constitute a large portion of the overall form. They reveal the ways Ellington sought to link the choruses that he used to structure piece. He uses non-chorus material for contrast, development, and transition. I call the contrasting and developmental areas episodes while I refer to the shorter transitional areas simply as transitions.

Example 1.23. Iterations of motive z in *The Tattooed Bride*. DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

a) first appearance, rhythm section intro (B)

Musical score for Piano (Pno.) and Bass. The Pno. part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. It features a sequence of notes with a slur and a 'z' above it, followed by a rest, then another slur with 'z', and finally a rapid ascending scale with a slur and 'z (extended into scale)'. The Bass part starts with a bass clef and a key signature of two flats, mirroring the Pno. part with similar slurs and 'z' markings, including 'z (extended into scale)'.

b) during the abandoned second chorus (C')

Musical score for Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bari), Trumpet 2 (Tpt. 2), and Trombone 3 (Tbn. 3). The Cl. part starts at measure 109 with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. It features a sequence of notes with a slur and a 'z' above it, followed by a rest, then another slur with 'z', and finally a rapid ascending scale with a slur and 'z'. The Bari part starts with a bass clef and a key signature of two flats, mirroring the Cl. part with similar slurs and 'z' markings. The Tpt. 2 part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats, mirroring the Cl. part with similar slurs and 'z' markings. The Tbn. 3 part starts with a bass clef and a key signature of two flats, mirroring the Bari part with similar slurs and 'z' markings.

Musical score for Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bari), Trumpet 2 (Tpt. 2), Trombone 3 (Tbn. 3), and Bass. The Cl. part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. It features a sequence of notes with a slur and a 'z derivative?' above it, followed by a rest, then another slur with 'z derivative?', and finally a rapid ascending scale with a slur and 'z derivative?'. The Bari part starts with a bass clef and a key signature of two flats, mirroring the Cl. part with similar slurs and 'z derivative?' markings. The Tpt. 2 part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats, mirroring the Cl. part with similar slurs and 'z derivative?' markings. The Tbn. 3 part starts with a bass clef and a key signature of two flats, mirroring the Bari part with similar slurs and 'z derivative?' markings. The Bass part starts with a bass clef and a key signature of two flats, mirroring the Cl. part with similar slurs and 'z derivative?' markings. There is also a 'w' marking above the Cl. part and 'Saxes' written below the Bari part.

Ellington's motivic treatment within the episodes and transitions falls into one of four categories, and below I examine an example of each type. All the episodes fall into Type 1 or Type 2 areas. Type 1 episodes consist of fragmented riff deployment, where Ellington overlays themes and motives from other sections into a dense texture. In the lone Type 2 episode, Ellington adds chordal insertions to the motivic and developmental nature of Type 1. With one exception, all the transitions fall into Type 3 or Type 4 categories. In the former, motivic development leads into a chordal passage, while in the latter Ellington reverses the sequence.

Type 1 areas, marked by fragmented riff deployment, characterizes the episodes at **D**, **C'** and **I**, as well as the "Charge" vamp of **E**. A short score to Episode 4 (**J**) is given in Example 1.24 to show how Ellington constructs these developmental episodes. When the episode begins, the saxophones signal a return to the main theme of "Omaha" with motive x but abandon that motive very quickly. The trumpets follow with an altered version of the same riff, and then the trombones enter with motive m . The saxes shift to a modified version of motive w that is an inverted form of what the trombones played in the final section of the first chorus. Then Ellington transforms the fourth motive (x) into a fifth motive (x^{-1}) as the saxes stay stuck on that figure. The trumpets echo the reeds' motive w statement, then draw upon the reed figures from the theme's bridge. Throughout this section, the bass holds a $B\flat$ minor pedal for the first sixteen measures, then walks $D\flat$ major for the next eight. Harmonically, then, this repeated 24-bar section fits the *AAB* scheme of the full choruses in "Omaha." During the developmental episodes, Ellington draws on the choruses' harmonic schemes, but refrains from presenting the full chorus. Furthermore, the layered cycling of several motives frustrates phrase expectations, in contrast to the clear phrasing employed in the choruses.

Example 1.24 (cont'd). Short score to Episode 4 (J), a developmental Type 1 area.

The musical score consists of two systems of staves for Saxophones (Saxes), Trumpets (Tpts), and Trombones (Tbns).
 The first system (measures 230-234) features:
 - Saxophones: A melodic line with a 'bridge rhythm' annotation above measures 230-231. A slur labeled 'x-1' spans measures 232-234. An '8va' marking is present at the end of measure 234.
 - Trumpets: A melodic line with a slur labeled '-x' spanning measures 232-234.
 - Trombones: A melodic line with a slur labeled 'w' spanning measures 232-234.
 The second system (measures 235-237) features:
 - Saxophones: A melodic line starting with a circled '8' and a '(8)' above measure 235. A slur labeled 'y' spans measures 236-237. A '3' is written below measure 237.
 - Trumpets: A chordal accompaniment with the annotation 'bridge to "Omaha"' above measures 236-237.
 - Trombones: A melodic line with a slur spanning measures 236-237.

climbs diatonically to set up the following episode, leaving the end of this formal area with a transitional feel. The musician’s parts seem to reflect this shift in function, as the fourteen-bar segment is split into an eight-measure and a six-measure phrase. The first eight clearly establishes contrast, while the transitional six measures create a larger section through rhythmic continuity with the preceding figures.

The end of Episode 1 sets up Episode 2 (E), the only Type 2 segment in *The Tattooed Bride*. As in other episodes, the harmonic scheme of the chorus guides the material: at the beginning of the episode a clarinet obliquely references the theme and the saxophones begin to play through the chorus changes. The brass entries in the eighth bar of this false-chorus derail the proceedings, and the band eventually arrives at an augmentation of the F7-E7-E \flat passage that marks the first three measures of the chorus. Notably, this augmentation bridges the rehearsal mark that divides these measures into twelve-bar units. Ellington also develops an isolated

Example 1.25. Episode 2 (E) of *The Tattooed Bride*, the one Type 2 episode of the piece. DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

a) isolated rhythmic motive Ellington develops during the episode



b) chordal insertion at mm. 91-92, marking the episode as a Type 2 area

rhythmic motive throughout this episode (Ex. 1.25a); the cell figures prominently throughout this 24-measure formal area but appears nowhere else in the piece. What makes this episode a Type 2 formal area arrives in measures 91-92, when the band unexpectedly converges on tutti chords for the first time in the piece (Ex. 1.25b). The chordal texture dissolves in the ensuing measures, as the band fractures into the motivic gestures discussed above in Example 1.20. Chordal convergences define Type 3 and Type 4 formal areas, but Episode 2 remains distinct because this chordal passage is nested in the middle of an otherwise developmental episode.

The remaining area types refer to transitions that, like Episode 2, feature marked chordal passages. Unlike Type 2 areas, however, these chordal passages occur either at the beginning or end of the section, which enhances their function as transitions. Type 3 areas begin with motivic figures and then converge into a chordal texture. The transitions at **H** and **K** fit this mold. In the former, the reeds begin with a chromatic derivative of motive *m* with altered contour, the trumpets take motive *z*, and the trombones work through a descending tritone (Ex. 1.26). The

Example 1.26. Transition **H**, linking the two choruses of “Omaha” in *The Tattooed Bride*. An example of a Type 3 transition that moves from a motivic focus to a chordal texture. DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

trombones set up reed and trumpet chords in the third measure of the segment, and the reeds continue in block voicings for the rest of the section.⁷⁴ The transition at **K** features the full ensemble for more of the section, with the brass kicking things off with chord punches. The reeds play motives *y* and *m* in response, respectively, before initiating a taut call-response alternation with the brass chords in a composed ritardando. The section ends with gentle saxophone chords under a brief trumpet solo by Shorty Baker, followed a brief piano interlude, all preparing the mood and tempo that initiates the piece’s final part, “Aberdeen.”

Transition **I** is the only instance of a Type 4 area in *The Tattooed Bride* (see Ex. 1.27).

The section opens with four measures of harmony for the reeds, distinct especially because of the

⁷⁴ At one stretch (mm. 215-16) the chordal figures seem to draw on motive *z*, though this does not affect the transitional function of the phrase.

Example 1.27. Transition I, section of “Omaha” in *The Tattooed Bride*, the only instance of a Type 4 transition that moves from a chordal texture to a motivic-based texture. DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

on-the-beat pacing.⁷⁵ After these four measures, the brass enter with syncopated block chords, essentially harmonizing motive *w*. The reeds converge in a unison texture playing a stepwise motive that eventually turns into motive *y*.

The treatment of transition I is actually in keeping with the way Ellington arranged the background figures throughout Brown’s solo in the chorus at G’: during the *A* sections, the brass plays the chordal motive *w* against motive *m* in the reeds, and during the *B* section the reeds harmonize while the brass is tacet. The transition therefore creates strong continuity with the preceding chorus, especially because Brown continues soloing for the first four measures of I.

⁷⁵ Chordal figures occur often in *The Tattooed Bride*, but they are usually syncopated in some way.

The shift to motivic gestures during the last four measures of **I** also prepares the intense motivic fragmentation that follows in **J**.

As mentioned above, all the episodes of the piece fall into the Type 1 or Type 2 category, while most of the transitions fall into Type 3 or Type 4. One Type 1 formal area in the piece breaks from this simple pattern: the “Charge” vamp, labeled **F** on the diagram. Ellington constructs this section by gradually harmonizing motive *w* in the brass (see Ex. 1.28).⁷⁶ The band plays this transition at 212 bpm—a tempo approximately twenty-five-percent faster than the original tempo of “Kitchen Stove,” which was 167 bpm—and carries the new tempo through into “Omaha.” Thus the “Charge” vamp functions primarily as a transition to the new tempo and increased motivic emphasis on motive *w* in “Omaha.”

Example 1.28. The “Charge” vamp (**F**) from *The Tattooed Bride*, the transition from “Kitchen Stove” to “Omaha” that Ellington repurposes as a contrasting episode later in “Omaha.” DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

⁷⁶ Though the section is obviously chordal, I treat it as a motivic-focused Type 1 area because the chords are created by a harmonization of one of the piece’s core motives.

Ellington complicates the formal function of this phrase by repurposing it later in “Omaha.” Most of the repeating formal areas in *The Tattooed Bride* occur in relative proximity to one another, such as the choruses in “Aberdeen,” the repetition of Episode 4 (**J**) in “Omaha,” and the choruses of “Omaha,” which are separated only by the twelve-measure transition **H**. The incomplete second chorus of “Kitchen Stove” stretches the limits of this observation, arriving sixty-eight measures after the first chorus, although the opening of Episode 2 (**E**) also hearkens back to the chorus. The “Charge” vamp, however, returns one-hundred and forty measures after its initial presentation. In its second occurrence, the music no longer functions as a transition to a faster tempo or as a way to emphasize a new motive. Its steady build does imbue it with a preparatory character, but the measures shed their transition function and instead function as a contrasting episode that prepares the final transition of “Omaha” (**K**).

As the preceding discussion has shown, Ellington includes one or more of the piece’s core motives in every section of *The Tattooed Bride*. He weaves these motives into each theme of the composition’s three parts, ensuring that each chorus is motivically integrated. Outside of the choruses, he tends to layer the motives and combine them in ways not explored in the choruses, even as he builds his episodes on some of the same harmonic progressions. Sensitive to the musical function each area has, however, Ellington breaks from motivic repetition in order to provide chordal lead-ins to more stable formal regions. With his approach to motivic development and formal continuity, Ellington responded to his critics in the composition of *The Tattooed Bride*, showing that he was indeed capable of integrating his extended compositions.

Soloists and collaboration

For all the clear compositional control Ellington exerts over the motivic materials, he also allows room for a few of his musicians to provide their own improvised stamp on the composition. In the liner notes to the CD reissue of the album, Patricia Willard reports that Ellington referred to the piece as “a heavy request for Jimmy Hamilton,” whom the leader often described as “our serious musician.”⁷⁷ Hamilton likely earned that moniker by virtue of his virtuosic and precise clarinet technique, and it seems fitting that Ellington features his most studied player on the leader’s most academic composition. In addition to Hamilton, trombonist Lawrence Brown and trumpeter Harold “Shorty” Baker have solos in the composition, although Baker’s is confined to a brief four-measure vamp in the transition to “Aberdeen” (K). Amidst these improvisations, Ellington’s compositional vision for *The Tattooed Bride* still emerges, as his players tap into some of the motivic thinking that drives the piece.

Brown solos throughout the second chorus of “Omaha” (G'). Above the static harmonies that characterize each section, Brown generally employs the main thematic riff for “Omaha” and inflects his primarily diatonic licks with $\flat\hat{5}$, taking another cue from the theme. Example 1.29 shows the first few bars of Brown’s solo. Thus in his solo Brown has his characteristic phrasing and delivery foregrounded while he mines Ellington’s motives for the pitch content.

Example 1.29. Riff references in the first four measures of Brown’s solo. Transcription by David Berger.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Ellington Melody' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Brown'. Both staves are in bass clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The number '175' is written above the first measure of the top staff. The notation shows rhythmic patterns and pitch contours for both parts, with the Brown part featuring a prominent flat fifth (b5) inflection.

⁷⁷ Patricia Willard, liner notes to Duke Ellington & His Orchestra, *Masterpieces by Ellington*.

Example 1.30. Composed melody of “Aberdeen” compared to Hamilton’s solo interpretation. Berger transcription below written melody from DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

289
Ellington Melody
Cl.
3

294
Ellington Melody
Cl.
3

299
Ellington Melody
Cl.
5
3

302
Ellington Melody
Cl.
3

Example 1.31. Motivic references in Hamilton’s up-tempo solo in “Aberdeen.” Berger transcription.

a) start of section C in Chorus 2 (L')

Cl. 357 m m

b) last 3 measures of section A into C in Chorus 3 (L'')

Cl. 386 w w m m

The bulk of the solo responsibilities fall to clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton, who takes a solo over the repeat of Episode 4 (J) in “Omaha” and is featured throughout “Aberdeen.”⁷⁸ With the exception of the first chorus and a half in “Aberdeen,” Hamilton’s playing is all improvised, and although Ellington has provided a clear melody for that first chorus, Hamilton elaborates the melody considerably (see Ex. 1.30). Unlike Brown’s solo, Hamilton’s does not bear strong resemblance to the piece’s themes. In a few choice places during his final solo choruses, Hamilton does explicitly invoke motives *m* and *w*, enhancing the continuity Ellington created throughout the composed passages (Ex. 1.31). Once again, we see the fruits of collaboration in the recorded products of the Duke Ellington Orchestra.

Conclusion by way of the Introduction

One of the hallmarks of the symphonic jazz idiom, according to Howland, is its tendency to include “‘sophisticated’ introductions,” which play into the *symphonic* aspect of the genre.⁷⁹ The 10-measure slow introduction to *The Tattooed Bride* fits such a description, revealing Ellington’s compositional aims and setting a serious tone for the work. The jaunty theme of “Kitchen Stove,” driving riffs of “Omaha,” and climactic swing that closes “Aberdeen” point to the band’s identity as a jazz group, but the introduction lacks these clear markers and possesses a dramatic intensity that sets it apart from the rest of the piece. Ellington deliberately taps into the heightened symphonic mood by the introduction’s slow tempo, layered orchestral presentation of short musical motives, and the gradual build to a dominant sustained by fermata. The introduction appears as a sort of abstract summary of the processes at work throughout the piece.

⁷⁸ Hamilton is also featured as a soloist during Episode 2 (E), but Ellington has composed his melodic lines in this episode.

⁷⁹ Howland, *Ellington Uptown*, 2.

A short score to the ensemble Introduction appears in Example 1.32. The baritone saxophone begins *The Tattooed Bride* with an ominous presentation of motive w , with widening intervals—first a minor second, next a major second, and finally a minor third. The clarinet begins an overlapping motive w statement with an exaggerated contour that includes a minor and major seventh. For the third measure, the clarinet moves to a presentation of motive z , extended with a chromatic passing tone and then, perhaps, an instance of motive x^1 . At a slower pace beneath the clarinet, one trumpet plays a chromatic z variant while the other plays ever-widening ascending intervals (cf. this moment to the baritone sax’s presentation in m. 1). In measure 4, the first trombone plays motive m as a half-step while the other trombones play chromatic z variants. The full trumpet section enters in measure 5, playing a motive w variant in harmony; the top three trumpets also hint at motive x with their leap down and up a fourth. The baritone saxophone’s part in measure 6 does not seem to connect to the rest of the composition beyond the motive w gesture that kicks off the descent through the dominant. Ellington undercuts the tonic arrival in measure 7 by beginning a chromatic descent in the bass and baritone sax as the clarinet and alto play an unpredictable arpeggio through the chord that is elaborated with passing tones and the incomplete upper neighbor to G. The trombones’ pickup into measure 9 resembles motive z with a raised starting pitch. The trumpets play a faster-paced ascent that prepares the final dominant that ends the introduction, an E13(#11). Though not shown in the example, after a few moments Ellington plays a soft, out of time piano arpeggio that eventually materializes into a C7, the dominant to the F7 that starts the theme to “Kitchen Stove.”

Over the slow-moving ii-V-I-V(-V_{sub}) progression in E \flat major that constitutes the introduction, Ellington deploys a variety of materials that recur frequently throughout *The Tattooed Bride*, even though those motives and fragments are not recognizable as themes or

Example 1.32. Slow introduction to *The Tattooed Bride* (A). Ellington incorporates a variety of the piece’s core motives into the introduction, creating an abstract overview of the processes at work through the composition. DEC Series 1, Box 377, Folder 6.

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 1-6) features the following parts and annotations:

- Cl.:** Motives w , z , and x^{-1} are marked above the staff.
- Ten. Sax.:** Rests in measures 1-3, then a melodic line in measures 4-6.
- Bari:** Motive w is marked above the staff.
- Tpts:** Motive z (chromatic) is marked below the staff.
- Tbns Bass:** Motive z (chromatic) is marked below the staff.
- Chords:** $E\flat: ii$ and V are indicated below the staff.

The second system (measures 7-12) features the following parts and annotations:

- Cl. Alto:** Melodic line in measures 7-12.
- Bari:** Melodic line in measures 7-12.
- Tpts:** Motive z (extended) is marked above the staff, with triplets (3) indicated.
- Tbns Bass:** Motive z (altered) is marked above the staff, with triplets (3) indicated.
- Chords:** I , V , and V_{sub} are indicated below the staff.

tunes. The musicians have the introduction to this piece on a separate sheet, titled “Kitchen Stove Intro.” The chronology is difficult to determine, but its existence as a free-standing element of the score suggests that Ellington may have written it with the motivic summary in mind. Perhaps

in Ellington's mind a work structured by motivic continuity and development needed an introduction that announced the abstract musical logic governing its form. When we consider that most criticism about Ellington's longer compositions pointed to formal deficiencies and a lack of development, the motivic and thematic connections that run through *The Tattooed Bride* gain greater weight. These introductory measures proclaim an opening to a concert work, a piece that demands to be taken seriously as art.

1.4 Conclusion

Though considered a stunning artistic achievement today, *Masterpieces by Ellington* did not bring the commercial success Ellington hoped to gain. Part of the problem, at least in Ellington's eyes, was that Columbia failed to market the band's albums. With the long-playing record in its infancy, and especially given the commercial flop Stan Kenton's ambitious concert albums *Innovations in Modern Music* and *City of Glass* had been for Capitol, Columbia's trepidation made sense from a business perspective. Avakian had such success in the popular music division of the label that he was allowed to give Ellington free reign; he recognized at the time that Ellington's album would not be a commercial success, nor could it produce a hit. Ellington's decision to retool three standards into concert arrangements was a shrewd one, as it avoided the untested experimentation present on Kenton's LPs, but the standards did not lure the record-buying public en masse.⁸⁰

Shortly after the *Masterpieces* session, the Ellington Orchestra lost three long-standing members: Johnny Hodges left to form his own band, taking drummer Sonny Greer and trombonist Lawrence Brown with him. Ellington bounced back at the end of March, 1951, luring

⁸⁰ It should be noted that LPs required newer, expensive equipment, and so the market was necessarily limited by the number of households that had purchased new record players.

former Ellingtonian valve trombonist Juan Tizol, alto saxophonist Willie Smith, and drummer Louis Belson from Harry James' band in what became known as "The Great James Robbery." This band would record another LP for Columbia in 1952. *Ellington Uptown* was another bold release in the vein of *Masterpieces by Ellington*, featuring the extended composition *A Tone Parallel to Harlem* as well as longer arrangement of other well-known classics such as "Take the 'A' Train."

Ellington's LPs in the early 1950s were experimental, and the grooves of *Masterpieces by Ellington* tell a story of composition as well as collaboration. In *The Tattooed Bride*, we hear Ellington's demonstrable effort to engage with the aesthetics of classical music, perhaps in response to the criticism his earlier extended compositions had endured. George Dale's liner notes on the album explicitly build on the classical connection, pointing to Gershwin, Respighi, and Stravinsky as models. Dale also suggests that Ellington's treatment of the three tunes has the effect of "broadening their scope as both popular music and as music with recognizable claims to serious attention." Though Dale's notes foreground Ellington, as does the album's title, "Mood Indigo," "Sophisticated Lady," and "Solitude" abound in collaborative moments. Careful listening reveals the ensemble members responding to one another in real-time as well as interacting with a historical repertoire for these three tracks. Billy Strayhorn's immense role in arranging substantial portions of each tune also demands we widen our analytic purview beyond the bandleader. Ellington would come to rely on Strayhorn for arrangements more extensively when the orchestra returned to Columbia in the late 1950s. Chapter 2 examines one of these collaborations, 1959's *Duke Ellington, His Piano and His Orchestra At the Bal Masque*.

Chapter 2: *Duke Ellington, His Piano, And His Orchestra At The Bal Masque*

2.1 Introduction

Ellington left Columbia for Capitol Records in 1953 because the latter label, though smaller, was known for its aggressive promotion and publicity. Other than “Satin Doll,” one of the first sides the band cut for the label, none of Capitol’s promotion returned a hit. Dissatisfied, Ellington parted ways from Capitol in 1955. According to John Fass Morton, Columbia’s George Avakian saw an opportunity to court Ellington back to his former label by linking him with pop singer Rosemary Clooney.¹ In an interview with Morton, Avakian explained,

When I reissued Bessie Smith on four LPs, Rosie wanted to do some of that repertoire in an album. I told her that the incompatibility with her image and voice was too great, whereupon she asked me if I thought Duke would be willing to do an album with her. ‘That I can hear,’ I said, and Duke agreed.²

The resulting album, *Blue Rose*, was the first in a long series of concept albums that Ellington would record for Columbia into the 1960s. An intervening pair of albums for the small independent label Bethlehem Records followed early in 1956, but Avakian and his assistant Irving Townsend successfully drew Ellington into a new contract with Columbia following the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival, where Columbia recorded Ellington’s performance.

¹ John Fass Morton, *Backstory in Blue: Ellington at Newport '56* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 41. Morton dramatizes some of the tension between Avakian, Columbia’s pop album producer, and Mitch Miller, the head of pop singles. Avakian was always a major booster of Ellington’s music, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, but Miller never tried to release any of Ellington’s recordings as a single because it did not fit with his perception of the popular music marketplace. Morton describes Clooney as “the darling of Mitch Miller and his pop singles department,” suggesting Avakian’s carefully plotted political ploy to re-sign Ellington.

² *Ibid.*, 42.

Columbia wanted to use its LP technology to capture full sets at the Newport Jazz Festival, and when it was released, the album *Ellington at Newport* purported to showcase the band's set from the celebrated performance, including Paul Gonsalves' twenty-seven chorus solo between the halves of *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue*. Years later, details surrounding the recording revealed the amount of studio engineering that actually went into the LP's release. In the studio, Avakian rerecorded Ellington's exhortations during Gonsalves' solo and at Ellington's direction recorded and substituted whole passages that Ellington felt the band had underperformed. Avakian also spliced in applause and abridged festival presenter Norman O'Connor's introduction to the band. Many longtime fans of the album felt slighted by Columbia's deliberate misrepresentation of the release, but for this dissertation, the process sheds light on two important facts. First, Columbia's ability to engineer the album shows that technology—specifically magnetic tape—was fundamentally reshaping the possibilities of the recorded product.³ Second, we can learn that Ellington apparently exerted considerable authorial control over the takes and performances used on the final product. Ellington insisted on the additional studio time as a condition of permission for Columbia to record his Newport set, especially because he was worried that his newly-composed *Newport Festival Suite* was under rehearsed.⁴ The band's retouching of the performance in the studio allowed Columbia to release an album that fit the Ellington brand.

Townsend recounted the negotiations of Ellington's new three-year recording contract with Columbia, which were conducted at the time of the band's performance at Newport. Above

³ As another example, the previously mentioned *Blue Rose* collaboration with Rosemary Clooney was recorded in two separate locations, without the performers ever meeting. The Ellington band recorded the instrumental backing in New York and the masters were transported to L.A. where Clooney recorded her vocals. Billy Strayhorn coached Clooney through the arrangements over the phone.

⁴ Morton, *Backstory in Blue*, 108–113.

all, Ellington stipulated that he wanted to record new material, and he described his idea for *A Drum Is A Woman*, an allegorical history of jazz that was produced as an LP in 1956 and later adapted into a television production the following year.⁵ Happily for Ellington, then, his first recording for Columbia under his new contract was a new long-form composition. The following year saw the release of Ellington and Strayhorn's ambitious Shakespearean suite *Such Sweet Thunder*, as well as the romantic mood music of *Ellington Indigos*. Scholars have lauded and admired *Such Sweet Thunder* for its heady, intellectual approach and imaginative adaptation of the hallowed playwright's work. According to Eddie Lambert's detailed study of Ellington's recorded output, *Ellington Indigos* "found little favor among reviewers in the jazz press," due to what Lambert claims is a tendency for reviewers to regard big band ballad collections "as tainted with commercialism." In contrast, Lambert identifies *Ellington Indigos* as "an LP of exceptional music making."⁶ Historian Harvey Cohen, following Lambert's reappraisal of the album, claims that "Ellington once again was creating sophisticated art out of a very commercial setting."⁷

Such Sweet Thunder is typically regarded as one of Ellington's premiere concept albums, but it is worth noting that *Ellington Indigos* also qualifies, even if its structuring concept is less self-consciously intellectual. Later rock and pop concept albums have shaped the category into collections of songs that tell a cohesive story or refer to some extramusical theme, but musical qualities can also provide a unifying concept.⁸ The concept uniting the tracks on *Ellington*

⁵ Irving Townsend, "Ellington in Private," *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1975. Reprinted online at <https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/unbound/jazz/townsend.htm>, accessed 25 November 2015.

⁶ Eddie Lambert, *Duke Ellington: A Listener's Guide* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1999), 196. It is also worth noting that the critical establishment's disdain for Ellington's "commercial" recordings conflicts with Ellington's public admissions that he sought to write and record hit songs.

⁷ Harvey G. Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 337.

⁸ Todd Decker takes a similarly broader view of the concept album, citing recording artists such as Fred Astaire, Ella Fitzgerald, and Rosemary Clooney as early pioneers of the concept album in the 1950s, prior to the explosion of rock concept albums in the 1960s. Todd Decker, "Fancy Meeting You Here: Pioneers of the Concept Album," *Dædalus* 142, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 98–108.

Indigos is the overall approach to timbre, tempo, and track selection, creating a low-key collection of background or easy-listening ballads, rather than the literary parallels that guide *Such Sweet Thunder*. By expanding the definition of concept album, we can even posit *Ellington at Newport* as an example, where the concept is a presentation of the album's tracks as live recordings from a particular event, even if much of the sonic material presented to the listener was recorded in a studio.

In fact, *Ellington Indigos*, and to a lesser extent *Ellington at Newport*, served as predecessors for Duke Ellington's next concept album in 1959: *Duke Ellington, His Piano, & His Orchestra at the Bal Masque*. The concept is simple—Ellington and the orchestra are entertaining guests at the Bal Masque supper club at the Americana Hotel in Miami Beach, Florida. The band spent a week in January 1958 doing exactly that, sharing the bill with a young Tony Bennett. The album is portrayed as a live concert from the venue. Ellington has programmed paired compositions in a symbolic masquerade, supposedly inspired by the masks that decorated the lounge in the hotel. In the liner notes to the LP, producer Irving Townsend names the dancing couples, among them Alice and the Wolf, Satan and an angel, a donkey and a butterfly. He also suggests that some of Ellington's band members are acting as these characters, with Jimmy Hamilton as the butterfly on "Poor Butterfly," Harry Carney as the clown on "Laugh, Clown, Laugh," and Ray Nance and Johnny Hodges acting as gypsies in "Gypsy Love Song" (Table 2.1 presents the personnel for the recording sessions). According to the notes, Ellington changes wardrobe during the intermission (the flip from side A to side B), a further attempt to situate the masquerade in a live concert setting. To enhance the illusion, Townsend fades applause at the beginning and end of every track to simulate a live audience. On many of the tracks, Ellington can be heard shouting directions to the band amid the canned applause, but

Table 2.1. Personnel from the recording sessions for *At the Bal Masque*, Columbia’s 30th Street Studio in New York, on 20 March, 24 March, 26 March, 31 March, 1 April 1958.

Section	Musician	Instrument(s)
Reeds	Bill Graham/Johnny Hodges ⁹	Alto saxophone
	Russell Procope	Alto saxophone; clarinet
	Jimmy Hamilton	Tenor saxophone; clarinet
	Paul Gonsalves	Tenor saxophone
	Harry Carney	Baritone saxophone; bass clarinet
Trumpets	William “Cat” Anderson	Trumpet
	Harold “Shorty” Baker	Trumpet
	Willie Cook	Trumpet
	Ray Nance	Trumpet; violin
	Clark Terry	Trumpet; flugelhorn
Trombones	Quentin Jackson	Trombone
	Britt Woodman	Trombone
	John Sanders	Valve Trombone
Rhythm	Duke Ellington	Piano
	Jimmy Woode	Bass
	Sam Woodyard	Drums

he sounds as if he is shouting the same direction each time, suggesting that Townsend is reusing the same audio clip in between tracks. Of course, the band actually recorded the album over a set of dates in a New York studio, casting the simulated live-ness of the album as an exercise in sonic manipulation.¹⁰

As part of the album’s concept, each track features Ellington as a soloist. Townsend describes this showcase of the bandleader as a marked departure from the orchestra’s modus operandi. While Ellington would frequently set the tempo and call a number from the piano, and on concert dates would often take a solo chorus, the apparent perception of the record-buying

⁹ Johnny Hodges briefly left the band at the beginning of 1958. Bill Graham took over Hodges’ duties as the band traveled, and recorded alto sax on several of the *At the Bal Masque* until Hodges rejoined 1 April 1958. There are discrepancies as to which tracks Hodges actually recorded; in the liner notes, Townsend credits Hodges for the solo on “Alice Blue Gown,” although the track was recorded on 31 March.

¹⁰ Darren Mueller presents an in-depth look at the implications of “live-ness” in his dissertation, especially as it concerns *Ellington at Newport*. Morton’s book also touches on the studio session following the Newport concert. Darren Mueller, “At the Vanguard of Vinyl: A Cultural History of the Long-Playing Record in Jazz” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2015), 105–147; Morton, *Backstory in Blue*, 204–210.

public was that Ellington received little exposure as a performer. “No more,” proclaim Townsend’s liner notes. Columbia evidently felt they had stumbled on a successful marketing angle, since subsequent years saw the release of *Piano in the Background* and *Piano in the Foreground*, two albums that highlighted Ellington as a performer, if in different ways.¹¹ The approach was not unprecedented, however, since *Ellington Indigos* also featured Ellington prominently as a piano player.¹²

The final aspect worth noting is the track list for the album, given in Table 2.2. With the exception of “Satin Doll,” all the tracks on this album are arrangements of preexisting pop tunes from Tin Pan Alley, musicals, and film, with “The Donkey Serenade” from 1937 as the most recent composition. Ellington’s workload for the arrangements was rather light—he contributed arrangements of “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” and “Laugh! Clown! Laugh!” and split duties on “Poor Butterfly” with Billy Strayhorn. Strayhorn penned the majority of the remaining arrangements, but the organization contracted Dick Vance to provide three additional scores. The scope and amusing tone of these arrangements contrasts with the serious, weighty arrangements on *Masterpieces By Ellington* discussed in Chapter 1, and a closer look reveals how the central figures in the Duke Ellington Orchestra thought about their craft.

Scholars rarely discuss Ellington’s arrangements and recordings of preexisting popular tunes, principally because they do not add to the traditional narrative of Ellington as composer.¹³ In a departure from this trend of Ellington scholarship, Andrew Berish looks at two particular

¹¹ Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, *Piano in the Background*, Columbia CS 8346, 1961, 33 1/3 rpm; Duke Ellington, *Piano in the Foreground*, Columbia CS 8829, 1963, 33 1/3 rpm. *Piano in the Background* highlights Ellington’s role in directing his big band from the piano bench, providing introductions and pounding out rhythmic exhortations. *Piano in the Foreground* consists of trio recordings.

¹² Ellington took solos on many of the recordings of the tunes discussed in Chapter 1.

¹³ In addition to the two authors discussed below, extended discussion of Ellington’s arranging techniques can be found in Mark Tucker, *Ellington: The Early Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 140–170, 211–258; Michael S. Brockman, “Orchestration Techniques of Duke Ellington” (D.M.A. diss., University of Washington, 2011), 67–120. Tucker’s examination only focuses on Ellington’s output until the 1930s, and though some of his

Table 2.2. Track list for the album *Duke Ellington, His Piano, & His Orchestra At the Bal Masque*.

Side	#	Title	Credits (from disc label)	Length
A	1	“Alice Blue Gown”	J. McCarthy, Tierney	3:02
	2	“Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?”	F. E. Churchill, Ronell	2:53
	3	“Got a Date with an Angel”	C. Grey, M. Miller, Turnbridge, Waller	2:25
	4	“Poor Butterfly”	J. Golden, Hubbell	3:40
	5	“Satan Takes a Holiday”	Clinton	3:15
	6	“The Peanut Vendor”	Gilbert, Sunshine, Simon	3:33
B	7	Satin Doll	Ellington	3:48
	8	Lady in Red	Dixon, Wrubel	2:49
	9	Indian Love Call	Harbach, Hammerstein II, Friml	3:36
	10	“The Donkey Serenade”	Wright, Forrest, Friml, Stothart	2:14
	11	“Gypsy Love Song”	H. B. Smith, Herbert	3:54
	12	“Laugh, Clown, Laugh”	Lewis, Young, Fiorito	3:02

recordings of Tin Pan Alley songs, one from the 1930s and the other from the 1940s. Berish’s first example, Sam Coslow and Arthur Johnston’s “Cocktails for Two” from 1934, captures a particular moment in the swing era when “sweet” bands were still at the height of their popularity. Consequently, Ellington’s orchestra taps into the sweet tropes to present a low-key and restrained arrangement. The second example Berish considers is Edgar Leslie and Joe Burke’s “At a Dixie Roadside Diner,” recorded by the celebrated Blanton-Webster band in 1940. Unlike the predominantly instrumental tracks that constitute the canon of recordings from the era (pieces such as “Ko-Ko,” “Harlem Airshaft,” “Jack the Bear,” and “Rumpus in Richmond”), “At a Dixie Roadside Diner” features Ivie Anderson on vocals. Berish’s reading juxtaposes the ironic, racially charged critique inherent in a black band’s performance of a song about enjoying

observations hold consistent throughout the composer’s career, Ellington’s writing style also adapted as his ensemble expanded, the personnel in the band changed, and popular styles shifted. Brockman also takes a very limited view of the scope of Ellington’s arranging practices, focusing primarily on original compositions from the 1930s and 1940s; many of the pieces he considers surfaced in different arrangements later in Ellington’s career.

an evening in a Southern diner against the sonic reality that the recording exhibits an “obvious celebration of movement.”¹⁴ Ultimately, Berish’s goal is to expose these Tin Pan Alley recordings not as the forgettable commercial fodder that many Ellington critics make them out to be, but instead as complex cultural products that provide insights into particular historical moments.

Ryan Raul Bañagale also considers Ellington’s arranging practices in his book *Arranging Gershwin*, which tracks various incarnations of *Rhapsody in Blue* throughout the twentieth century.¹⁵ The Ellington band had at least three arrangements of the piece—one a largely undoctored stock arrangement from 1928, another an Ellington-penned arrangement for his band from 1932, and the third an arrangement by Billy Strayhorn recorded for the 1963 album *Will Big Bands Ever Come Back?*¹⁶ All three display some signs of adaptation, as the nine-minute rhapsody is transformed from a symphonic jazz presentation to a more streamlined big band performance.¹⁷ For Bañagale, the manuscripts to the early arrangements point to an otherwise undocumented era of live performance, since the band never recorded those versions and most likely played them on dance engagements. The 1963 recording and the album on which it was released shares a number of qualities with 1959’s *At the Bal Masque*: like the earlier album, *Will Big Bands Ever Come Back?* contains selections from a bygone era, with homage to Ellington’s

¹⁴ Andrew Berish, “Leisure, Love, and Dreams in Depression America: Duke Ellington and Tin Pan Alley Song,” *The Musical Quarterly* 96, no. 3–4 (December 2013): 360. The song’s lyrics described an impossibility for the black performers of the Ellington band because of the realities of Jim Crow segregation throughout the South. The Ellington orchestra avoided possible roadside confrontation in the 1930s during its southern tours by traveling by rail in a private Pullman car.

¹⁵ Ryan Raul Bañagale, *Arranging Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue and the Creation of an American Icon* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 96–118.

¹⁶ Duke Ellington, *Will Big Bands Ever Come Back?* Reprise 6168, 1963, 33 1/3 rpm.

¹⁷ To be sure, symphonic jazz elements still remain. For a more detailed look on Ellington’s debt to the symphonic jazz idiom, see John Howland, “*Ellington Uptown*”: *Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, & the Birth of Concert Jazz* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 143–199. Howland also discusses the form of *Rhapsody in Blue* on pp. 64–69.

contemporaries in the 1930s, all of which would be remembered fondly by the older generation who could now afford to buy these albums to enjoy on their expensive Hi-Fi stereo systems. Even with its similarities in time period and concept to the *At the Bal Masque* arrangements, the 1963 *Rhapsody in Blue* stands out as distinct because its unique formal properties contrast with the verse-chorus forms of Ellington and Strayhorn's arrangements on the 1959 album.

The discussion of *At the Bal Masque* in the rest of the chapter divides into two major parts. In the first part, I look closely at the recording and the manuscripts from the Duke Ellington Collection in order to piece together elements of both Ellington and Strayhorn's arranging processes. I discuss two arrangements by each—"Alice Blue Gown" and "The Donkey Serenade" by Strayhorn, "Laugh, Clown, Laugh" and "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" by Ellington—and a fifth arrangement, "Poor Butterfly," to which they both contributed. My analysis reveals that even though the two musicians were working with a fixed source, they still thought compositionally, adding a "sonic signature" to each arrangement and dressing up the chorus structures in individualized ways. The second part of the chapter steps back to look at collaboration in three ways¹⁸—first through the hiring of Dick Vance as arranger for several tracks on the album, second through the role producer Irving Townsend plays in mediating the experience, and finally through the elaborate "audiotopia" into which Columbia Records, Irving Townsend, and Ellington invite the audience to enter. Maligned by some critics because of its light fare, *At the Bal Masque* provides fertile ground for an examination of Ellington's musical language as well as an understudied set of collaborative efforts that produced the album.

¹⁸ As I note in my introduction, I use "collaboration" in the broadest sense of "working with"; though all these relationships can be construed in different ways (contracted, professional, consumer)

2.2 Arranging as Composition

2.2.1 Crafting Sonic Signatures

The arrangements on *At the Bal Masque* show that although Ellington and Strayhorn are adapting preexisting material for the band, they add subtle compositional touches to distinguish their arrangements from commercially available stocks.¹⁹ The five arrangements discussed in this chapter all feature a small repeated segment of music that acts as a sonic signature for the arrangement, a marker of Ellingtonian originality. The sonic signatures consist of short sections of music that appear multiple times in an arrangement and, even if derived explicitly from the original tune, are marked in some way, whether through sudden shifts in timbre or texture or through subtle rhythmic or melodic adjustments. The practice is reminiscent of the novelty effects used by Don Redman and Kaiser Marshall's cymbal punctuation for Fletcher Henderson's band in the 1920s. Jeffrey Magee points to those elements of the Henderson band as a way to satisfy Redman's quest to create variety within his arrangements.²⁰ Ellington and Strayhorn do not foreground variety to the same degree, but they work to put a unique, identifying stamp on each arrangement. A more contemporary analog might be drawn between the pop records of the 1950s, especially those produced by Mitch Miller. As Albin Zak has shown, Miller attempted to present the listener with something new and novel in each song, a particular gesture or timbre that a listener would only associate with that song.²¹ Again, Ellington

¹⁹ It is possible and perhaps likely that the Ellington arrangers referenced stock arrangements in creating their own arrangements, but I have found no archival evidence suggesting that this was a common practice. There are printed copies of the piano-vocal sheet music to "Gypsy Love Song," "Indian Love Call," and "Laugh, Clown, Laugh" in the Duke Ellington Collection, though these sheets lack any annotations.

²⁰ Jeffrey Magee, *The Uncrowned King of Swing: Fletcher Henderson and Big Band Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 40–71.

²¹ See Albin Zak, *I Don't Sound like Nobody: Remaking Music in 1950s America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 47–54.

and Strayhorn did not pursue such extreme lengths on *At the Bal Masque*, but they did work to add brief snippets of music that were entirely unique to the band's arrangements.²²

The sonic signatures on *At the Bal Masque* do not create thematic continuity across the album's tracks, however, instead reflecting a tendency for Ellington and Strayhorn to add their own little hooks to these preexisting pieces of music. Consequently, each sonic signature has a distinct character. In "Alice Blue Gown," Strayhorn dresses up the tune's harmonic progression with a sudden shift in texture and timbre. Ellington uses a similar group of instruments to create the sonic signature for "Laugh, Clown, Laugh," but his signature is newly composed material. His sonic signature for "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" is also newly composed. For "The Donkey Serenade," Strayhorn shortens the tune's tag, using it as the sonic signature when played by the Ellington band's muted brass. The sonic signature for the final track considered, "Poor Butterfly," relies on an instrumentalist's quasi-programmatic referencing of the title in a passage that frames the tune's choruses. To better understand Ellington and Strayhorn's compositional thinking, I consider each sonic signature in turn.

Strayhorn's arrangement of the first track, "Alice Blue Gown," illustrates the practice of creating sonic signatures. Overall, he creates a rather subdued arrangement for Harry Tierney's 32-bar **ABA'C** form, using primarily a saxophone trio (alto, tenor, and baritone) in a generally unison texture to foreground Ellington's piano statement of the tune's melody. At the endpoints of each eight-measure phrase, Strayhorn breaks the saxophones into harmony and adds two clarinets. The effect of this sudden timbre shift is most pronounced in the **A'** phrase: Strayhorn sets both clarinets high above the saxophones in a four-measure chorale of whole notes that takes

²² The sonic signatures were unique precisely because they were not a part of the familiar tunes.

Example 2.1. Strayhorn, sonic signature for “Alice Blue Gown,” last four measures of the A' phrase. The textural and timbral shift to harmony for saxophones plus clarinets creates a marked moment in the arrangement. DEC Series 1, Box 39, Folder 14.

The musical score consists of two staves: Clarinets (Cls.) and Saxophones (Saxes). The Cls. staff is mostly silent, with a bracketed section labeled 'sonic signature' in the final four measures showing chords. The Saxes staff has a melodic line with a similar 'sonic signature' in the final four measures. Below the Saxes staff, the chord symbols Bb: ii, iii, V, and V/ii are indicated for the final four measures.

up the second half of the phrase, creating a conspicuous sonic signature (Ex. 2.1).²³ Strayhorn couples the pronounced change in texture with directed harmonic motion that elaborates Tierney’s written material. The harmonic motion in the original tune stops on III in measure seven of A', adding the chordal seventh in measure eight that makes it sound as V/vi, but the C phrase begins on a ii⁶ chord. Strayhorn’s chorale connects the two harmonies, resolving III as a secondary dominant to an altered VI that functions as V/ii.

Ellington uses the reed choir with a high clarinet to similar effect in “Laugh, Clown, Laugh,” the album’s closing track. Instead of incorporating the texture into the chorus, he writes an eight-bar tag for the reeds, which substitutes for the final cadential bars in the theme’s eight-measure closing phrase (Ex. 2.2). The new addition appears a total of three times in the arrangement: first following the abbreviated baritone statement of the melody, next following Ellington’s full statement of the tune, and one last time to close the track after Carney’s reprised melody statement. The drums also change noticeably in the tag, as the swung eighth-note ride cymbal gives way to sparse drum hits. This textural shift contributes to it being one of the most sonically marked moments of the arrangement.

²³ Because the chorale in mm. 21-24 is not balanced by a similar chorale in mm. 5-8, I also hear it as a somewhat disorienting gesture given the parallel nature of the A and A' phrases.

Example 2.2. Ellington, sonic signature for “Laugh, Clown, Laugh,” an eight measure tag for saxophones and clarinet. REC, Series 2A, Box 13, Folder 20.

Example 2.3. Ellington, sonic signature for “Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” a syncopated vamp for trombones and baritone (bottom staff) and the rest of the saxes (top staff). DEC Series 1, Box 412, Folder 9.

For “Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” Ellington adds the sonic signature at the opening of the track, following his introductory piano statement of Frank Churchill’s eight-measure tune in $A\flat$. The sonic signature is a vamp for trombones and saxophones (Ex. 2.3). The four-measure figure features syncopated $B\flat$ 2s in the trombones and chord oscillations in the other saxes, a dominant pedal point in the key of the dominant, $E\flat$.²⁴ The vamp continues into the next formal unit, serving as the basis for the **A** phrases of Churchill’s 32-bar **AABA** verse from the tune. The $E\flat$ setting of the verse respects the tonal plan of Churchill’s tune, which includes a modulation to the dominant during the verse.

Unlike the other arrangements discussed here, Strayhorn does not write an original sonic signature for “The Donkey Serenade” but instead derives it from the tune’s oft-repeated tag, originally scored for tin whistle (Ex. 2.4a). For most of the arrangement, Strayhorn only uses the

²⁴ My musical example (Ex. 2.3) follows the manuscript sources in writing the music in $E\flat$, but Ellington’s opening piano statement of the theme is in $A\flat$, the “home key” of the arrangement. The move to $E\flat$ is a modulation to the dominant.

Example 2.4. Strayhorn, sonic signature to “The Donkey Serenade.” DEC Series 1, Box 103, Folder 10.

a) Original tag from published music, for tin whistle.



b) Strayhorn’s tag for muted brass at the end of the intro/outro.



A musical score for four parts: 2 Alto 2 Ten., Bari. Tbns., Tpts., and Tbns. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The Alto and Tenor parts are silent. The Bari. Tbns. part is silent. The Tpts. part plays a complex rhythmic pattern of chords and eighth notes. The Tbns. part plays a similar pattern, including a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure.

c) Strayhorn’s call-and-response tag for reeds and brass at the end of each A section.



A musical score for four parts: 2 Alto Ten., Ten. Bari., Tpts., and Tbns. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The 2 Alto Ten. part plays a complex rhythmic pattern of chords and eighth notes. The Ten. Bari. part plays a similar pattern, including a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. The Tpts. and Tbns. parts are silent.

first measure of the tag. When it appears in the intro and outro in abbreviated form for muted brass, Strayhorn leaves a measure of sparse percussion and bass following each statement, with bassist Jimmy Woode offering an echo during the first repetition of the figure (Ex. 2.4b). The tag also appears at the end of each A phrase, and Strayhorn sets the abbreviated motive as an echo between reeds and muted brass (Ex. 2.4c). The unfinished, halting statements of the sing-song

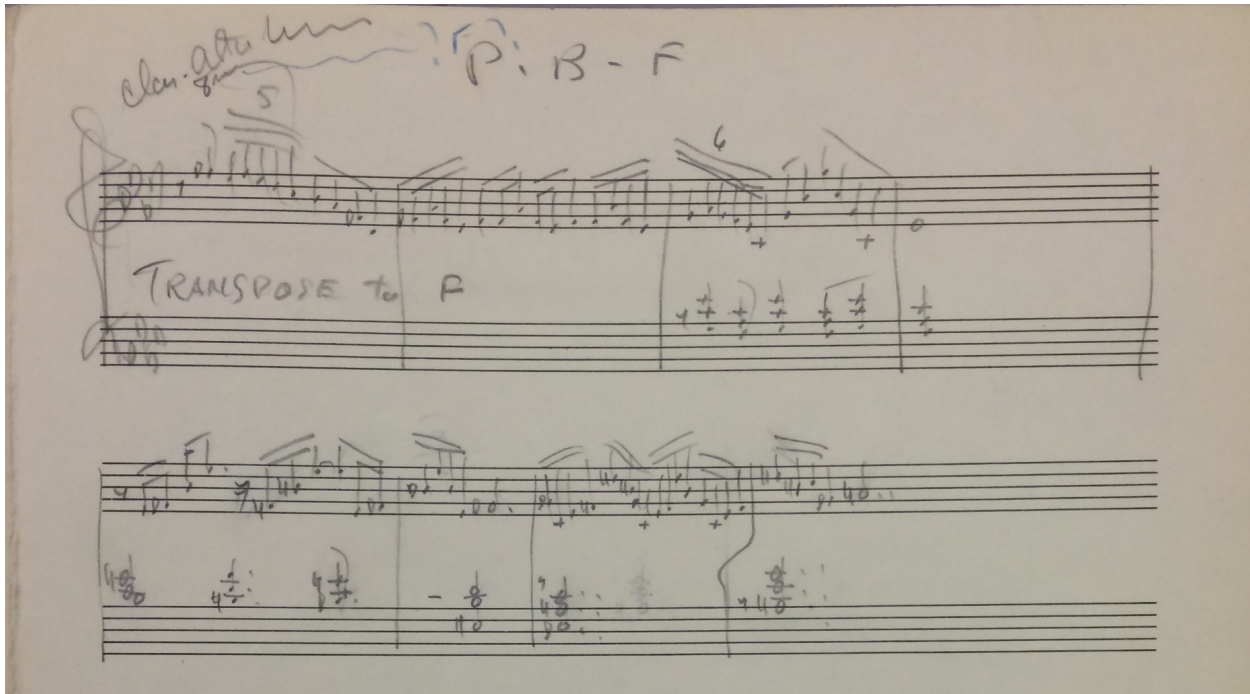
tag from Friml's tune add to the overall humor of this arrangement, which is discussed in detail in the next subsection of the chapter.

Ellington and Strayhorn collaborated on the arrangement to "Poor Butterfly," each supplying one of the two choruses heard on the recording. Their choruses contain no shared material, other than the obvious melodic and harmonic skeleton upon which they are built, so no moment in either chorus stands out as a sonic signature for the arrangement. That said, the introduction to the piece, featuring improvisatory clarinet flourishes with piano accompaniment, also returns as an outro to the arrangement, providing a distinct sonic signature to frame the piece. Townsend's liner notes suggest that Hamilton's ascending and descending runs attempt to create an auditory allusion to the butterfly mentioned in the piece's title.²⁵ Though these passages are improvised and are hallmarks of Hamilton's playing style, the overall contour and germ of the idea is found in a sketch in Ellington's hand for this session (Fig. 2.1), suggesting that Ellington wanted Hamilton's clarinet to supply the sonic signature as a frame for this track. Hamilton's idiomatic musical figures are given additional resonance through the quasi-programmatic association of these gestures.

Even though they are working with old standards meant to be familiar to an audience of a certain age, Ellington and Strayhorn insist on adding something new as a way of stamping their original mark on these tunes. Ellington adds a whole new tag to "Laugh, Clown, Laugh," develops a vamp for "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" that he reused throughout the first 32-

²⁵ In a separate article about Ellington's studio practices, Townsend writes, "He hires individual sounds, and in an album such as *Bal Masque* he demonstrates what he means by making Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet the butterfly in 'Poor Butterfly,' Shorty Baker's trumpet the sadness in 'Willow Weep for Me,' and Johnny Hodges' alto the 'Gypsy Sweetheart.'" Irving Townsend, "When Duke Records," in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 322. Although Townsend penned the original liner notes and made the correspondence between Hamilton and the butterfly there, he evidently felt the gesture was important enough to repeat here. Note also that he misremembers the presence of "Willow Weep for Me" on *At the Bal Masque*; the track actually appeared on 1957's *Ellington Indigos*, for which Townsend also served as producer.

Figure 2.1. Photograph of Ellington’s sketch for “Poor Butterfly” featuring rapid clarinet figuration. DEC, Series 1, Box 276, Folder 4.



bar section of the piece, and guides Hamilton’s butterfly imitations in “Poor Butterfly.” Strayhorn’s signatures are more subtle—a marked chorale two-thirds of the way into the chorus of “Alice Blue Gown” and an abbreviation of the tag to “The Donkey Serenade.” These brief passages all highlight the compositional tendencies of their arrangers, but as we see below, they do not mark the only instances of compositional reimagining taking place on these tracks.

2.2.2 Composing within the Lines

In addition to these sonic signatures, Ellington and Strayhorn’s compositional approach to their craft emerges elsewhere in these arrangements. Given the basic harmonic, melodic, and formal constraints of working with preexisting material, their decisions offer insights into their creative processes. Jeffrey Magee has eloquently stated the significance of arrangement as a creative practice in his work on Fletcher Henderson’s orchestra. In his words, “Like a composer,

an arranger gives an original shape to a piece of music, creating unity and contrast through a variety of musical elements, including melody, harmony, rhythm, form, tempo, texture, and timbre.”²⁶ Because Ellington and Strayhorn *were* composers, this facet of their output has been largely ignored, but arranging should still be recognized as a significant component of their creative expression. In what follows, I revisit the previously discussed arrangements, examining further details of each arrangement for insight into Ellington and Strayhorn’s working practices. My discussion considers the recorded tracks as well as the extant scores and parts for each piece from the Duke Ellington Collection to understand how Ellington and Strayhorn conceived their arrangements.

By the end of “Alice Blue Gown,” Strayhorn has transformed the light swing of the album’s first track into a hard swinging, pseudo-improvisational climax in the vein of classic New Orleans jazz. Johnny Hodges’ climactic solo becomes bolstered by echoing G-A-B \flat ascents from various members of the band, the traded riffs adding to the energy. While perhaps surprising given the character of the opening minutes of the track, the energetic conclusion sets the pace for the next track, Ellington’s hard-swinging arrangement of “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” One of the most interesting aspects of Strayhorn’s outro to “Alice Blue Gown” is its absence from the manuscript sources in the Duke Ellington Collection, suggesting that the climactic, New Orleans-style coda may have been orally arranged in the studio. In fact, although certain musicians in the band consistently annotated their parts to reflect the changes made during rehearsal, none of the performers added indications about the piece’s ending, further supporting the possibility that it was a one-off conclusion.

²⁶ Magee, *The Uncrowned King of Swing*, 40.

Strayhorn's manuscript short score also shows another aspect of his creative process, because the tune appears as part of a medley Strayhorn was writing that incorporated "Greensleeves" and "Lady in Red." The version of "Lady in Red" from this medley also appears as a track on *At the Bal Masque*. We can only speculate as to why Strayhorn was working on this medley, which seems to posit colorful women's garments as its connecting thread. Another piece from the DEC, titled "Les Bitch" and credited to D. Shirley, presents a separate medley of "Greensleeves," "Alice Blue Gown," and "Lady in Red." Its composer was likely Don Shirley, a concert pianist that was affiliated with the Ellington orchestra. We can speculate that Strayhorn and Shirley challenged one another to integrate the three tunes into a single arrangement, but when the band approached the *At the Bal Masque* session the pop tunes were extracted. Because "Alice Blue Gown" led into "Lady in Red" in Strayhorn's medley, "Alice Blue Gown" did not have a written ending, which may account for the riff-trading that ends the studio recording. It also clarifies the subdued nature of Strayhorn's arrangement, since the section was only a part of a larger whole.

By contrast, Strayhorn's vision for "The Donkey Serenade" is clear from his manuscript short score. He adapts Friml's somewhat unconventional **AABCA'** form, bringing the final **A'** into greater alignment with the first two **A** sections than Friml does in the printed sheet music. For the initial **A** phrases, Quentin "Butter" Jackson states the melody on plunger-muted trombone in his upper register amid backing chords from the reeds. Example 2.5 presents the first four measures of the phrase. Strayhorn follows Friml's lead for the ensuing 8-measure **B** phrase. In the film and printed sheet music, this phrase constitutes a dialogue between two of the film's characters, where they exchange statements of the tag motive. With additional instrumentalists at his disposal, Strayhorn cycles through even more instruments—first two

Example 2.5. Strayhorn, “The Donkey Serenade,” first four measures of the **A** phrases. DEC Series 1, Box 103, Folder 10.

The musical score for Example 2.5 shows the first four measures of the A phrase. The Saxophones (Saxes) part is in the bass clef and features a series of chords and melodic fragments. The Trombone (Tbn.) part is also in the bass clef and plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Example 2.6. Strayhorn, “The Donkey Serenade,” first four measures of the final **A'** phrase. DEC Series 1, Box 103, Folder 10.

The musical score for Example 2.6 shows the first four measures of the final A' phrase. It includes parts for Clarinet (Cl.) and Alto (2 Alto) in the treble clef, Tenor Baritone (Ten. Bari.) in the bass clef, and Trombones (Tbns.) in the bass clef. The Clarinet and Alto parts are more active and syncopated, while the Tenor Baritone and Trombones provide harmonic support with sustained notes and chords.

unmuted trumpets, next a tightly muted trumpet paired with clarinet, then Jackson’s wailing trombone, and finally a clarinet solo statement. For the tune’s minor-inflected **C** phrase, Jackson’s muted trombone harmonizes in thirds with Ray Nance’s muted trumpet, backed by saxophone chords with an occasional high clarinet.

For the final **A'** phrase, Strayhorn makes some slight modifications (Ex. 2.6). First, he rewrites the backing reed harmonies to a more active, syncopated rhythmic profile. Second, he gives Jackson liberty to improvise through this phrase. Third, he uses the other two trombones to hint at the melodic skeleton of the tune throughout the phrase, resulting in a slower motivic pace. These subtle changes create more variety within the simple piece, providing contrast with the preceding material while also creating more continuity with the final section of the arrangement.

Strayhorn’s score ends with a ten-measure closing phrase derived from the **A** material. He scores the tune for unison baritone and tenor with a clarinet two octaves higher, which produces a marked and memorable sonority. Muted brass (two trombones and three trumpets)

Example 2.7. Strayhorn, “The Donkey Serenade,” first four measures of the intro/outro. DEC Series 1, Box 103, Folder 10.

replicate the syncopated chord attacks from the reeds during the A' phrase (Ex. 2.7). The rhythm of the background chords and the octave-doubled melodic material create a strong continuity between these last two sections of the arrangement. He ends the piece with a repetition of the abbreviated tag motive for muted brass, sounding the last sonic signature in the tune.

Like most manuscript sources in the Duke Ellington Collection, however, Strayhorn’s score to “The Donkey Serenade” does not match the recorded track exactly. The change is simple yet significant: the band plays Strayhorn’s 10-measure closing phrase as an introduction in addition to its role as conclusion, creating a frame around the bulk of the track. Walter van de Leur has detailed Ellington’s proclivity for reordering Strayhorn’s manuscripts, arguing that Ellington’s modular approach to composition at times violated Strayhorn’s developmental writing style, usually in cases where the reordering was more severe than using an outro also as an intro.²⁷ In the written arrangement, we can see that Strayhorn gradually abstracts the melody over the course of the arrangement. The reordering disrupts the process by placing the octave-spaced saxophone statement at the beginning. Additionally, the syncopated background chords in

²⁷ Walter van de Leur, *Something to Live For: The Music of Billy Strayhorn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 110–13. I should note that there is no evidence that the decision to play the closing material as an introduction was not Strayhorn’s idea, but it is more in keeping with other known instances of discrepancies between manuscript and recording to assume that Ellington called for the change.

A' create less of a shift in the character of the arrangement since listeners hear the rhythms in the introduction. However, bookending the piece with this 10-measure phrase also more concretely establishes the arrangement's sonic signature, sets up Jackson as the featured soloist, and reinforces the muted brass as key characters in the piece. It seems clear that Strayhorn was using the plunger sound in a comedic way for this arrangement, and the increased presence of the brass in the added introduction helps to set up that humor, especially when Jackson's trombone solo begins. Ultimately, the recorded track suggests that developmental listening is not the way to approach the arrangement.

While Strayhorn's manuscripts show a clearly laid out progression of sections, Ellington's scores are scrawled across diverse pages, with passages given shorthand labels for copyists to use as a reference when extracting the parts. Despite its scattered appearance (and despite the childish nature of the tune), Ellington composes out an extensive arrangement for "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" Throughout the **A** phrases of the **AABA** verse, Ellington states Churchill's melody on piano, though he displaces parts of the tune by an octave, creating a stronger sonic link to the tune's refrain. For the contrasting bridge, Ellington arranges the full band into a flashy and slick big band texture, with the trombones stating the melody, the saxes adding leaping background figures, and the trumpets playing rapid-fire block chords (Ex. 2.8). Ellington's arrangement for the brass is particularly intriguing here because the trumpets and trombones vie for the listener's attention—the trombones having the advantage of Churchill's sequential melodic phrase, the trumpets the advantage of a busier and louder texture. While Ellington's writing here employs tropes common to big band jazz, the simultaneous deployment of the riffs—especially when applied to a children's song—creates something surprisingly elaborate, especially for the tune at hand.

Example 2.8. Ellington’s arrangement of the **B** section of Churchill’s verse to “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” DEC Series 1, Box 412, Folder 9.

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each containing three staves: Saxes (top), Tpts. (middle), and Tbns. (bottom). The key signature is two flats (Bb). The time signature is 4/4. The Saxes part begins with a melodic line in the first system, followed by a more active line in the second and third systems. The Tpts. part features a complex rhythmic pattern with many triplets throughout all three systems. The Tbns. part has a steady bass line with some triplets and slurs, providing a solid foundation for the other instruments.

Perhaps most unusually for this piece, Ellington leads the band through a tour of keys.

The opening move from A \flat to E \flat is dictated by Churchill’s original piece. After the verse, Ellington returns to A \flat , and then gives Clark Terry two more A \flat phrases for his flugelhorn solo.

After Terry's solo, Ellington shifts the band abruptly into C major for the start of Paul Gonsalves' tenor saxophone solo. After two phrases in that key, the trombones effect another modulation, up one half-step to D \flat . Gonsalves continues his solo, and the band remains in D \flat for the last shout chorus and cadenza from Gonsalves. The sprawling tonal plan of the arrangement suggests that Ellington sought to milk everything he could from this simple tune in one pass, since it would be unlikely that the band would ever take it up again. His soloists share that vision, developing surprisingly rich improvisations out of the source material, since the characteristics of Churchill's tune—octave descent through arpeggiation followed by repeated leaps of a seventh—provide fertile ground for jazz improvisation.

The last aspect of Ellington's arrangement to "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" I consider is his scoring of the melody statement for saxophone (Ex. 2.9). Throughout the first verse and chorus, Ellington handles the principal melodic duties on the piano. After the conclusion to the **AABA** verse, Ellington scores Churchill's chromatic transition into the refrain for muted brass, which sets up a harmonized melodic statement for four saxophones. Interestingly, Ellington gives the melody to tenor saxophone, the lowest voice in his saxophone voicings, with the baritone riding a second or third above the melody and the two altos providing the rest of the chord. In his manuscript short score, Ellington has actually written the block chords with the melody in the top voice, but then adds an annotation "Paul top 8vb." On paper, these voicings are more identifiable and accessible because they cast the baritone voice as an added sixth or as a third below the bottom alto. The octave displacement of the melody (which puts it below the baritone in most cases) makes the baritone line appear as if it is arbitrarily shadowing the melody at a dissonant interval above. In fact, it is more accurately generated downward from the covering alto voice. Ellington's block harmonization of the tune's melody

Example 2.9. Illustration of Ellington’s arrangement of the melody in “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?”

a) Churchill’s original melody.



b) Sounding voicing in Ellington’s arrangement for saxophones (low to high) tenor, baritone, alto, and alto.



c) Ellington’s written saxophone voicing on the manuscript short score, with directions to transpose melody for tenor down an octave. DEC Series 1, Box 412, Folder 9.



for his saxophone section dresses the piece up in the sleek trappings of big band jazz, but his unorthodox scoring provides the sonic distinction to separate the band's interpretation from other versions.

Ellington uses a similar scoring technique on "Laugh, Clown, Laugh," the last track on the album. The first chorus's **B** phrase features Ellington's unusual saxophone voicing. Once again, Gonsalves takes the top voice, but here he does play in the upper register and fellow tenor saxophonist Jimmy Hamilton doubles an octave below. For the saxophone statement during the **C** phrase, Ellington swaps in a clarinet for one of the tenors and creates wide voicings. The voicings are somewhat atypical of his melodic harmonization schemes for the reeds based on his arrangement of "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" and "Laugh, Clown, Laugh," though he uses open voicings for the tag on the latter track. Ellington scores the second chorus of "Laugh, Clown, Laugh" as a tutti passage (leaving out Hamilton). Ellington's primary departures from the written model are some interesting rhythmic adjustments to provide additional novelty.

A key difference between the two Strayhorn arrangements and the two Ellington arrangements examined in this chapter are the ways the two composers utilized the ensemble. For his two arrangements, and "Laugh, Clown, Laugh" in particular, Ellington gives each section a distinct role and plays the sections off of one another. Given Ellington's reputation as a master of cross-scoring who relishes unusual instrumental combinations, it is surprising that we find no such combinations here.²⁸ In "Alice Blue Gown," Strayhorn concentrates on a small subset of the ensemble. His approach in "The Donkey Serenade" most closely resembles that of Ellington in its sectional assignment of roles, but Strayhorn also creates unique instrumental pairings.

²⁸ Michael Brockman notes this gap in Ellington's reputation and practice, although as mentioned in n. 5, he bases his conclusions on Ellington's original compositions from the 1930s and 1940s. See Brockman, "Orchestration Techniques of Duke Ellington," 21.

For the shared “Poor Butterfly,” Strayhorn builds on his cross-scoring tendencies from “The Donkey Serenade” while Ellington opts for a sparser, limited orchestration reminiscent of Strayhorn’s score to “Alice Blue Gown.” In his chorus of the arrangement, Strayhorn splits the orchestra into three groups based on instrument type—alto paired with baritone, two muted trumpets, and finally the three trombones. The first four measures of the chorus are given in Example 2.10a. Except for a small number of measures later in the phrase, the groups play octave doublings. Strayhorn staggers their entrances to create gradually shifting, ambient harmonies, a practice I refer to as “emergent harmony.”²⁹ The slow-moving emergent harmonies serve as background to Ray Nance’s solo violin statement of the melody. In keeping with the **ABAC** structure of the chorus, Strayhorn reuses the arrangement of the **A** phrase. For the **B** phrase, he brings in a tenor saxophone, setting the saxophone section in three-part harmony against octave trombone statements (Ex. 2.10b). For the **C** phrase, Strayhorn splits the trombones into widely-voiced three-part harmonies, keeping the alto and baritone set in octaves in a more active counter-melodic phrase (Ex. 2.10c). The octave doubling process returns for the final three bars, as do the trumpets. Though he uses a variety of scoring combinations, Strayhorn achieves a consistent sonority throughout the chorus, principally through the octave-doubled long notes.

Ellington’s chorus simply uses a unison saxophone line in both the first **A** and **B** phrases. His **A** phrase includes development of a background riff figure that adapts to the harmonic moment (Ex. 2.11a). The **B** phrase consists of a repeated riff cell throughout (Ex. 2.11b). His score indicates that the **A** material should repeat, but instead the band drops out and Gonsalves plays through the tune. Ellington finally uses more of the band for the **C** phrase, which starts out

²⁹ For more on emergent harmony, especially as it relates to Ellington’s writing practice, see chapter 3.

Example 2.10. Strayhorn, “Poor Butterfly” arrangement. DEC Series 1, Box 276, Folder 4.

a) First four measures of the **A** phrase.

Musical score for the first four measures of the A phrase. The score is written for four parts: Clarinet (Cl.), Alto/Bassoon (Alto Bari.), Trumpets (Tpts.), and Trombones (Tbns.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The Cl. part features a melodic line with slurs and ties. The Alto Bari. part provides harmonic support with chords. The Tpts. part has a melodic line with slurs. The Tbns. part features a melodic line with slurs and ties.

b) First four measures of the **B** phrase.

Musical score for the first four measures of the B phrase. The score is written for two parts: Saxophones (Saxes) and Trombones (Tbns.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The Saxes part features a melodic line with slurs and ties. The Tbns. part provides harmonic support with chords and a melodic line with slurs.

c) **C** phrase.

Musical score for the C phrase. The score is written for three parts: Alto/Bassoon (Alto Bari.), Trumpets (Tpts.), and Trombones (Tbns.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The Alto Bari. part features a melodic line with slurs and ties. The Tpts. part has a melodic line with slurs. The Tbns. part provides harmonic support with chords and a melodic line with slurs.

with syncopated trombone harmony before he incorporates the saxes and trombones into a chordal chorale to close the chorus (Ex. 2.11c).

Example 2.11. Ellington, “Poor Butterfly” arrangement. DEC Series 1, Box 276, Folder 4.

a) Sax riff for the **A** phrase.



b) Sax riff for the **B** phrase.



c) C phrase (Ellington completes the eight-measure phrase on piano).

Musical notation for Saxophone, Baritone, and Trombone, showing the C phrase. The notation is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of five measures. The Saxophone part has a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a whole note G2 in the second measure, a whole note F2 in the third measure, and a quarter note G2 followed by a quarter rest in the fourth measure. The Baritone part has a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a whole note G2 in the second measure, a whole note F2 in the third measure, and a quarter note G2 followed by a quarter rest in the fourth measure. The Trombone part has a quarter rest in the first measure, followed by a quarter note G2 in the second measure, a quarter note F2 in the third measure, a quarter note G2 in the fourth measure, and a quarter rest in the fifth measure. The piece ends with a double bar line.

The manuscript sources reveal that both composers’ arrangements of the tune were more substantial than the version issued on *At the Bal Masque*. Ellington included a tutti arrangement of the chorus melody in block chords. The harmonies are written on the staff generally reserved for trumpets, but the accompanying note “Ham. Rest” suggest this was scored for the saxes as well in a full band tutti. Ellington’s scattered pages of short score also include the arrangement of his tutti chorus and baritone solo for “Laugh, Clown, Laugh,” strong evidence that this arrangement was being written for the *At the Bal Masque* session. Notably, Ellington’s version is scored in A \flat , but the two sections used (intro with clarinet flourishes and sparse second chorus) have notes for the copyist to transpose into F major, the key in which Strayhorn had written his arrangement.

Example 2.12. Strayhorn, “Poor Butterfly” unused introduction. DEC Series 1, Box 276, Folder 4.

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is for Alto/Bari saxophones, the second for Trumpets (Tpts.), the third for Flugelhorn/Tenor (Flug. Ten.), and the bottom for Trombones (Tbns.). The Alto/Bari part has a rest in the first two measures, then plays a melodic line. The Tpts. part has a rest in the first measure, then plays a sustained note. The Flug. Ten. part has a rest in the first measure, then plays a melodic line. The Tbns. part has a rest in the first measure, then plays a sustained note. The music is in 4/4 time and features a slow-moving arpeggiation.

Strayhorn’s arrangement features an additional nine-measure phrase, similarly scored for octave pairs in staggered attacks. This section features an additional pair in Clark Terry and Paul Gonsalves. Example 2.12 provides the first four measures of this unused section, which ultimately consists of a slow-moving arpeggiation passed throughout the band. The manuscript suggests that Strayhorn intended this to be an introduction, as he even includes the melodic pickup into the refrain (all of which he intended for Hamilton to play on clarinet).

Though Ellington contributed more of the final arrangement, it appears that Strayhorn’s arrangement guided the ultimate tone of the piece. Ellington’s tutti chorus was scrapped, its loud texture too much of a departure from Strayhorn’s atmospheric writing. Ellington’s introduction won out, perhaps because Ellington wanted to capture the fluttery character of the clarinet lines, or because Strayhorn’s introduction was a bit too static. Considering the usual big band practice of varying instrumentation between choruses, it should not surprise us that Ellington and Strayhorn’s separate arrangements work together, since Ellington’s background saxophone riffs provide a low-key foil to Strayhorn’s more active chorus. The merging of the two scores was not flawless, however. An inaudible challenge to this collaboration arises from the manuscript sources, since the copyist who joined the separate arrangements together had trouble first with the transposition of Ellington’s materials and second with mapping Strayhorn’s score onto the

parts. Half of the music copied down on each part was not used at all, since the copyist put down Strayhorn's introduction and then recopied that music instead of the A' phrase. Ellington's chorus appears as a coda, an afterthought on the back of each part.

In considering the archival materials from the Duke Ellington Collection, we get a better sense of how these recordings came about. While manuscripts are usually taken to be the definitive version of a piece, for the Ellington orchestra the manuscripts were simply a means to an end. Arrangements were extracted from larger medleys, written across a variety of separate sheets, and constantly reordered from their written form over the course of a recording session.³⁰ Because of the malleable nature of Ellington's scores, they can only be used as intermediary steps along the way to another temporally fixed source—the recording. Of course, as the numerous versions of “Mood Indigo” discussed in Chapter 1 suggest, a recording was never definitive either, as Ellington was constantly revising his material. In the case of these arrangements, created for a specific session for a specific set of players, the recording realizes these manuscript sources in conclusive ways.³¹

Ellington and Strayhorn were primarily composers, but arranging was an essential component of their work. This close look at five arrangements from *At the Bal Masque* shows how they approach their craft. It is clear from the evidence that they both approached arranging creatively, that is with a view to generate something new in each arrangement. This urge comes across most obviously in the sonic signatures Ellington and Strayhorn stamp onto each track, but

³⁰ Walter van de Leur addresses aspects of the music manuscripts in his work. See Walter van de Leur, “Scores of Scores: Einige Anmerkungen zu Manuskripten der Billy Strayhorn und Duke Ellington Sammlungen in den USA,” in *Duke Ellington und die Folgen* (Darmstadt: Jazz-Institut Darmstadt and Wolke Verlag, 2000), 225–47; Walter van de Leur, “‘People Wrap Their Lunches in Them’: Duke Ellington and His Written Music Manuscripts,” in *Duke Ellington Studies Anthology*, ed. John Howland (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

³¹ For instance, Ellington did revisit “Poor Butterfly” for the album *Edward K. and Francis A.* in 1967, but Billy May provided all the arrangements for that session and he did not build off of the Ellington band's previous version from *At the Bal Masque*. *Francis A. Sinatra and Edward K. Ellington*, Reprise FS 1024, 1968, 33 1/3 rpm.

closer examination of the details in each reveals further compositional tendencies. Above all, both composer/arrangers display a remarkable breadth of writing styles and adaptability. Both could toss off simple unison background riffs to support a melody statement, as Ellington does in “Poor Butterfly” and Strayhorn does in “Alice Blue Gown.” Both could also craft intricate arrangements that utilized each section of the ensemble in different ways, as Ellington does in “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” and Strayhorn in “Poor Butterfly.” Differences also emerge, as Strayhorn tended to build continuity throughout his arrangements, while Ellington thought of each section as a modular, moveable block, and even applied this thinking to smaller units.

2.3 Collaborators

In Chapter 1, I argued that Ellington’s recorded output can be understood as the product of real-time, interactional collaboration among the members of the band. This frame still applies to *At the Bal Masque*, but here I wish to consider three different collaborators: Dick Vance, a trumpeter who played with the band briefly in the early 1950s and was hired to arrange several tracks on the album; Irving Townsend, the Columbia Records producer who worked with the band throughout their Columbia years and provided the liner notes to *At the Bal Masque*; and finally the audience, whose imaginative and simulated engagement with *At the Bal Masque* serves as the final crucial step in realizing the album’s programmatic masquerade. In viewing these subjects’ relationships with *At the Bal Masque* as collaborations (rather than more traditional contractual, producer, or consumer relationships), we gain greater insight into the contexts surrounding the album.

2.3.1 Dick Vance

Born in Mayfield, Kentucky on November 28, 1915,³² Richard Thomas Vance grew up in Cleveland and became a trumpeter after brief study of the violin.³³ He served as lead trumpeter in Fletcher Henderson's band from 1936-1938 before transitioning into Chick Webb's orchestra, where he also served as an arranger.³⁴ After Webb's band dissolved, Vance wrote arrangements for several bands throughout the 1940s, including those of Glen Gray, Cab Calloway, Don Redman, Billy Eckstine, and Harry James. He played trumpet for many of those bands during the period as well.

Vance joined the Ellington orchestra in 1951 and was a member of the trumpet section through the following year, but in the band's recorded output he only appears on the December 7, 1951 recording of *Harlem* that was later issued on *Ellington Uptown*. According to Stanley Dance's liner notes to the Mosaic-issued *The Complete Capitol Recordings of Duke Ellington*, Vance provided a number of arrangements to Ellington during the period, including "Flying Home," "In the Mood," and "Stomping at the Savoy," which had been Webb's big hit, all of which finally appeared on a 12-inch LP titled *Ellington '55*.³⁵ Vance arranged for the Ellington band as early as 1947, however. The Duke Ellington Collection contains a full score for "Singin' in the Rain," with the names of the performers corresponding to the band members present for

³² Some records point to 1914 as his birth year.

³³ Biographical data drawn from Scott Yanow, "Vance, Dick [Richard Thomas]," *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*. *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed November 25, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/J463400>.

³⁴ Vance remained with the band after Webb passed away and Ella Fitzgerald took over as bandleader from 1939-1941.

³⁵ Stanley Dance, liner notes to *The Complete Capitol Recordings of Duke Ellington*, Mosaic MD5-160, 1995; Duke Ellington, *Ellington '55*, Capitol T-521, 1955. During the early 1950s, Ellington's relationship with Strayhorn was somewhat strained. Although Strayhorn appeared as pianist on a number of Capitol sessions and provided some arrangements for the band during this period, it is not surprising to see Vance's names alongside a number of other arrangers including Rick Henderson, Sy Oliver, and Buck Clayton. For more on the tensions between Ellington and Strayhorn, see van de Leur, *Something to Live For: The Music of Billy Strayhorn*, 117-30.

the Columbia Records session on November 14, 1947. This document proves critical in attributing the *At the Bal Masque* arrangements to Vance, since the score shows his handwriting and illustrates the large differences in the way he approached his craft as compared to the Ellington organization's in-house arrangers. My research posits that Vance provided the arrangement to three tracks of *At the Bal Masque*—"The Peanut Vendor," "Got a Date with an Angel," and "Satan Takes a Holiday." My conclusions are based on one existing attribution,³⁶ handwriting comparison, similarities in the layout and scheme of the documents (scores and parts), and financial records.

Vance's manuscript score to "The Peanut Vendor" stands out primarily because it is exactly that—a full score. Unlike Ellington and Strayhorn, who tended to work on standard, portrait-oriented manuscript paper and create short scores on three or four staff lines, Vance uses landscape-oriented ledger paper (King Brand No. 9) and puts each instrument on its own line. Whereas the in-house arrangers would use short-hand that the copyist had to decipher in order to extract the parts (assigning a measure a number or letter, then writing in that letter when the material repeats), Vance relies on conventional notation practices. In-house arrangements, particularly at the hands of Ellington, would be scrawled across a number of different pages and needed to be ordered by the copyist, much like a puzzle (only to be reordered further during rehearsal). By contrast, Vance's score is presented sequentially and continuously. Page numbers are boxed in the upper-right-hand corner of the page. Vance's score also features carefully

³⁶ Other researchers have concluded that Vance arranged Moises Simon's "The Peanut Vendor" for *At the Bal Masque*: a transcription of this arrangement was issued by Jazz at Lincoln Center for the 2000 edition of their annual Essentially Ellington competition, and the printed version securely credits Vance as the arranger. The manuscript sources provide no definitive attribution, however. In a personal email communication with David Berger (26 March 2015), who transcribed the piece for the Essentially Ellington publication, Berger said that he did not remember how the attribution was made, but suggested that it was based on the work of the late Annie Keubler, an archivist who worked on the Duke Ellington Collection for many years. Taking this published attribution as a starting point, we can connect the dots between the various Vance arrangements. Moisés Simons, "The Peanut Vendor," arranged by Dick Vance, transcribed by David Berger (Warner Bros.: Miami, FL, 2000).

indicated dynamic and articulation markings, something rarely if ever encountered in Ellington and Strayhorn scores. Such details were left up to the player to notate if they needed the reminder after they were orally communicated during rehearsals. The handwriting and overall layout of “The Peanut Vendor” matches that of “Singin’ in the Rain,” strongly validating the attribution to Vance.

The score to “Got a Date with an Angel” also closely aligns with the other Vance arrangements. The arrangement is laid out in full score, complete with detailed performance directions and pages numbered in the upper-right-hand corner. The paper used here is different (King Brand No. 35, specifically printed for a big band with standard instrumentation). The handwriting appears to be the same, although there are some interesting discrepancies—on the “Got a Date with an Angel” score, the arrangement uses the abbreviations “TPTS” and “TRBS” for trumpets and trombones, respectively, while on “The Peanut Vendor” Vance uses “Trps.” and “TRPS” for trumpets and “Trbs.” “TRBS” or “Trombs.” for trombones. The variability in the score to “The Peanut Vendor” smooths over some of the concerns with the discrepancies between the separate pieces, especially since all other signs in the arrangement suggest this is the work of one hand. That said, the arrangement for “Got a Date with an Angel” has even more detail, including fully notated drum and bass parts as well as chord symbols for the piano throughout. The arrangement to “The Peanut Vendor” lacks that specificity, although there are moments where it is indicated that the piano is supposed to carry the tune even when the tune is not written out. There are also occasionally instrument markings for drums and bass on the score, but no music is ever provided on those staves. The differences might reflect a difference in function—perhaps “Got a Date with an Angel” was an already-written arrangement that Vance made available to other bands, whereas “The Peanut Vendor” was more quickly thrown together

for Ellington's *At the Bal Masque* sessions specifically. Whatever the case, the two scores do seem to be the work of a single arranger, even if there are questions arising from the few discrepancies that exist between the manuscripts.

Another powerful correspondence between these two arrangements arises in the individual parts found in the Duke Ellington Collection. Both sets of parts have been copied out by the same hand, an unfamiliar one and not one of the usual copyists for the Ellington orchestra. The parts are in a distinct hand from the scores, but the attempt to faithfully capture Vance's articulation and dynamic markings, as well as the lack of any identifying instrumentalists' names also point to someone outside the orchestra. There are mistakes and sloppy spots on the parts—most glaring is the omitted title on the third trumpet part to “The Peanut Vendor,” prompting the player to scrawl “P’Nuts” at the top of his part—all suggesting a hasty extraction. It seems reasonable to assume that Vance, as an established arranger, had a copyist he contracted to extract his scores, explaining the presence of the unfamiliar hand amid the vast collection of Ellington manuscripts.

In fact, this copyist's work also leads to my attribution of Vance as the arranger for “Satan Takes a Holiday” as it appears on *At the Bal Masque*. No score to this piece is found in the Duke Ellington Collection, so we do not have the same ability to compare the other known Vance arrangements with the score for the piece.³⁷ Because the same unfamiliar hand has copied out the parts, it seems reasonable enough to conclude that Vance contracted the same individual to extract his score for “Satan Takes a Holiday.” The parts exhibit the same traits that mark them as an outside source: the parts are all labeled by instrument (not musician name), feature dynamic and articulation marks, and (most unusually) include a notated piano part. Like the

³⁷ I cannot entirely rule out the existence of a score to “Satan Takes a Holiday” in the Duke Ellington Collection, but if so the piece is not properly cataloged and mislabeled.

other Vance arrangements, this arrangement may have been a stock that Vance made available to bands, not necessarily an arrangement specifically for Ellington's band.

The final piece of evidence that links Vance to these *At the Bal Masque* arrangements comes from the financial records in the Duke Ellington Collection. On April 4, April 17, April 25, May 2, and May 8, 1958, Duke Ellington, Inc. issued Dick Vance five checks for one hundred dollars each. The band recorded "Got a Date with an Angel" and "Satan Takes a Holiday" on March 20 and "The Peanut Vendor" on March 24, 1958—these checks could have been characteristically late payments to Vance for supplying the arrangements that the band used during the sessions.³⁸ Admittedly, Ellington often kept musicians on the payroll long after their tenure with the band.³⁹ The sudden appearance of Vance in the organization's check stubs shortly after the *At the Bal Masque* sessions is compelling evidence that Vance supplied the three arrangements discussed here.⁴⁰

Vance's work with the Ellington organization is seldom discussed and not widely known. One of the most striking elements of Vance's arrangements on *At the Bal Masque* is how closely Ellington reproduces them, especially given his tendency to reorder Strayhorn's arrangements and compositions. "Got a Date with an Angel" and "The Peanut Vendor" follow Vance's plan exactly. Only on "Satan Takes a Holiday" does Ellington alter the order: he takes the baritone solo Vance has arranged for the ending moments of the piece and also uses it as an introduction

³⁸ The band finished the *At the Bal Masque* sessions on April 1, 1958. A small group from the band recorded the tracks for the album *The Cosmic Scene* as Duke Ellington's Spacemen on April 2 and 3, and then a session on April 24 was the only session that took place after the checks were issued until the Newport Sessions in late June.

³⁹ The most famous example of this was longtime drummer Sonny Greer, who was paid by the Ellington organization for decades after he left in 1951. Of course, Ellington had a much longer and deeper history with Greer than he did with Vance, since the drummer briefly led Ellington's first band, The Washingtonians, in the 1920s. See Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America*, 356. Cohen admits that there is no documentary evidence in the Smithsonian's Ellington collections, but maintains that several sources confirm the story.

⁴⁰ Note that the Ellington organization issued five checks, which may correspond to the 5 sets of documents accounted for in the Duke Ellington Collection (two scores and three sets of parts).

to the track. Even though this moment is the only true Ellingtonian insertion, the tracks blend well with the rest of the album, precisely because the conceptual conceit is that the band is taking on an identity other than its own. Ellington's image looms so large over the entire album that Eddie Lambert attributes the send up of the Hal Kemp style in "Got a Date with an Angel" to Ellington, when in fact Vance is responsible.⁴¹ Of course, this was precisely the impression that Columbia Records wanted to give, since Ellington's was the name that sold records. But his name was not enough, and so Columbia turned to its producer to provide additional appeal. Now we turn our attention to Irving Townsend, the Columbia employee tasked with selling *At the Bal Masque* to the public.

2.3.2 Irving Townsend

Townsend initially joined Columbia Records as an advertising copywriter, but he convinced George Avakian to let him assist on recording sessions.⁴² By the mid-1950s, Townsend was a producer in his own right, best known perhaps for producing, along with Teo Macero, Miles Davis' landmark 1959 album *Kind of Blue*. During the Ellington band's initial three-year contract with Columbia starting in 1956, Townsend served as the producer for all of Ellington's LPs.⁴³

Ellington includes Irving Townsend in one of the "Dramatis Felidae" sections in his autobiography *Music Is My Mistress*, sections he used to call out and honor important individuals he had worked with and met throughout his career. His prose lacks the effusiveness that

⁴¹ Lambert, *Duke Ellington*, 200.

⁴² Ashley Kahn, *Kind of Blue* (New York, N.Y: Da Capo Press, 2000), 91.

⁴³ Avakian produced *Ellington at Newport*, but Ellington had not signed his contract with Columbia at that point. Interestingly, although Avakian conceived the collaboration with Rosemary Clooney mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, Townsend served as the producer for the album *Blue Rose*.

characterizes many of the other entries in the book, but Townsend's inclusion is notable considering the number of producers with whom Ellington worked as a recording musician. "As an a. and r. man, he is wonderful," Ellington writes. "We are indebted to him for having produced many of our favorite and most satisfactory records."⁴⁴ Besides these remarks, Ellington leaves no further details of their working practices, which comes as no real surprise given the opaque and superficial nature of *Music Is My Mistress*.

Townsend's writings provide more clues as to their relationship. A 1960 essay for *Just Jazz 4* attempted to correct perceptions that Ellington came to the studio unprepared and had to develop everything on the spot.⁴⁵ Townsend acknowledged that Ellington habitually reordered, edited, and modified his compositions as the band recorded them, but he always came with more than enough material for each session. After detailing the idiosyncratic practices of a recording session with the Ellington band, Townsend provided insights into his own role. "Ellington usually leaves the editing, sequence of selections, and all sound problems to me. And he seldom shows any disappointment over a recorded performance after he leaves the studio... Duke is seldom completely satisfied with a record, although he is also not seriously dissatisfied either."⁴⁶ Ellington evidently closely supervised the recording process, but once he was satisfied with the band's performance he trusted Townsend and the engineers to produce a suitable product. According to Townsend, Ellington usually received a preview copy of each album before it was released, but his non-stop touring schedule generally prevented him from listening to the albums in advance of their release.

⁴⁴ Duke Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), 247–48.

⁴⁵ Townsend, "When Duke Records."

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 323.

Elsewhere, Townsend took credit for luring Ellington back to Columbia in a conversation at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival. During the conversation, Ellington stressed, “We have to make new things. Don’t talk to me ’bout no ‘Sophisticated Lady.’” Townsend agreed, and justified his position:

I shared the opinion of Columbia’s Goddard Lieberson that it was a record company’s responsibility to introduce and to preserve new music. My boss had been financing a distinguished series of music by contemporary American composers out of the profits of Mitch Miller’s hits. These hits would also pay for the new music of Ellington...⁴⁷

The commercial success of *Ellington at Newport* would temper Townsend’s position that Ellington’s albums would be financial losses, but most of the bandleader’s releases could not generate the sales numbers of Columbia’s stable of pop singers. Interestingly, this narrative—that revenues from pop sales funded Ellington’s orchestra—has been used to explain some of Ellington’s recordings of Tin Pan Alley tunes. The reality for Ellington’s band, however, was that the royalties from standards such as “Mood Indigo” and “Sophisticated Lady” financed the orchestra during the leaner years.

Despite Ellington’s concern that he would be discouraged from recording new material after signing a new contract, Columbia did not have a strong desire to reissue Ellington’s classics, according to Avakian. In fact, label executives had reservations about the live Newport recording because they did not want another take of “Mood Indigo” or “Take the ‘A’ Train”; as Avakian explained to Ellington, “They’re in the Columbia catalog three times over, plus other catalogs. We’re going to have to have some fresh material.”⁴⁸ Avakian’s remarks precipitated composition of the *Festival Suite* for Newport, and with Townsend in the booth the band soon recorded *A Drum Is A Woman* and *Such Sweet Thunder*. Over the course of the Columbia

⁴⁷ Townsend, “Ellington in Private.”

⁴⁸ Quoted in Morton, *Backstory in Blue*, 69.

recording contract, “fresh” proved to be relative: 1957’s *Ellington Indigos*, for instance, featured new arrangements of “Solitude,” “Mood Indigo,” and “Prelude to a Kiss,” amidst a selection of old, non-Ellington standards. The album evidently sold well enough commercially for Townsend and Ellington to imitate its formula for *At the Bal Masque*.

Because Ellington and Strayhorn composed “Satin Doll” while the band was on contract with Capitol in 1953, the piece was one of the few Ellington standards that Columbia did not already have in their catalog. Its conspicuous absence from their archive likely explains why it was included on the album, considering all the other selections date from the 1930s and earlier. Despite their vintage, the band had never recorded many of the selections chosen for *At the Bal Masque*, even if older manuscripts in the Duke Ellington Collection show that they had been in the band book before. Thus, Townsend was able to build Columbia’s catalog while banking on a segment of the population buying the album with a nostalgic view to the past.

Additional research⁴⁹ could reveal the full extent of Townsend’s contribution to *At the Bal Masque*, but the producer’s presence is conspicuous in two key aspects of the album’s presentation. The first is auditory and critical to the album’s simulated live-ness: the applause inserted at the beginning and end of each track. To modern ears, the applause sound artificial and point to obvious studio manipulation, but it would be unsurprising to learn that contemporaneous listeners could also see through the façade. Rather than view Townsend’s sound effects as a deliberate attempt to trick the listener into believing *At the Bal Masque* was a live recording, we might consider the applause as a form of participation in Ellington’s imaginative masquerade, an invitation to suspend reality and be transported.

⁴⁹ I refer specifically to Sony’s private archive with the session tapes and internal documents. Ashley Kahn was granted access to such materials while researching his 2005 monograph on Miles Davis’ *Kind of Blue*.

The second way Townsend makes his presence known on *At the Bal Masque* is through the liner notes he provides. In some respects, this was a practical choice, because according to former Columbia producer Cal Lampley, “Nobody in those days got a production credit [on the album], but Avakian was smart because he always wrote the liner notes for his, so his name would be on them.”⁵⁰ Like Avakian, Townsend penned his own liner notes as a way of asserting his role as producer, since he was denied a proper credit on the jacket. At the same time, his liner notes advance a particular way of listening and shape the sonic product. The concept of a masquerade complete with dancing couples likely originates with Ellington, but Townsend names Ellington’s vision. Does Townsend take the initiative and assign various instrumentalists roles in this masquerade, or is he merely reporting directions he heard the bandleader give to his musicians at the session? Importantly, Townsend never specifically declares *At the Bal Masque* to be a live recording, though the details he provides certainly suggest it. Note finally that because Townsend never mentions Strayhorn, Ellington’s compositional partner is completely effaced from the album, even though he supplied over half of the charts and very likely appeared in the studio with the band.⁵¹

Ironically, some reissues of *At the Bal Masque* actually erase Townsend’s presence on the album. Several releases remove the applause from the tracks, leaving instead larger gaps of silence.⁵² While more indicative of the studio environment in which the recordings were made, the absence of the applause removes some of the album’s charm. As music consumption embraces digital media, Townsend’s written notes have begun to disappear as well. Streaming

⁵⁰ Quoted in Kahn, *Kind of Blue*, 153.

⁵¹ Strayhorn does not even appear on the disc label. He shares copyright credit for “Satin Doll” alongside Ellington and Johnny Mercer, but the disc label only attributes credit to Ellington.

⁵² Officially sanctioned Columbia reissues in particular omit the applause from the album.

services such as Spotify and Pandora do not license liner notes, cutting off the possibility for Townsend's prose to guide how listeners hear the music.

2.3.3 Audience (and Audiotopia)

The last form of collaboration explored in this chapter expands the meaning of the word even further, considering the social contexts of the album for the members of the audience to whom it was sold. The audience members are consumers first and foremost, but here I consider the role that audience plays in realizing the conceptual framing of *At the Bal Masque*. I focus in particular on the auditory and imagined space created by Townsend's liner notes, the mastering of the album, and the orchestra's overall musical presentation.

At the Bal Masque proposed the impossible—that the Ellington orchestra become something it is not (a supper-club orchestra) while still retaining its identity. A stubborn listener rejects this pretense, insisting that the Ellington band will always sound unique, and in “playing down” to a lower level, the band's output suffers. To a more charitable listener, the band *can* achieve the impossible—the selections are out of character with the usual repertoire, the piano is featured as it might be for a lounge audience, and the arrangements are more subdued, yet each arrangement possesses a trace of the signature Ellington sound. Yes, these conceits are part of a marketing ploy, a way to unite this assortment of recordings under a single theme. But there are also ways in which the complete package of *At the Bal Masque*—music, graphics, liner notes—creates what scholar Josh Kun calls an “audiotopia.” Audiotopia implies “that music functions like a possible utopia for the listener, that music is experienced not only as sound that goes into our ears and vibrates through our bones but as a space that we can enter into, encounter, move

around in, inhabit, be safe in, learn from.”⁵³ In describing music as sonic spaces, Kun approximates philosopher Charles Nussbaum’s account of musical experience in *The Musical Representation: Meaning, Ontology, and Emotion*.⁵⁴ Where Nussbaum accounts for experiences of meaning in instrumental works in the classical tradition, Kun’s focus is exclusively on popular music, specifically the ways our private acts of listening allow us access to our identities, especially racial and national.

Consider the album cover, reproduced in Figure 2.2, and the visual implications of whiteness contrasted with the heavily shadowed, red-lit scene. The lighting washes out the left side of Ellington’s face, and he holds a mask that is lined white inside. He is flanked by two female figures, the one to his right eclipsed by shadows except for the long, white gloves that

Figure 2.2. The album cover of *At the Bal Masque*.



cover her forearms. A separate publicity photo from the shoot reveals both women to be African-American (Fig. 2.3), but the lighting and framing of the album cover obscures this fact, and

⁵³ Josh Kun, *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 2.

⁵⁴ Charles O. Nussbaum, *The Musical Representation: Meaning, Ontology, and Emotion* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2007).

Figure 2.3. Publicity still from the *At the Bal Masque* album cover photo shoot.



Ellington's own blackness is minimized by the darker shadows around him and concentrated lighting on his face. His slight smile suggests that although he holds his mask away from his face, he dons a different sort of disguise for this album.⁵⁵

The polite, supper-club characterization of the Ellington band has its own implications of racial disguise, not only due to the association of white musicians with “sweet” and low-key music in the swing era. There were apparently racial divisions that played into the real-life Bal Masque Supper Club. Townsend recalled, “when they [Ellington’s band] played Miami Beach, they could not stay in the hotel that hired them.”⁵⁶ Aside from the week-long engagement at the Bal Masque Supper Club in the Americana Hotel in January 1958, the band only played one other hotel in Miami Beach, and that was not until 1973, so Townsend is almost certainly referring to discrimination at the Bal Masque gig. The effacing of blackness is a key ploy of this

⁵⁵ Album covers that featured photographs or portraits of Ellington tended to present him stoically or with a friendly, wide smile. The slight smile here most closely resembles his smile on *Duke Ellington Presents...*, a Bethlehem release from 1956 that similarly featured the Ellington band playing older standards. *Duke Ellington Presents...*, Bethlehem BCP-6005, 1956, 33 1/3 rpm.

⁵⁶ Townsend, “Ellington in Private.”

imagined, fantasy performance, just as circumscribing blackness was a part of the Americana Hotel's business.

Once we enter the audiotopia, these visual distinctions break down because the auditory space opens up in such a dynamic way. Townsend's crisply engineered applause, with reverberation added, swells in at the needle drop, locating the listener in the midst of a crowd—and their restrained, polite applause contrast with the boisterous applause on *Jazz at the Philharmonic* records. The high-fidelity, stereo recording further locates the listener spatially, the studio engineered reverb giving shape to the imagined room. Townsend's liner notes do not prescribe how the listener occupies this space, however—does the listener sit at a table in the club, allowing the masquerading performers to pass around her, or does she move through a static group of musicians? Does his living room become a ballroom for him to dance with his partner, the Ellington band a hired group for a private party? Does the listener recognize the musicians as a part of the Ellington band, imagining their individual faces and demeanor, or do they envision an ensemble with different characteristics? The recording affords all of these possibilities and countless others. In this way, the masqueraders are not only the characters that Townsend mentions on the liner notes, but also the listeners who enter into the space—imagined and physical—between the grooves on the album.

In developing his concept of audiotopia, Kun latches onto the multiplicity of experiences each tune presents. “The audiotopia is a musical space of difference, where contradictions and conflicts do not cancel each other out but coexist and live through each other.”⁵⁷ Thus, the Ellington band's masks of a white supper club orchestra exist alongside their real identities as black performers, and the realities of a largely white record-buying public. The band's firsthand

⁵⁷ Kun, *Audiotopia*, 23.

experience of discrimination at the Americana Hotel in Miami Beach—invited to perform but not allowed to stay—may explain a somewhat trivial setlist of older pieces, including a children’s tune and several novelty hits, an ironic distancing, a way of Signifyin(g) on the tired tropes of racial discrimination and white expectations of respectable jazz performance.

The music does not unequivocally suggest a stance of protest or mockery, however. Though skewed humorously, the music works to fulfill its programmatic role as light fare for background music for dancing. Even on the most unusual numbers “The Donkey Serenade,” “Laugh, Clown, Laugh,” and “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?”— the band delivers strong performances. Considering the band took several trips to the studio to record the tracks and worked out all new arrangements for the sessions, the demeanor is not one of consistent rejection. Following Kun, Andrew Berish makes a similar claim about *The Deep South Suite* and “At a Dixie Roadside Diner”: both pieces contain enough intellectual context to label them as acts of protest or irony, but the exuberance of the music belies such a one-dimensional reading.⁵⁸ So too with *At the Bal Masque*, for as firmly as Ellington may be holding his tongue in cheek, the music communicates something of genuine fun and enjoyment.

For this album, the audience ultimately decides. Those committed to narratives of Ellington as a musical genius have scoffed at these arrangements, arguing that they are proof of the ridiculous commercial pressures on the band that interfered with Ellington’s art. Others, like Eddie Lambert, have recognized the commercial necessity yet hear great humor throughout the album, viewing it as a showcase of Ellington’s wit.⁵⁹ Thousands of other listeners likely have bought Townsend’s line and have used the album as a background setting for dinner parties, still

⁵⁸ Andrew S. Berish, *Lonesome Roads and Streets of Dreams: Place, Mobility, and Race in Jazz of the 1930s and '40s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 153–57; Berish, “Leisure, Love, and Dreams in Depression America: Duke Ellington and Tin Pan Alley Song,” 359–62.

⁵⁹ Lambert, *Duke Ellington*, 200.

others have turned their living rooms into memory lane and have retraced the dance steps of their youth. Because of the sound world created on *At the Bal Masque*—the audiotopia—these spaces can exist and collide simultaneously.

2.4 Conclusion

After the weight of *Masterpieces By Ellington*, *At the Bal Masque* provides a pleasant detour into playfulness. Because only one original composition appears on the album, scholars have largely ignored it, and the album's lightness has earned it the disdain of some critics. In this chapter, I have argued that the album deserves closer scrutiny precisely because of these elements. A closer look at the ways Ellington and Strayhorn adapted preexisting material provides insights into the ways they thought about and shaped their own musical compositions. We see that both men composed short sections of music into their arrangements as a sonic signature. We see the variety of approaches each took to arranging, whether it involved excerpting a segment of a curious medley, as was the case with Strayhorn's "Alice Blue Gown," or writing a complete arrangement in one pass, as with his "The Donkey Serenade." We see Ellington closely following the published model for half of the arrangement before detouring into new material in "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" and his cut-and-paste arranging process at work in the combined score to "Poor Butterfly." Ultimately, we see two musicians who can write and arrange music in multiple ways to achieve a variety of effects, sounds, and performances.

The chapter has also explored collaboration through the broadest sense of "working together." For instance, Dick Vance was hired as a professional arranger and produced three arrangements for the *At the Bal Masque* sessions. His work with the orchestra is not well-

documented, and it sheds light on the reality that Ellington and Strayhorn were not always responsible for the arrangements performed by the orchestra. Study of the manuscripts in the Duke Ellington Collection demonstrates that Vance supplied three of the arrangements heard on *At the Bal Masque*. We might view Vance's collaboration as a form of mediation: the familiar Ellington band filtered through a pen of another arranger, albeit one who was familiar with the group.

Townsend also plays the role of mediator, and his role in the production of *At the Bal Masque* challenges simplistic visions of Ellington as auteur of his band's recorded output. Ellington likely approved all the takes during the sessions, but Townsend and his engineers were charged with assembling the recordings into a commercial product. While the music industry tends to minimize and conceal the producer's role on most albums, Townsend's presence emerges sonically on the finished recording through the applause that bookend each track, and his liner notes ensure his credit. The sonic cues work together with the liner notes to create an auditory illusion of live-ness capable of transporting the listener into an imagined space.

For these imagined spaces to have any effect, however, requires something from the audience. An engaged listener can find in the grooves of *At the Bal Masque* an audiotopia, a sonic utopia stripped of realities of race, class, and status.⁶⁰ These highly personal and private traversals through the sonic space do not eliminate their existence in our shared world, however, as the discrimination the Ellington band experienced at the true Bal Masque supper club

⁶⁰ Kun's formulation of audiotopia suggests that in our private listening to music, we construct our own private worlds that do not necessarily correspond to the realities of our everyday life. Of course, especially in 1959, the reality of this album's consumer base (middle-class whites) limits the number of people who could actually participate in the audiotopia of *At the Bal Masque*. I would argue that the possibilities of that audiotopia would be available to anyone who could access the album, while understanding that the access is necessarily limited by the very race, class, and status that the audiotopia allows one to transcend.

illustrates. For some listeners, the audiotopia that emerges from this recording may be a way of navigating these harsher, real-world scenarios.

At the Bal Masque serves as a counter to the focus on original composition, because arrangements of preexisting music were integral to the band's livelihood as well as Ellington's creative process. Instead of dismissing these works as commercial fodder demanded of Ellington by a profit-driven label, I have looked to them for insights on how the orchestra operated and how Ellington and Strayhorn wrote for the band. The remaining chapters of the dissertation return to Ellington's more ambitious compositional projects: Chapter 3 examines three suites released posthumously on the album *The Ellington Suites*, and Chapter 4 considers two multimedia works—Ellington's film score for *Racing World*, an unfinished documentary on the French Impressionist Edgar Degas, and his ballet *The River*—also released posthumously from Ellington's stockpile of recordings. Ellington recorded all of these later works at his own expense without the intent of commercial release, but we should not automatically assume that albums such as *At the Bal Masque* were recorded begrudgingly or with distaste. Ellington's transition to Capitol and back to Columbia demonstrate that Ellington was motivated by commercial success. *At the Bal Masque* above all showcases an experimentation with LP technology, an attempt to create a sonic reality through an imaginative concept, together with hard-swinging, creative, and humorous arrangements.

Chapter 3: *The Ellington Suites*

3.1 Introduction

In 1976, two years after Ellington's death, Norman Granz's Pablo label released an LP titled *The Ellington Suites*, which featured three previously unreleased extended compositions: *The Queen's Suite*, *The Goutelas Suite* and *The UWIS Suite*, all musical tributes to individuals or locations.¹ The first suite on the album, written in gratitude for a warm reception by Queen Elizabeth at a 1958 festival in England, was a particularly cherished revelation, for Ellington often recounted the story of how he wrote, recorded, and pressed only one copy, which he sent to the queen.² Ellington refused to release the suite publicly, but occasionally performed a selection from the six movements live.³ Usually these renditions were solo piano versions of "Le Sucrier Velours" or "Single Petal of a Rose." Although Ellington recorded a stockpile of unreleased material, he seldom touted such recordings as publicly as he did with *The Queen's Suite*. The eventual release of suite likely satisfied a deliberately intrigued fan base.

The Ellington Suites won the 1976 Grammy for Best Performance by a Jazz Orchestra, the first of three posthumous Grammys Ellington would receive.⁴ In the liner notes to a recent CD reissue of the album, Ashley Kahn contextualizes the original release:

In the mid-'70s, rock was in full explosion, pushing music business profits to untold heights and pushing out older styles...All remnants of swing—and even bebop and post-bop—were being drowned out by the amplified sound of fusion jazz and its groove-

¹ Ellington detailed the circumstances of each in his 1973 autobiography *Music Is My Mistress*.

² Ellington collector Steven Lasker has demonstrated that the single pressing of the record is a myth. Lasker brought one copy of the original pressing to the Duke Ellington Music Society's London conference in 2008, and record producer Teo Macero had five copies. He estimated that a total of ten copies had likely been pressed.

³ The Ruth Ellington Collection at the Smithsonian Archives Center contains a photocopy of a UK governmental official's response to a letter by Teo Macero requesting that the Queen make the album public (Ruth Ellington Collection, Series 3, Box 2, Folder 1).

⁴ Ellington received nine Grammys during his lifetime, starting with the three he received in 1959 for the film score for *Anatomy of a Murder*.

directed rhythms... When Ellington's son Mercer started shopping the tapes of these three suites, few were the doors to knock on.⁵

The tapes found a home with Granz's newly-formed Pablo label. Granz worked intermittently with Ellington from 1958 onward, and though their relationship occasionally turned sour, Granz was instrumental in bringing Ellington to Europe on several tours during his final decade.⁶ The previously unreleased recordings span a thirteen year period, with the A-side of the LP from the late 1950s and the B-side from the early 1970s. The two sides of the album have a thematic split as well, with the A-side containing the suite dedicated to Queen Elizabeth and the B-side containing the suites dedicated to particular places.

Like the album itself, this chapter is divided into two main parts, the first dealing with composition and the second with collaboration. The first part of the chapter focuses on *The Queen's Suite*. The suite displays a variety of styles and moods, and because it is regarded as one of his more successful suites it can serve as a representative repository of the techniques and approaches Ellington took toward composition. The chapter functions as a later career case study, revisiting Ellington's approach to familiar musical aspects such as repetition, timbre, and riff-based passages. "Northern Lights," Billy Strayhorn's contribution to the suite, serves as a comparative foil to illustrate the differences between the two composers.

The second part of the chapter considers collaboration, specifically as it applies to the particular locales to which the suites on side B are dedicated. My analysis approaches the music through Ellington's historical encounters with the two places—a restored chateau in the south of France where Ellington was an honored guest in 1966, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison

⁵ Ashley Kahn, liner notes to Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, *The Ellington Suites*, Original Jazz Classics OJC-34614-02, 2013, compact disc.

⁶ Part of the strain in their relationship was due to differences in their stance toward the civil rights movement. Granz, a wealthy white man who used his money and influence to push for desegregation in the jazz scene, faulted Ellington for refusing to be outspoken on behalf of the cause. Ellington stuck with an attitude of racial uplift, making his most outspoken statements in the partially veiled medium of music. See Tad Hershorn, *Norman Granz: The Man Who Used Jazz for Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 105–107.

where the Ellington Orchestra stayed for a week of master classes and concerts in 1972. After treating these historical events and the musical homages to them in turn, I offer a speculative reading of these musical products, with place—and individual’s experiences of place—grounding my interpretation of the music as collaborations with the members of the orchestra.

3.2 Composition in Miniatures

The Ellington Orchestra recorded the six movements of *The Queen’s Suite* at several sessions in April 1958. The six movements took up side A of the original LP and constitute the first six tracks of CD releases (see Table 3.1). The personnel for these sessions (see Table 3.2) is virtually the same as the band that recorded *At the Bal Masque*, discussed in Chapter 2. Previous chapters have discussed Ellington’s compositional style, with Chapter 1 considering how he writes in extended forms and Chapter 2 examining how he adapts and arranges existing music for his band. The present discussion illuminates Ellington’s techniques for shorter original compositions, here bundled into a suite form. Many of Ellington’s later extended works fit into this category, a grouping of shorter pieces with related titles, themes, and (occasionally) musical material. My analysis of *The Queen’s Suite* does not aim to show why this particular work is a masterwork nor claim that it is particularly unique among Ellington’s compositions, but rather aims to show the day-to-day realities of Ellington’s compositional practices.

The approach relies on careful close analysis of even the more straightforward and commonplace elements of the music.⁷ First, I examine Ellington’s strategies for managing repetition, principally as it appears in “Sunset and the Mockingbird.” Because repetition is

⁷ In this regard, I consider the analyses in Gabriel Solis’ book on *Thelonious Monk Quartet featuring John Coltrane at Carnegie Hall* a conceptual predecessor to the analyses in this chapter. Gabriel Solis, *Thelonious Monk Quartet Featuring John Coltrane at Carnegie Hall* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Table 3.1. Track list for the album *The Ellington Suites*.

Side	#	Suite	Track Title	Length
A	1	<i>The Queen's Suite</i>	Sunset and the Mockingbird	3:48
	2		Lightning Bugs and Frogs	2:51
	3		Le Sucrier Velours	2:44
	4		Northern Lights	3:34
	5		The Single Petal of a Rose	4:07
	6		Apes and Peacocks	3:07
B	7	<i>The Goutelas Suite</i>	Fanfare	0:31
	8		Goutelas	1:12
	9		Get-With-Itness	1:56
	10		Something	5:23
	11		Having At It	3:34
	12		Fanfare	0:34
	13	<i>The UWIS Suite</i>	Uwis	7:51
	14		Klop	1:59
	15		Loco Madi	5:53

Table 3.2. Personnel for *The Queen's Suite* recording sessions at Columbia's 30th Street studio in New York on February 25, April 1, and April 14, 1959.

Section	Musician	Instrument(s)
Reeds	Johnny Hodges	Alto saxophone
	Russell Procope	Alto saxophone; clarinet
	Jimmy Hamilton	Tenor saxophone; clarinet
	Paul Gonsalves	Tenor saxophone
	Harry Carney	Baritone saxophone; bass clarinet; clarinet
Trumpets	Clark Terry	Trumpet
	Cat Anderson	Trumpet
	Shorty Baker	Trumpet
	Ray Nance	Trumpet
Trombones	Britt Woodman	Trombone
	John Sanders	Valve trombone
	Quentin Jackson	Trombone
Rhythm	Duke Ellington	Piano
	Jimmy Woode	Bass
	Jimmy Johnson	Drums

critical to most of the movements, these observations apply beyond this particular piece. Next I consider Ellington's treatment of timbre, which vacillates between orchestral blend and what

Olly Wilson calls the “heterogeneous sound ideal.”⁸ “Lightning Bugs and Frogs” serves as the primary example, but again the remarks here pertain to the other movements. Third, I explore the ways Ellington’s piano playing informs his writing by considering “The Single Petal of a Rose,” the fifth movement for solo piano with arco bass, and then “Le Sucrier Velours,” the suite’s third movement. I also consider how Ellington transformed the latter movement from a full band arrangement into a vehicle for the saxophone section, and discuss how he reworked the composition as a solo piano piece after the recording session. Finally, I compare the musical elements of groove, non-standard formal structures, nonfunctional harmonic movement, motivic construction, and riff deployment in the remaining movements of the suite, “Northern Lights” and “Apes and Peacocks.” The former was composed by Strayhorn, the latter by Ellington. The pieces share the elements mentioned above, but each composer utilizes the techniques differently. Overall, the extended discussion of *The Queen’s Suite* provides a sweeping overview of Ellington’s compositional practices, a different perspective from the picture presented by the classic compositions from the 1930s and 1940s that usually serve as examples of his technique.⁹

3.2.1 “Sunset and the Mockingbird”: Composing Repetition

Repetition is crucial to jazz performance. Gabriel Solis, expanding on the work of Ingrid Monson, understands repetition in jazz “as a structural principle at essentially every meaningful level, from the smallest details of musical form, the moment-to-moment sonic events that make

⁸ Olly Wilson, “The Heterogenous Sound Ideal in African-American Music,” in *New Perspectives on Music: Essays in Honor of Eileen Southern*, ed. Josephine Wright and Samuel A Floyd (Warren, Mich.: Harmonie Park Press, 1992), 327–38.

⁹ Ken Rattenbury and Gunther Schuller in particular focus on this earlier repertoire in their discussion of Ellington as composer. Richard Domek has examined an Ellington score from around the same period as *The Queen’s Suite*, though his discussion considers a more integrated large-scale work that also more prominently features contributions from Billy Strayhorn. Ken Rattenbury, *Duke Ellington, Jazz Composer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Richard Domek, “The Late Duke: Ellington’s and Strayhorn’s Music for Anatomy of a Murder Considered,” *Jazz Perspectives* 6, no. 1–2 (2012): 75–121.

up a performance, to the largest order—pieces and styles.”¹⁰ In jazz, repetition governs the underlying beat structure and rhythmic groove, generates the form through a succession of choruses, and even shapes a musician’s experience of a standard tune through frequent performance over his or her career. My analysis of “Sunset and the Mockingbird” examines how Ellington creates variety among several repetitions of the same underlying chord progression. On a smaller scale, it examines how the piece’s main melody is made up of three repetitions of a simple two-measure idea. We see that although “Sunset and the Mockingbird” is made up of few ideas, Ellington avoids direct repetition, often in very subtle ways.

Example 3.1 presents the first eleven measures of the piece, an introduction by the rhythm section that prepares the full band entrance in measure 11. The opening bars divide into two parts: a four measure introduction, with Ellington playing descending fourths above a tonic pedal; and a six-measure theme statement, which elides with the two-chord vamp that begins in measure eleven (in other choruses, Ellington replaces the vamp with two measures of tonic, extending the theme to eight measures). Ellington’s tendency toward varied repetition emerges immediately in the second measure as he repeats the descending fourth figure an octave lower and adds an additional descending fourth to arrive on G3. Measures three and four seem to replicate the preceding measures exactly, but Ellington slightly alters his articulation, lingering a little longer on the C4 in measure 4.

Ellington constructs the main theme rather simply—a pickup tremolo between A \flat and E \flat yields a sustained E \flat , and then a diatonic figure connects back down to A \flat in the second bar, skipping B \flat . After playing this pattern three times, he steps up to a melodic cadence on B \flat . The first measure of the pattern focuses on $\hat{5}$ while the second focuses on $\hat{1}$. To create variety within

¹⁰ Solis, *Thelonious Monk Quartet Featuring John Coltrane at Carnegie Hall*, 8–9. See Ingrid Monson, “Riffs, Repetition, and Theories of Globalization,” *Ethnomusicology* 43, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 31–65.

Example 3.1. Duke Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Sunset and the Mockingbird," introduction. Transcription by David Berger.

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with three staves: Piano, Bass, and Drums.

- System 1 (Measures 1-4):**
 - Piano:** Measures 1-3 feature an 8va trill over a quarter note. Measure 4 has a triplet of eighth notes.
 - Bass:** Measures 1-4 consist of quarter notes.
 - Drums:** Measures 1-4 feature a triangle.
- System 2 (Measures 5-8):**
 - Piano:** Measure 5 starts with a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 6 has a chord change to A0. Measures 7-8 feature triplets of eighth notes.
 - Bass:** Measures 5-8 consist of quarter notes.
 - Drums:** Measures 5-8 feature a triangle.
- System 3 (Measures 9-12):**
 - Piano:** Measure 9 has a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 10 has a chord change to #9. Measure 11 has an 8va trill. Measure 12 has a triplet of eighth notes.
 - Bass:** Measures 9-12 consist of quarter notes.
 - Drums:** Measures 9-12 feature sticks and ride.

this simple dominant and tonic melodic alternation, Ellington harmonizes the basic statement differently each time and supports \hat{I} with a dominant-type chord. The basic root movement that governs the full phrase (I–IV–III–VI–II–V_{SUB}–I) functions logically as a standard jazz chord progression, but the two-measure melodic repetitions and subtle nuances that Ellington adds to these harmonies also invite closer examination of the chord pairs.

The first statement moves from A \flat , the tonic, to a dominant-ninth chord built on D \flat , a “blue IV” chord.¹¹ There is a slight hint of dominant function via tritone substitution as the D \flat 9 resolves into a C chord in measure seven, but the unstable nature of the C $^{\circ}$ 7 undercuts that hearing. Instead, Ellington seems to be using the dominant-quality D \flat chord to destabilize the melody’s A \flat , disrupting the stasis that might come from a strongly supported \hat{I} in the melody.

The two chords in the second statement, III–VI in A \flat , contain alterations that give them colorations of a ii–V progression in B \flat minor: the flatted fifth in the III transforms the harmony from a diatonic minor chord to C $^{\circ}$ 7, and the raised third in the VI generates a dominant harmony instead of a diatonic minor chord. The second modification creates an interesting interaction with the melody, because the A \flat in measure eight becomes a raised ninth (enharmonically, G \sharp) above the F7, creating a dissonant clash with the chord’s third (A \flat) and the lowered ninth (G \flat) that Ellington includes in his piano voicing. Ellington uses the F7 here as both a dominant quality and dominant functioning chord, resolving it directly to B \flat minor.

The third chord pair operates as a ii–V progression in the home key, with Ellington adding a significant alteration in measure 10. Instead of an E \flat 7, Ellington plays an AM7. The root movement bears affinities to the tritone substitution, creating a descending chromatic bass line. A7 and E \flat 7 share the same tritone, but Ellington eliminates the tritone by raising the

¹¹ By “blue IV” I am implying this chord shares something with the dominant-seventh IV chord in a blues progression.

seventh to G \sharp . The move creates even more direct voice-leading from the preceding ii chord, retaining and reinterpreting the D \flat -A \flat fifth as C \sharp -G \sharp while the chord's other fifth (B \flat -F) steps down to A-E. For this pair of measures, the melody's E \flat sits an eleventh atop the ii chord, while the A \flat functions enharmonically as the seventh of the AM7.¹² Despite not being a dominant-quality chord, the AM7 does *function* as a dominant because of its placement within the phrase and the chromatic voice-leading back to A \flat .¹³

With the harmonic progression that underlies “Sunset and the Mockingbird,” Ellington exploits a range of possibilities with dominant harmony: one of the chords is dominant quality but not dominant functioning, one of the chords is dominant functioning but not dominant quality, and one of the chords exhibits both traits. Ellington's harmonic choices add an air of sophistication to the repeated and otherwise simple melody, further enhanced by his decision to cadence the melody on B \flat rather than A \flat as the tonic harmony returns.¹⁴

The four measure vamp that begins in measure 11 gives way to the main part of the form, which Ellington arranges as a 32-bar **AABA** form with two additional **A** sections appended to the end (see Table 3.3). What distinguishes each of these **A** sections is first the soloist's treatment of the melody and second the orchestral backing for those statements. The analysis

¹² Tonally, the AM7 is an enharmonic spelling of B \flat \flat M7, a \flat II chord in the key of A \flat . A \flat is the appropriate spelling for the chord in the key, but in keeping with the enharmonic spelling of the chord in the transcription I refer to A \flat as the enharmonic tone.

¹³ Patricia Julien notes the presence of this altered dominant chord in the music of Wayne Shorter and points to similar observations of this “post-bop commonplace use of such a relation” in Rayburn Wright's analysis of substitute chords employed by Thad Jones. Wright labels such chords “*upper chromatic MA7*.” See Patricia Julien, “The Structural Function of Harmonic Relations in Wayne Shorter's Early Compositions: 1959-1963” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2003), 104; Rayburn Wright, *Inside the Score: A Detailed Analysis of 8 Classic Jazz Ensemble Charts by Sammy Nestico, Thad Jones, and Bob Brookmeyer* (Delevar, New York: Kendor Music, 1982), 57. Ellington's use predates these examples.

¹⁴ Julien identifies non-tonic melodic closure as an acceptable and commonplace occurrence in jazz practice, because “these tones are heard as consonant ‘extensions’ of the tonic triad, rather than active dissonances requiring resolution.” She posits that especially in the post-bop era, melodies frequently end on scale members besides $\hat{1}$. Julien, “The Structural Function of Harmonic Relations in Wayne Shorter's Early Compositions: 1959-1963,” 65–66.

Table 3.3. Form chart for “Sunset and the Mockingbird.” The nested 32-bar song form is boxed in the table.

Section	Length	Musical Features
Introduction (Intro + A ₀ + Vamp 1)	14 (4+6+4)	Rhythm section only for first 10 m.; central phrase contains a statement of the theme (6 m.) elided with a vamp (4 m.); vamp adds chords from saxophones and low brass with clarinet filigree
A ₁	8	Solo piano over saxophone harmony
A ₂	8	Solo clarinet over <i>emergent harmony</i> ; last two measures feature Vamp from Introduction
B	8	Solo piano against saxophone choir, joined by low brass for final three measures
A ₃	8	Climax; solo piano playing melody in octaves with solo clarinet elaboration, full band harmony
A ₄	8	Solo alto sax over <i>emergent harmony</i>
A ₁ '	6	Solo piano over saxophone harmony (as in A ₁); truncated and elided with the Outro
Outro (Vamp 2)	8 (fades out)	Vamp to fade with solo clarinet filigree

considers each in turn, exploring the ways Ellington manages the five repetitions of the **A** section, creating continuity as well as variety.

Example 3.2 shows the pickups and initial theme statement as it appears in each **A** section as well as the introduction (Ex. 3.2a). Ellington slightly varies his rhythmic interpretation of the theme for section A₁ (Ex. 3.2b). He also shifts his chordal accompaniments to arrive a swung eighth earlier than beat three. This subtle rhythmic shift works in tandem with the more active support from the rhythm section to create the swing groove that carries the movement forward. Hamilton’s clarinet line at A₂ (Ex. 3.2c) is much more active than Ellington’s statements, opening with an ascending pentatonic scale and then an arpeggio instead of the tremolo. Hamilton also includes more elaborations, including the blue third in the second Berger transcription.

Example 3.2. Anacrusis and first three measures of each theme statement in “Sunset and the Mockingbird.” Berger transcription.

a) Piano statement, A_0

A₀

b) Piano statement, A_1

A₁

c) Clarinet statement, A_2

A₂

d) Piano statement, A_3

A₃ *8^{va}*

e) Alto saxophone statement, A_4

A₄

f) Piano statement, A_1'

A₁'

measure.¹⁵ In section **A**₃, which follows the bridge, Ellington states the melody in widely spaced octaves with rhythmic exaggerations (Ex. 3.2d). Ellington assigns the theme to Johnny Hodges in section **A**₄, and the saxophonist plays a minimally ornamented version of the melody (Ex. 3.2e). His pickup figure resembles that of Hamilton, but he includes the leading tone in his scalar ascent and adds $\hat{4}$ and $\#4$ as part of his ascent into the initial $E\flat$. Hodges adorns his melodic statement not with a flurry of elaborations, as Hamilton does, but instead with expressive slides, bends, and rubato that add emotional depth to the melody. In section **A**₁' , Ellington repeats the first statement but without chordal accompaniment (Ex. 3.2f). Each time it appears, the theme is clearly recognizable, but the changing instrumentation and varying interpretations of the melody provide something fresh for the listener to grasp.

In addition to providing a variety of solo interpretations of the melody for “Sunset and the Mockingbird,” Ellington also arranges unique instrumental groups for each section.¹⁶ During the **A**₁ statement, he arranges the saxophones in a chordal texture, delayed by an eighth note in each measure. The voice leading is not always consistent—sevenths do not always step down, for instance, but do over most root movements by fifth (the $C^{\flat}7$ to $F7$ being the exception since Ellington writes the seventh resolving up to C^{\flat}). For the final three chords, Ellington uses parallel voice leading, with an alto and tenor saxophone holding the reinterpreted $D\flat-A\flat$ fifth as the other alto and baritone step down chromatically. Ellington avoids wholesale chromatic planing for the $AM7$ to $A\flat M7$ cadence by substituting the ninth for the root of the tonic chord, the ascending half-step countering the descending half-steps while also emphasizing the melody’s similar move.

¹⁵ It should be noted that Hamilton’s $C\flat$ here agrees with the $D\flat$ dominant harmony that arrives in this bar, a melodic elaboration that results from his rhythmic departure from Ellington’s theme.

¹⁶ Some sources also grant Billy Strayhorn a share in the arrangement for “Sunset and the Mockingbird,” though manuscripts I consulted did not verify this attribution.

Example 3.3. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Sunset and the Mockingbird," emergent harmony created by saxophones and trombones during section A_2 . Berger transcription.

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Saxophones and Trombones. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The Saxophones part is written in bass clef and features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in the second measure. The Trombones part is also in bass clef and provides a harmonic accompaniment with sustained chords and some rhythmic movement. The score is a transcription by Berger.

During Hamilton's melodic statement (A_2), Ellington brings in the trombones, which combine with unison saxophones to create composite harmony. Ellington also writes an interesting rhythmic trade-off between the two groups of instruments, as shown in Example 3.3, adding novelty to this repetition. This process of rhythmicizing the chords between instrumental sections produces what I call an *emergent harmony*. Ellington allows brief flashes of sectional identity with the staggered entrances, but the ear naturally groups the streams into a single harmony. In this particular instance of the technique, Ellington includes activity that obscures the emergent harmony. This arranging technique may be a hallmark of big band style in up-tempo numbers, but Ellington's handling of the technique here in a stately ballad seems notable because the sustained notes shift the focus from the rhythms of the attacks to the evolving sonority.

For the climactic chorus (A_3), Ellington adds two trumpets for a full band sound. Carney outlines the harmonic roots on baritone saxophone while the other instruments blend to create fully extended tertian sonorities, including thirteenths on the A_b , D_b7 , and $C^{\circ}7$; flattened-ninths on the $C^{\circ}7$ and $F7$; and the raised ninth on the $F7$. Ellington also creates two melodic focal points during this section: in addition to Ellington's widely-spaced octave statement of the theme (Ex. 3.2d), Hamilton plays fast scalar passages to fill in the gaps of Ellington's phrasing (Ex. 3.4). The introduction of the new melodic voice, especially one so active, contributes to the intensity of the section.

Example 3.4. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Sunset and the Mockingbird," first three measures of Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet line during section A₃. Berger transcription.



Example 3.5. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Sunset and the Mockingbird," emergent harmony created by saxophones and trombones during section A₄. Berger transcription.



During Hodges' solo (A₄), Ellington returns to the saxophone and trombone pairing but reverses the relationship: here the saxophones play in harmony while the trombones play in unison (see Example 3.5). Once again Ellington writes slight rhythmic variation between the two groups, creating moments of sectional identity before the emergent harmony materializes. At the close of the form (A'₁), Ellington includes the first literal repetition, reverting to the original saxophone choir to accompany his final melodic statement. In the repetition, however, the saxophones do not resolve into the final A_b as they had in the opening section, but instead elide into a repetition of the vamp figure that lasts through the track-ending master fade. Though the vamp material repeats, Hamilton's clarinet filigree provides new gloss on the simple progression.

"Sunset and the Mockingbird" is filled with repetition, from the smallest fragments of the melody to the underlying harmonic progression that supports each theme statement. Ellington treats each repetition as an opportunity to do something new with the material, whether he recontextualizes the notes of the melody over new harmonies, assigns a new soloist to offer a unique interpretation of the melody, or provides a varied orchestral palette to support the melody. As shown in Tables 3.4 (p. 170), 3.5 (p. 176), and 3.7 (p. 181), three other movements of *The Queen's Suite* are structured with similar 32-bar song forms, allowing Ellington to utilize these

techniques in other movements as well. The above analysis reveals some of the ways Ellington sought to keep his listeners, musicians, and perhaps himself engaged through repetitions, making subtle variations that reward close attention but do not interfere with casual listening.

3.2.2 “Lightning Bugs and Frogs”: Timbre

The second movement of *The Queen’s Suite* shares many similarities with the first, including the repetitive nature of the main theme and even the general formal outline: an introduction followed by **AABA** song form with additional **A** sections appended (see Table 3.4). While in “Sunset and the Mockingbird” Ellington sought to maintain a regal tone throughout the many repetitions of the theme, in “Lightning Bugs and Frogs” he seems to relish an oscillation between timbral blend and contrast. Because of the way the band fluctuates between these two poles throughout the movement, I use “Lightning Bugs and Frogs” as an example of Ellington’s approach to timbre.

In an influential article, Olly Wilson posits that African-American music exhibits a “heterogenous sound ideal,” where “a kaleidoscopic range of dramatically contrasting qualities of sound (timbre) is sought after.”¹⁷ Big bands, with their distinct instrumental sections, are a manifestation of this ideal. Wilson singles out Ellington’s plunger mute specialists, who create timbral variety within a single instrumental voice, as another salient reflection of the principle. He also points to Ellington’s orchestrations that “created new heterogenous blends, as in *Mood Indigo*.”¹⁸ I wish to unpack and expound upon this formulation because of its relevance to the composition at hand.

¹⁷ Wilson, “The Heterogenous Sound Ideal in African-American Music,” 329.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 337.

Table 3.4. Form chart for “Lightning Bugs and Frogs.” The nested 32-bar song form is boxed in the table.

Section	Length	Musical Features
Introduction	10 (4+4+2)	Solo clarinet (4 m.); clarinet, trombones, and bass clarinet (4 m.); bass with clarinet chirps (2 m.)
A₁	8	Melodic arpeggiation courses through the ensemble over tonic pedal (6 m.); dominant turnaround in m. 7 & 8 highlights the individual colors of the orchestra
A₁	8	"
B	8	Contrasting section featuring clarinet melody over low brass and reed harmony
A₂	8	“Rootless” statement of the theme: bass plucks the melody while the brass quietly articulates the governing harmonies
A₃	8	Call and response between Alto + Tenor and Clarinet (+ wah-wah trombone, first 4 m. only); bass clarinet returns with chord roots
A₁'	8	Reprise of main theme with a gradual ritardando; piece ends with a held dominant from m. 8

Presumably, the “heterogenous blend” refers to Ellington’s tendency to wed disparate instrumental voices into a single texture. In the case of “Mood Indigo,” as discussed in Chapter 1, this heterogenous blend arises from the combination of muted trumpet, muted trombone, and chalumeau clarinet. In addition to the heterogenous blends that Wilson identifies, Ellington deliberately coaxes homogenous sounds from his orchestra as well, even if the sources are heterogenous. An example would be an arpeggiated melodic line that passes through various instruments, blending into a single voice. Ultimately, the homogenous sound is another facet of the kaleidoscopic range of timbres available to Ellington.

The **A** sections of “Lightning Bugs and Frogs” exhibit both homogenous blend and the heterogenous sound ideal in miniature. The eight-measure theme consists of six measures of tonic pedal followed by a two-measure dominant turnaround. The theme itself is an arpeggio that is passed through the ensemble. During the tonic measures, the focus is on sonic blend, unifying

Example 3.6. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Lightning Bugs and Frogs," main theme. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 9.

The image shows a musical score for two bass staves. The top staff has a double bar line. To the left of the bar line, notes are shown with stems and flags, representing individual entrances. To the right, notes are shown with stems and flags, representing a single melodic line. Labels above the staff indicate instrument assignments: Hodges and Procope (altos), Nance (tpt.), Gonsalves (tenor), Woodman (tbn.), Sanders (tbn.), and Carney (bass cl.).

the timbre to present a single D6/9 chord. Example 3.6 condenses the first measure of the theme onto two bass staves. To the left of the double bar, the individual entrances are presented with the full duration of each attack, a clear representation of the accumulating texture during the passage. To the right of the double bar, the same measure is reproduced in a way that shows the melodic contour resulting from those entrances. In the second version, I have indicated the different instrumentalists that articulate each note of the theme, combining the different timbres into a single, homogenous line. Ellington shifts the voicing of the arpeggio throughout the tonic pedal, including chromatically rising inner voices in the fifth and sixth measures, but he preserves the instrumental entrances as the players work to convey a single melodic voice.

For the two measure dominant turnaround, however, Ellington exploits the timbral variety of the individual instruments (Ex. 3.7). He adds two trumpets, spaces the voicing more widely, and shifts the entry pattern. Trombonist Quentin "Butter" Jackson enters with a distinctive "wah-wah" gesture, oscillating between C5 and A4. Hamilton's clarinet, silent for the rest of the A₁ section, enters for quick A5 chirps on the last eighth of each bar. In one sense, the instruments still blend to create a harmony, but the highly altered nature of the dominant chord (A13_b9_b5 in measure seven, tritone substituted for E_b13_#9_b9_b5 in measure eight) ensure that each instrument contributes a distinct part of that whole. The lack of a discernable melody (aside from

Example 3.7. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Lightning Bugs and Frogs," dominant turnaround at the end of section A. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 9.

Jackson's "wah-wah" figure) also encourages a fractured hearing of timbre as opposed to the blended timbre that emerges over the tonic pedal.

Ellington's arrangement of the rest of the piece similarly navigates between timbral blend and contrast. In the bridge (B), Ellington sets Hamilton's clarinet against a backdrop of trombones, bass clarinet, and saxophones. While Hodges and Gonsalves emerge as distinct voices for the first five measures, they blend into the chordal texture of the low instruments in the second half of the bridge. After the bridge, the brass blend into a homogenous texture with gentle, understated chords as Jimmy Woode plays the theme on bass. Lacking Carney's bass notes, section A₂ sounds "rootless"—the chords are clear because the brass simply turn the thematic arpeggio into a simultaneity, but the chords lack a true bass note. The first appended A section (A₃) breaks out into contrasting timbres again, with Hodges and Gonsalves calling in the first half of each bar and Hamilton responding in the second half. Jackson adds plunger-muted commentary during Hamilton's first four responses. Even during the dominant turnaround when

Hamilton almost directly echoes the saxophones, the instruments' timbres provide contrast. The piece concludes by reprising the initial A_1 statement, with the band blending as one for the initial six measures before fragmenting into their individual timbres during the dominant chord.

Drummer Jimmie Johnson adds hits on the bell of his ride during the concluding ritardando, providing another distinct sonic element to the mix.

In *Music Is My Mistress*, Ellington describes the scene that purportedly gave rise to the music of "Lightning Bugs and Frogs":

We came out of Cincinnati late one night, took a road to the east on the South Shore of the Ohio River, and got lost while searching for the country club we were supposed to play. We ran into an area where the sultry moon was half-hidden by the trees it silhouetted. We stopped short, for there in this huge arena, with the trees as a backdrop, were, it seemed, millions of lightning bugs, dancing in the air. It was a perfect ballet setting, and down below in a gully, like an orchestra pit, could be heard the croaking of frogs.

The piece's mood-setting introduction, shown in Example 3.8 is perhaps the best place to locate an analog to Ellington's poetic description and also the most explicit display of timbral contrast. Jimmy Hamilton's punctuated clarinet leaps and dances from $C\#6$ to $A4$ over the first four measures before Harry Carney emits a low, guttural $A2$ on bass clarinet. Hamilton's clarinet flits around for two more measures, overshadowed by the expanding wedge motion from trombonists Britt Woodman and John Sanders. The croaking frogs of the orchestra pit are completed by Quentin Jackson's plunger-muted trombone line, slowly climbing the scale from $A2$ to $D3$ against Carney's bass clarinet counterpoint, an inversion of Hamilton's opening clarinet line. Hamilton adds $A5$ clarinet chirps on the last eighth of the bar to segue into the main theme. The most obvious contrast comes from the extremes of range, but Ellington also pulls individual timbres out of the low instruments, isolating Jackson's trombone from the other two because of the plunger-muted "wah-wah" and allowing Carney's bass clarinet to stand out with its own line.

Example 3.8. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Lightning Bugs and Frogs," **Introduction**. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 9.

In an article commemorating Ellington's silver jubilee in *Downbeat*, Billy Strayhorn explained Ellington's unique approach to sonority and coined an oft-recycled term: "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."¹⁹ Strayhorn refers specifically to Ellington's "on-the-man" writing, but commentators and critics have adopted it to more broadly identify the band's unique timbral traits. Obviously this sound is due to the band's constituent members and Ellington's exploitation of each man's particular

¹⁹ Billy Strayhorn, "The Ellington Effect," in *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 270.

sonic capabilities. “Lightning Bugs and Frogs” provides one example of this approach, highlighting Hamilton’s crisp clarinet delivery, Jackson’s imitation of Joe “Tricky Sam” Nanton with his plunger mute, and Carney’s ability to confidently support the entire band with his held bass notes. These chosen individual voices, however, amount to an ensemble that also could blend into one voice. The recorded performance of “Lightning Bugs and Frogs” owes as much to Ellington’s carefully balanced writing between timbral extremes as it does to the band members’ ability to move seamlessly between those extremes.

3.2.3 “The Single Petal of a Rose” and “Le Sucrier Velours”: Pianism

Strayhorn’s explanation of the Ellington Effect also included the observation that “Ellington plays the piano, but his real instrument is his band.”²⁰ As much as it emphasizes the reality that Ellington’s sonic palette extended past the piano, the statement disguises how significantly the keyboard informed his compositions for his band.²¹ While the piano figures prominently in many of his works, it shapes two movements of *The Queen’s Suite* in ways that merit closer examination. After first considering the fifth movement, “The Single Petal of a Rose,” I move to a discussion of “Le Sucrier Velours,” the third movement of the suite.

The penultimate movement is the most contemplative and intimate piece in *The Queen’s Suite*. Mainly a piano solo, with Jimmy Woode joining midway on *arco* bass, “The Single Petal of a Rose” has lived on as one of Ellington’s most exquisite and personal reflections. The piece is in **AABA** song form, prefaced by a chordal introduction (see Table 3.5). Ellington also

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Some scholars have pointed to this trend, most extensively Ken Rattenbury in his book *Duke Ellington, Jazz Composer*. However, Rattenbury’s book is marred by a limited consideration of Ellington’s compositional output and problematic consideration of race and culture. Rattenbury, *Duke Ellington, Jazz Composer*. For comprehensive critiques of Rattenbury, see Andrew Homzy, “Review of *Duke Ellington: Jazz Composer* by Ken Rattenbury,” *Notes* 48, no. 4 (1992): 1241–46; Scott DeVaux, “Review: *Ellington: The Early Years* by Mark Tucker and *Duke Ellington: Jazz Composer* by Ken Rattenbury,” *The Musical Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (1992): 121–35.

Table 3.5. Form chart for “The Single Petal of a Rose.”

Section	Length	Musical Features
Introduction	4	Dominant preparing B \flat minor
A	\approx 16	Eight-gesture theme in D \flat major
A	\approx 16	"
B	\approx 10	Bridge in B \flat minor, featuring cascading arpeggios
A	\approx 16	
B	\approx 10	
A	\approx 16	
Coda	Freely	Repeated cadence; quartal-voiced D \flat 13#11 arpeggio

includes an additional repetition of the **BA** material, followed by a brief coda. In his study on Ellington as a pianist, Matthew Cooper uses “The Single Petal of a Rose” to demonstrate “Ellington’s way of taking advantage of the entire range of the keyboard to achieve characteristically full sonorities.”²² Ellington pushes and pulls the tempo throughout the piece, rushing some phrases and drawing out others to enhance the music’s expressive effect.

With his free and expressive tempo, Ellington slightly alters the number of beats in each measure, which can yield markedly different results when attempting to render the performance on paper. For instance David Berger’s transcriptions of the piece includes fifty-one beats in the first **A** section and fifty-seven in the second, while Matthew Cooper’s transcription indicates fifty-four in each. A score for the piece in the Ellington collection writes the theme in sixteen measures of cut time, which yields sixty-four quarter notes—substantially more than the transcriptions.

Example 3.9 reproduces the **A** section, adapted from Berger and Cooper’s transcriptions. Instead of measures and time signatures (a main point of difference between the two transcriptions), I have drawn barlines to isolate the individual gestures that constitute the section.

²² Matthew J. Cooper, *Duke Ellington as Pianist: A Study of Styles* (Missoula, Montana: The College Music Society, 2013), 56.

Example 3.9. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "The Single Petal of a Rose," section A.

The musical score is presented in four systems, each labeled 'Pno.' on the left. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The first system starts with a measure number '1' and includes a 'Ped.' marking under the first measure of the bass line. The second system starts with a measure number '3' and includes 'Ped.' markings under the first and second measures of the bass line. The third system starts with a measure number '5' and includes 'Ped.' markings under the first, second, and third measures of the bass line. The fourth system starts with a measure number '7' and includes 'Ped.' markings under the second, third, and fourth measures of the bass line. The right hand of the first system has an '8va' marking above the final chord. The right hand of the fourth system has an '8va' marking above the final chord.

During repeats of the **A** section, Ellington varies the length of the gestures primarily by changing the number of octaves he climbs when repeating the right hand's chords. In general, the odd-numbered gestures are shorter than the even-numbered ones, but the consistent alternation balances the asymmetric subunits into relatively uniform phrases.

The main theme consists of a pedaled, arpeggiated melody in the bass register of the left hand that Ellington punctuates with open voiced triads in the right. Though the right hand chords

consistently sound B \flat minor triads, the clearly established D \flat –A \flat fifth in the bass casts B \flat as a sonorous added sixth rather than the tonic pitch. One can imagine Ellington rolling through the theme in a widely-space left-hand position, matched by a similar wide-voiced simultaneity in his right hand. The theme bears substantial affinities to the theme of “Lightning Bugs and Frogs” (cf. Ex 3.6, p. 171)), and it seems plausible to credit the composer’s pianism with the birth of the latter.

Note also that Ellington creates timbral variety in “The Single Petal of a Rose” through registral contrast, much as he has done in the suite’s second movement. The ascending right-hand chord figures float high above the low register melody. Ellington reserves the starkest contrast for the cadential preparation between the sixth and seventh gestures: he interrupts the ascending bell tenth chords with a low G1 that anticipates the arrival of G $^{\circ}7$. In the eighth gesture, he repeats the \flat VII–I cadence an octave higher, just as he might arrange a phrase echo in another section when writing for his band.

When he moves to the bridge, Ellington provides another gloss on repetition, transposing the theme to the relative minor (Ex 3.10). He answers this statement with a cascading arpeggio (a B \flat m6 chord from D \flat 6 to D \flat 3) that emphasizes the tonal break from A material as well as differentiates the section texturally. In each repeat of the gesture, an inner tenor voice ascends stepwise until arriving on A \flat , which prepares concluding chord statements that rise and fall across the piano. As he repeats the phrase, Ellington subtly adjusts the concluding chord, transforming it from F7 \flat 9 \sharp 9 (as dominant of B \flat minor) to A \flat 13 \flat 9 \sharp 9 by adding B \natural to the voicing. Neither altered dominant has all of its pitches, as it might when arranged for the full band, but we hear Ellington emphasizing the chords’ upper extensions while placing them low in his voicing. The net effect obscures the chords’ functions but provides rich sonorities.

Example 3.10. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "The Single Petal of a Rose," section **B**. Ellington creates a shift in mode, texture, and physical gesture for most of this section.

Jimmy Woode enters on *arco* bass during **B**, doubling the ascending inner voice. Though Ellington exploits a full range of the piano's timbre through his traversal up and down the keyboard, he does not emphasize the unique timbre of the bass once Woode enters. Instead, Woode's bass blends with the piano, functioning as an extension of the pedal that can bring out inner voices. This becomes more apparent during the **A** sections, when Woode sustains a pedal

A \flat , the fifth of the tonic harmony that governs each gesture, until Ellington shifts to G1 in the seventh gesture, which prompts a similar shift in the bass. At the end of the final **A** section, the performers repeat the cadential \flat VII –I progression a third time before closing on a D \flat major chord, which Ellington draws out by slowly adding upper extensions in fourths, producing a D \flat M13(#11).

“The Single Petal of a Rose” is wholly pianistic in its conception. The thematic arpeggiation in the left hand was a gesture Ellington evidently used more than once, and the octave-climbing chords Ellington tacks onto the end of his phrases emerge from the topography of the instrument. Note also how the cascading arpeggios from the **B** sections create a physical contrast in performance—Ellington’s right hand moves right to left instead of the left to right motion engendered by the climbing octave chords. Finally, we have Ellington’s harmonic choices and voicings, notably his extended dominant 13 \flat 9#9 chords with the principal members buried amid the upper extensions, which are placed low in his voicings. Because these muddled but colorful voicings seem to fall easily under his hand at the keyboard, it should come as no surprise to find similarly unusual voicings in his full band compositions.

The third movement of *The Queen’s Suite*, “Le Sucrier Velours,” also displays Ellington’s pianistic approach to composition.²³ Simultaneously, it shows Ellington’s penchant for constant revision, as the piece began as a full band arrangement titled “Do Not Disturb.”

Parts for the band arrangement are found in the Duke Ellington Collection, and it is instructive to review them here for clues as to why the piece was reworked over the years. All

²³ In *Music Is My Mistress*, Ellington gives the title of the piece as “Le Sucrier Velours.” The album replicates this spelling, but all the manuscript sources from the Ellington organization omit the final letter from the title. Either variant of “velour(s)” is acceptable, but I will use the one from the album in my discussion, except when referring to the specific documents where the variant spelling is given.

Table 3.6. Form chart for “Do Not Disturb,” based on the parts in the Duke Ellington Collection. There are some discrepancies between the section lengths between the reed and brass parts, indicated with an asterisk (*) in the table.

Section	Rehearsal	Length	Musical Features
A	A	8	Saxophones in block melodic harmonization, trombone riffs after 3 m. rest
A'	B	8	Saxophones in block melodic harmonization, trombone riff
B	C	8	Written out trumpet solo over reed and trombone harmony
A'	D	8 (+2*)	Saxophones in block melodic harmonization, full brass chords (*brass parts indicate a 2 m. piano interlude follows the 8 m. phrase)
B'	E	8 (+8*)	Saxophones in block melodic harmonization (*brass parts include an additional 8 m. of A material)
A''	F	8	Saxophones in block melodic harmonization; trombone riff; full band brought in for final chord

Table 3.7. Form chart for “Le Sucrier Velours.” Nested 32-bar song form boxed in the table.

Section	Length	Musical Features
Introduction	10	Piano and bass playing through the A section;
A₀ + prep	(8+2)	Ellington adds a two measure preparation for the A theme to return as the drums enter
A	8	Five saxophone choir with bass (two four-measure sub-phrases)
A'	8	Same; alterations to the final three measures
B	8	Four saxophone choir (no bari)
A''	8	Same as A' without the pickup into the bridge
Coda	4	Piano draws out cadential harmony

the parts for “Do Not Disturb” consist of five sections, marked in sequence from *A* to *F*²⁴ (Table 3.6 presents the form for this arrangement; the arrangement of “Le Sucrier Velours” from *The Queen’s Suite* is given in Table 3.7). The reed parts and one of the trombone parts do not have section *B* labeled, perhaps because *A* and *B* comprise the *AA'* sections of an *AA'BA''* form.

Aside from the missing rehearsal *B* sections on these parts, the reeds have each section of the

²⁴ As I describe below, many of the parts do not have a labeled *B* section, so I count five sections (*ACDEF*) as common across all parts.

Example 3.11. Ellington, “Do Not Disturb,” section A. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 8.

A

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Trombone 3, and Bass. The second system includes parts for Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Trombone 3, and Bass. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The first system shows the initial melodic lines for the horns and bass. The second system, starting at measure 5, shows more complex rhythmic patterns and triplets in the trombone parts.

piece as an eight-bar phrase. The brass parts have longer phrases for sections *D* and *E*. Notably, several players have written a modified ordering of the sections on their parts, indicating the sections should be played *A, E, D, C*, with one player following this sequence with section *F*. From these varying sequences and section lengths, we can conclude that Ellington treated the sections of this piece rather malleably and reordered the sections to achieve a specific flow that contrasts with the initial arrangement.

A full band score for section *A* is given in Example 3.11.²⁵ We see that the reeds move in block chords, with alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges carrying the melody. This block homophonic voicing persists through all versions of the piece, suggesting that the voicings were critical to Ellington's conception of the piece. Against the homophonic background, Ellington writes a countermelody in the trombones that fractures into harmony in the final bar. Example 3.12 shows section *D*, where Ellington has fleshed out the texture even more, adding the trumpets to thicken the sonority. The parts for section *D* include a substantial discrepancy, however, as the brass parts all include an indication for a two-measure piano interlude before section *E*, bringing the section to ten total measures, while the reeds only have an eight-measure section *D*. This difference may explain why the brass' chromatic figure in the last bar of the section seems out of place with the saxophones' clear cadence.²⁶

There is one extant recording of "Do Not Disturb" from a 1956 session, two years prior to the recording of "Le Sucrier Velours" for *The Queen's Suite*. The former recording has been released on the first volume of SAJA's series *The Private Collection*, a ten-disc collection of

²⁵ The baritone saxophone part is missing from the DEC.

²⁶ Another discrepancy follows in section *E*: the reeds have the eight-measure bridge statement for this rehearsal mark, while the brass instruments have an eight-measure rest followed by an eight-measure statement of **A** material for the trombones. Section *F* in all parts presents an eight-measure **A** statement with a concluding harmony to end the piece. In short, the brass version is longer, including the two-measure piano interlude between sections *D* and *E* as well as an additional trombone statement of **A** material after the bridge in section *E*. Clearly, Ellington reworked this arrangement several times.

Example 3.12. Ellington, “Do Not Disturb,” section *D*, where Ellington fleshes out the arrangement for the whole band. The brass parts all have an indication for two measures of piano interlude following this section, which is not indicated on any reed part, suggesting these may be separate arrangements. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 8.

D

(cont'd)

previously unreleased material from Ellington’s so-called “stockpile” sessions, recordings he made at his own expense with no intention of commercial release.²⁷ In his liner notes to the album, Stanley Dance fails to mention the correspondence between “Do Not Disturb” and the third movement of *The Queen’s Suite*, but their shared origin is unmistakable.²⁸

²⁷ I discuss the stockpile and *The Private Collection* more extensively in Chapter 4.

Example 3.12 (cont'd). Ellington, “Do Not Disturb,” section *D*.

The image displays a musical score for the section D of Duke Ellington's "Do Not Disturb." The score is arranged in two systems of staves. The first system includes Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, and Tenor 2. The second system includes Tpt. 1, Tpt. 2, Tpt. 3, Tpt. 4, Tbn. 1, Tbn. 2, Tbn. 3, and Bass. The music is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The alto and tenor parts feature melodic lines with various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes. The brass parts (trumpets and trombones) provide harmonic support with block chords and rhythmic patterns. The bass part provides a steady accompaniment.

The personnel at the 1956 session correspond to the names on the parts in the DEC.

However, the arrangement proceeds sequentially through the sections, avoiding the previously mentioned modified sequence written on several parts as well as the variant section lengths indicated in the brass parts. Ellington has largely cut much of the brass work from the arrangement as well. Only section *C*, which presents the tune’s bridge, has any brass parts—a solo for Ray Nance and backing figures for the trombones (Ex. 3.13). It is the only section of the

²⁸ Duke Ellington, *The Private Collection, Volume One: Studio Sessions (Chicago, 1956)*, Saja 91041-2, 1987, CD.

Example 3.13. Alternative chordal harmonization for the bridge of “Le Sucrier Velours,” based on the parts to “Do Not Disturb.” DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 8.

The musical score for Example 3.13 is presented in two systems. The first system includes parts for Trumpet, Altos, Tenors, and Trombones. The Trumpet part carries the melody, while the other parts provide harmonic support. The second system includes parts for Tpt., Altos, Tenors, and Tbn. The Tpt. part continues the melody, while the other parts provide harmonic support. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C).

piece where the reeds do not carry the block harmonization of the melody, as they instead harmonize with the trombones. Perhaps during the rehearsals for the session, Ellington felt the thickened orchestration (illustrated in Examples 3.11 and 3.12) compromised the clarity of the melodic lines, and so he reduced the ensemble to more effectively present the tune.

When the band recorded “Le Sucrier Velours” for *The Queen’s Suite* in 1958, Ellington pared the arrangement even more. He eliminated the brass from the arrangement entirely, letting the reeds carry the full tune with their block voicings. Ellington starts the track with a rendition of the A material on piano with bass, and then the reeds play through the 32-bar tune. Afterwards,

Ellington adds an improvised piano coda (refer to Table 3.7, p. 181, for a formal diagram of “Le Sucrier Velours”). Two scores in the Smithsonian Archives Center shed further light on this arrangement and clarify why Ellington’s piano serves as the guiding factor in this composition.

The first document, from the Ruth Ellington Collection, contains the contrapuntal framework of the piece, prepared by a copyist to serve as the copyright registration. Tellingly, the title “Le Sucrier Velour” is taped over the original “Do Not Disturb,” indicating that the sheet was prepared prior to *The Queen’s Suite* recording, although it was not copyrighted until 1959. Though sufficient to register Ellington’s intellectual property, the counterpoint fails to capture the lush sonority and harmonic implications of Ellington’s piece. Consider the opening **A** section, shown in Example 3.14. The counterpoint sounds hollow and unclear, and the dominant thirteenth chords in mm. 1 and 3 are not effectively conveyed by the sixth between bass and melody. The fifth motions in the bass, while conveying the progression, nonetheless lack the altered extensions critical to “Le Sucrier Velours.”

The second document, a presentation score of “Le Sucrier Velour” from the Duke Ellington collection, rectifies the shortcomings of the contrapuntal outline by showing the full reed choir. The score condenses the altos and tenors on the top staff and presents Carney’s baritone saxophone on a staff by itself—standard practice in the Ellington organization, but one that obscures the fact that the baritone is often not the lowest voice, especially in block settings.²⁹ In this arrangement, the second tenor doubles Hodges’ melodic line while Carney tends to sit a second above the melodic double.³⁰ Example 3.15 presents **A'** from this short score.³¹ We see that

²⁹ David Berger has demonstrated that this saxophone voicing was a solution to the addition of tenor saxophonist Ben Webster to the four-saxophone section in 1940. Webster was told to double the melody an octave lower, but the rest of the section retained their close-voiced harmony. David Berger, “The Process of Becoming: Composition and Recomposition,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Duke Ellington*, ed. Edward Green, Cambridge Companions to Music (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 33.

³⁰ Not consistently true, see m. 1.

Example 3.14. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Le Sucrier Velours," initial A section from the copyright registration score, which contains only counterpoint between the melody and bass. REC, Series 2A, Box 21, Folder 10.

Example 3.15. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Le Sucrier Velours," section A' from the presentation score, with harmonization of the melody in the saxophones. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 14.

Ellington constantly employs dominant chords with $\flat 9$, which are integral to the piece's sound.

The close-voiced harmonies in the saxophone section, which often omit the chordal root, would

³¹ Only the final two bars are different from A, so this short score serves as a good comparison point for Ex. 3.14.

fall naturally under the pianist's hand, and the lower-voice doubling of the melody helps emphasize the line. In the bridge, the baritone saxophone rests, leaving a pianistic four-voice harmonization of the melody. Given the consistency with which the close-voice, homophonic presentation of the melody appears in the various versions of "Le Sucrier Velours" and its precursors, we can conclude that Ellington conceived of this piece in those block voicings, no doubt worked out at the piano.

The orchestra rarely performed *The Queen's Suite*. Instead, when selections of it were performed they were often solo piano renditions by Ellington. "A Single Petal of a Rose" was an obvious choice, but Ellington played "Le Sucrier Velours" as a piano solo as well.³² Although Ellington does not execute the exact block voicings dictated by his arrangements for the saxophones, he does include the salient chord members from those voicings in his left hand. His hands interlock for the planing minor seventh chords during the **A** sections, but when the melody arpeggiates through a single harmony, as it does for much of the **B** section, he holds a left hand voicing rather than move it in block form with the melody. Nonetheless, even when performing the piece as a piano solo without a bassist, Ellington uses his left hand to voice the chords from the reed choir rather than articulate the bass line. Over time, Ellington pared down his arrangements of the tune, from the full-band score to "Do Not Disturb," to the reed choir on *The Queen's Suite*, until finally all that was left was the piano player. While practical reasons may have accounted for why the reed choir did not perform "Le Sucrier Velours" live (perhaps the tune was not in the band book, or perhaps it had not been rehearsed), Ellington could confidently convey the piece's substance—he described it as "beauty" in *Music Is My Mistress*—on the

³² One recorded example from a 1972 concert is Duke Ellington, *Live at the Whitney*, Impulse! IMP-173, 1995, compact disc.

piano.³³ Given the piece's construction, it is perfectly understandable, since it most likely began that way.

3.2.4 “Northern Lights” and “Apes and Peacocks”: Grooves, Nonfunctional Harmonies, and Motives

The remaining movements of *The Queen's Suite*, “Northern Lights” and “Apes and Peacocks,” share many outward musical qualities: both forgo 32-bar song form for a more episodic structure, feature a prominent drum groove, unfold with nonfunctional harmonic succession and stasis, and rely on motives and riffs for the primary musical material. Despite these similarities, the movements have markedly different characters, a byproduct of their different composers. We can productively consider the two movements in dialogue with each other, reflecting the ways their composers harnessed these shared musical elements.

The formal structures of the two works are given in Tables 3.8 and 3.9. Both pieces feature an introduction that returns as a conclusion. In addition, the **A** sections also return prior to the **Outro**. Strayhorn writes a repeat of the **A** section between the two episodes in “Northern Lights,” while Ellington includes three episodes without **A** material intervening.

Both pieces feature nonstandard phrases, most notably the five measure **A** section in “Northern Lights.” Strayhorn writes the **B** and **C** material in more typical four-measure units, although the three repetitions of the **B** phrases creates a less standard twelve-measure section.³⁴ In “Apes and Peacocks,” Ellington's phrases also straddle more common eight- and sixteen-bar divisions, although each section contains an even number of measures. Unlike my form chart for

³³ Duke Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), 113.

³⁴ Of course, a common 12-bar section composed of three four-measure units is the 12-bar blues; the **B** section of “Northern Lights” bears no resemblance to this idiom, however.

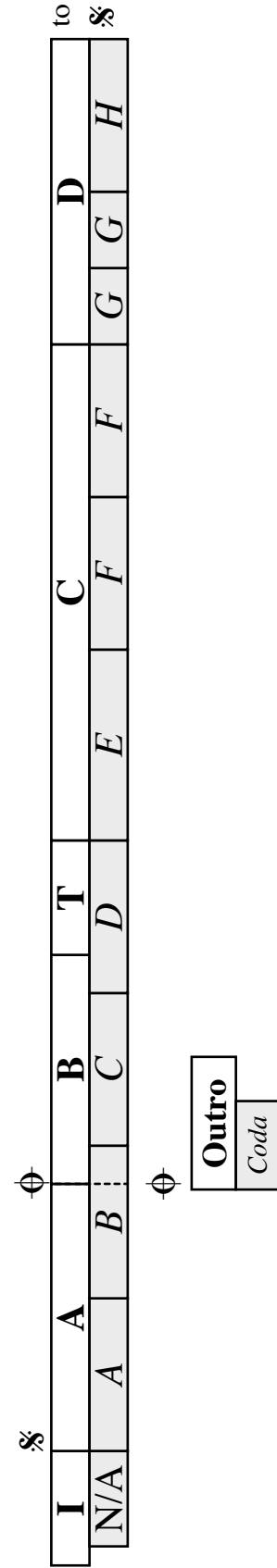
Table 3.8. Form chart for “Northern Lights.”

Section	Length	Musical Features
Introduction	10 (6 + 4)	Swelling ensemble chords and pounding drum rhythm (6 mm.); repeated scalar segue and muted chords (4 mm.)
A	10 (5 x 2)	Fragmentary motive in clarinets (3 mm.); scalar call-and-response between clarinets and low reeds with fragmentary motive in trumpet
B	12 (4+4+4)	New motivic material; texture thickens with each repetition
A	5	
C	8 (4+4)	Highly dissonant orchestral layering
A	5	
Outro	10	Same as Introduction with a final bitonal chord

Table 3.9. Form chart for “Apes and Peacocks.”

Section	Length	Musical Features
I(intro)	6	“Jungle” drum groove; 2 mm. tenor sax pickup
A	14	Gradual sectional entrances
B	12	Repeated trumpet riff
T	6	Transitional
C	26	Interplay between Phrygian and Lydian riffs
D	16	Shift to C minor/E \flat major
A	14	
O(outro)	6	Drum groove (6 mm. plus a downbeat)

Figure 3.1. Diagram showing “Apes and Peacocks” formal designations from Table 3.9 (top row) along with the rehearsal marks on the score and parts from the Duke Ellington Collection (in gray).



“Northern Lights,” my formal map of “Apes and Peacocks” does not respect the rehearsal marks indicated in the orchestra’s score and parts, which do tend to correspond to these standard units, but instead reflect a phenomenological segmentation that will be explained more fully below. Figure 3.1 presents the two types of formal segmentation in a proportional diagram: overall, only the first half of the arrangement has noncongruent segments.³⁵

Unlike other movements in the suite where the drums recede to the background to provide a standard swing groove, the drums mark both “Northern Lights” and “Apes and Peacocks” with distinct rhythmic patterns. During the opening six measures of “Northern Lights,” drummer Jimmy Johnson plays the swung rhythm shown in Example 3.16. Beneath swelling, half-note chords from the rest of the ensemble, Johnson’s groove provides a propelling drive forward. After the six measures of swelling chords, Johnson’s pattern calms, emphasizing a quarter-note subdivision with a syncopated embellishment surrounding the final quarter of each measure. Ellington foregrounds the drums even more explicitly in “Apes and Peacocks,” initiating the piece with a solo drum groove. Johnson plays the syncopated figure shown in Example 3.17 on the tom-toms and cymbal, which immediately channels Ellington’s “jungle style,” principally in its extensive use of tom-toms.

The two pieces also rely on harmonic stasis, most clearly expressed by the pedal points given to the bassist. For “Northern Lights,” the bass articulates the tonic F throughout each section, with the exception of the six-measure chordal statement of the **Intro**, where the bass articulates the harmonic movement, and the twelve-measure **B** section, where the bass joins in on

³⁵ Ellington’s manuscript short score shows that he organized the piece according to the eight and sixteen-bar units reflected in the rehearsal marks. Nonetheless, the experience of the piece does not match this segmentation. For instance, the trumpet riff that constitutes the main materials of rehearsal B actually begins two measures prior to the rehearsal mark, and the trumpets’ strong pick-up to that figure effectively signals the beginning of a new formal unit at that juncture.

Example 3.16. Strayhorn, *The Queen’s Suite*, “Northern Lights,” drum groove. Transcription by the author.

a) Busier drum pattern during **Introduction/Outro**, tom-toms with hi-hat pedal taps

Dr.

b) Quieter groove played lightly on the snare and hats through the rest of the piece.

Dr.

Example 3.17. Ellington, *The Queen’s Suite*, “Apes and Peacocks,” drum groove, played on tom-tom (downstems) and cymbal (upstems). DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 6.

Dr.

Example 3.18. Ellington, *The Queen’s Suite*, “Apes and Peacocks,” Joe Benjamin’s bass groove. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 6.

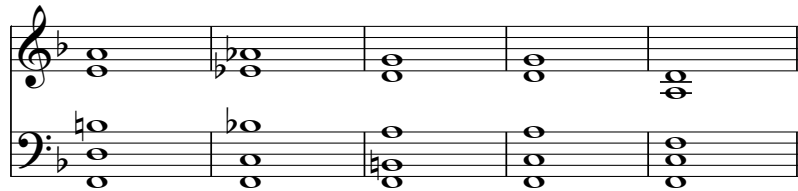
Bass

Dr.

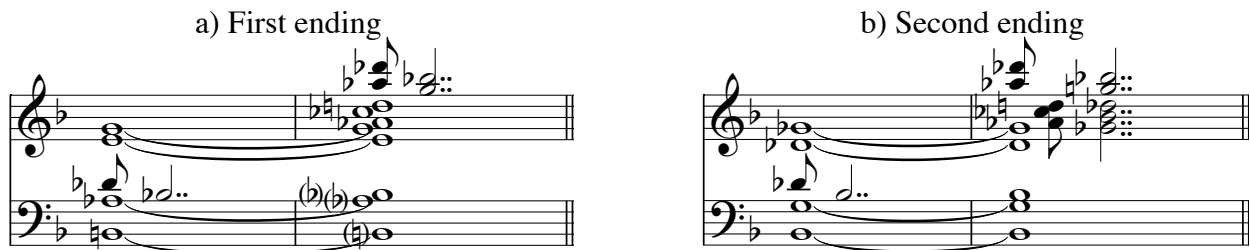
the motivic statements. The bass pedal in “Apes and Peacocks” is even more repetitive, creating a harmonic and rhythmic ostinato that enhances the drum groove (Ex. 3.18).

Above this static harmonic ground, the construction of the chords varies between the two pieces. Strayhorn builds chromatic, altered sonorities across instrumental sections in “Northern Lights.” For example, the harmonic background of the **A** sections contracts a FM13(#11) to an FM6 through chromatic voice-leading, arranged for mixed brass and reeds (Ex. 3.19). In a more extreme case, the turnaround at the end of each four-measure phrase during section **C** features prominent semitone clashes between members of the chord, cross-voiced again between brass

Example 3.19. Strayhorn, *The Queen’s Suite*, “Northern Lights,” chromatic voice-leading over tonic pedal during the recurring **A** section. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 11.



Example 3.20. Strayhorn, *The Queen’s Suite*, “Northern Lights,” dissonant turnarounds at the ends of the two four-measure phrases of section **C**. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 11.



and reeds. Strayhorn tempers the dissonance the second time through, although semitone clashes are still present (Ex 3.20).

Though Ellington is often celebrated for cross-scoring and unusual instrument combinations, he uses a sectional approach to chord construction in “Apes and Peacocks.”³⁶ The harmonic materials consist primarily of parallel triads and seventh chords; only at the end of section **B** and throughout section **D** do the clarinets combine with the trumpets to voice ninth chords. Ellington occasionally departs from his triadic harmonization for trombones, stacking them in fifths on the initial downbeat of section **B** to imply a CM9 (C–G–D), or giving them fourth-voicings in section **D** (F–B \flat –E \flat). The voicings in “Apes and Peacocks” often sound like thickened riffs and punctuated rhythmic attacks rather than deliberate harmonies.

Ellington’s more straightforward voicing and orchestration belies an at times biting dissonant chord structure. The saturation with dissonance reaches a peak once the trumpets enter

³⁶ See Michael S. Brockman, “Orchestration Techniques of Duke Ellington” (D.M.A. diss., University of Washington, 2011).

Example 3.21. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Apes and Peacocks," dissonant harmony in A. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 6.

in section A (Ex. 3.21). The trombones ground the ensemble with a close-voiced second-inversion C major triad, the clarinets sit a thirteenth higher with a root position E \flat -minor triad, and a notated B $^{\circ}7$ chord in third inversion crowds into the clarinets' voicing. The composite ten-note sonority, which lacks any meaningful appellation, sustains harmonic tension for four measures until the trumpets rest and the clarinets move into a root-position C-major triad on the last eighth of the fourth bar. The sectional components that make up this chord are not particularly dissonant, but their overlay produces a very dissonant, tense sonority.

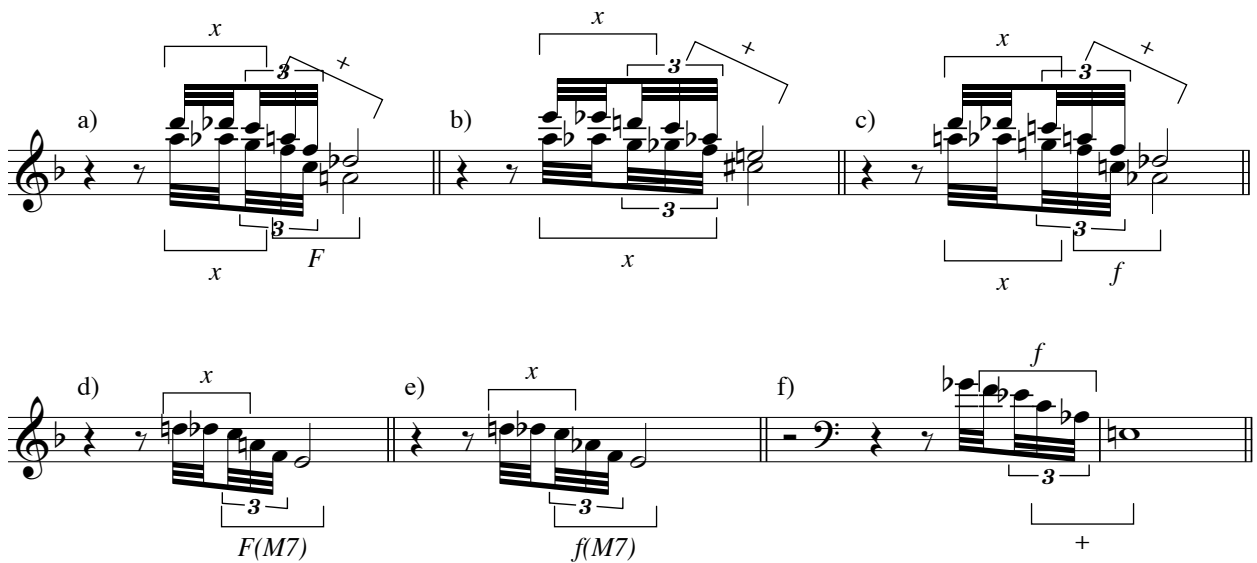
In section D, Ellington writes similarly veiled dissonance. In the first half of the section, the trumpets and one clarinet move from a third-inversion Cm $^{\circ}9$ chord to a root-position version of the sonority via a B $^{\circ}9$ chord. For the second half of the section, the trumpets are arranged close-voiced, with the clarinet written a third above the lead trumpet. The near-parallel writing creates unique sonorities at each stage. Unlike Ellington's other homophonic writing, such as that found in "Le Sucrier Velours," his pianism does not seem to dictate the chord construction, since the voicings fall somewhat awkwardly under the hand. Instead, the piece's core Phrygian motive (discussed below) creates the basic chordal outline, which Ellington fleshes out with largely parallel harmonization.

Both composers rely on short melodic fragments and repeated motives to create their respective pieces, but even with the similarity of technique we see a difference in execution.

Example 3.22. Strayhorn, *The Queen's Suite*, "Northern Lights," clarinet and tenor scalar passage from the **Introduction**, outlining an Fm7 arpeggio with a chromatic cell. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 11.



Example 3.23. Strayhorn, *The Queen's Suite*, "Northern Lights," fragmentary motive. The motive tends to features a chromatic cell (x), a F major (F) or F minor (f) arpeggio, and an augmented triad (+) arpeggio. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 11.



After the chordal statement in the introduction to "Northern Lights," Strayhorn assigns a clarinet a rapid ascending figure (Ex. 3.22) that is repeated by another clarinet and a tenor saxophone. The figure contains the primary motivic material that Strayhorn works into the piece: the F minor arpeggio and chromatic passing cell. In the **A** section, he reworks this material into its most common form. For the first three measures, the clarinets harmonize the new fragmentary motive. The lead clarinet includes a chromatic passing cell and F-major arpeggio, which Strayhorn extends into an augmented arpeggiation (Ex. 3.23a). The second clarinet begins to harmonize this figure in parallel fourths, but works through an F-major arpeggio against the augmented triad arpeggio. After two additional variants of this figure (see Ex. 3.23b-c), the clarinets switch to an

ascending scalar run in parallel thirds, a gesture that triggers comparisons with the figure from the introduction. Meanwhile, Clark Terry takes up the clarinet's motive, contracting the final interval to create a FM7 arpeggio (see Ex. 3.23d). With Terry's trumpet, the motive takes on its most iconic form, and he repeats the motive after the tenor and baritone saxophone echo the clarinets' scalar run.

In section **B**, Strayhorn introduces a new, syncopated idea marked by descending fourths, assigned to tenor saxophone with motivic support from the bass. The figure restarts, but then Terry's interjection of the iconic motive (Ex. 3.23e), colored minor by A \flat , prompts a similar response from the tenor (Ex. 3.23f), though the tenor's motive emphasizes the augmented triad.³⁷ The four-measure phrase repeats with the clarinet moving in thirds above the motive. On the third repetition, the trombones join the clarinets, changing their parallel thirds into parallel triads. Here Strayhorn reveals the basic idea behind the chordal figure to be an alternation between G \flat augmented triads and F-minor triads, a verticalization of the prominent arpeggios in the piece's core motive. The trombones again alternate between these two chords in section **C**, and Strayhorn also assigns parallel augmented triads to the trumpets. Altogether, Strayhorn works to unify his material through shared motivic properties, with Terry's recurring statement of the iconic motive providing a clear, audible indication of continuity.

In "Apes and Peacocks," Ellington works with motivic fragments but in a much less systematic way than his collaborator did in "Northern Lights." To start section **A**, the trombones

³⁷ Strayhorn's original manuscript short score for this piece has Terry's entrance delayed until the measure after the tenor's statement of the motive (m. 4 of section **B**). Terry's trumpet part also reflects this delay. Terry enters one measure early on the recording, which is also reflected in the presentation album copy of "Northern Lights" by copyist John Sanders. During the two repeats of the four-measure figure, however, Terry waits until the fourth measure to play the motive. Either the performers orally agreed on this early entrance during the sparse first four-measure unit, or Terry miscounted his rests during the first statement and was cued to his mistake by the tenor's quick motivic echoing. Terry does insert the necessary three-measure rest between motive statements that his part indicates, but this is because he omits the second statement of his motive during the repeat of the preceding **A** section. Again, this is not noted on his part or on any extant score, but may reflect an instance of a "mistake" yielding an aesthetically pleasing musical result.

introduce the main motivic pitch cell (D \flat -C-B \flat -C), a Phrygian figure harmonized as the root of parallel second-inversion triads. The harmonic roots guide the clarinet’s entrance four measures later, though Ellington rearranges the chord voicings. Gonsalves’ tenor saxophone states the Phrygian pitch cell three times to conclude the **A** section. The motive returns in section **C**, and as mentioned above it guides the trumpet voicings during the second half of section **D**. Unlike Strayhorn, Ellington does not give the motive a characteristic rhythm; in fact, with the exception of the initial statements by trombones and clarinets, the rhythmic profile of this pitch cell is varied each time it is presented. Ellington cultivates a variety of rhythmic motives throughout “Apes and Peacocks,” and during the **A** section he introduces the rhythms shown in Ex. 3.24. Together with the piece’s principal drum and bass groove, Ellington’s writing moves toward rhythmic saturation.

Example 3.24. Ellington, *The Queen’s Suite*, “Apes and Peacocks,” rhythmic motives introduced during section **A**. The Phrygian motive is also highlighted in the example. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 6.

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in bass clef and shows a sequence of notes and rests. A bracket above the second measure is labeled "Phrygian motive (triad roots)" and encompasses a chord voicing. The bottom staff is in treble clef and shows a sequence of notes and rests. Two brackets above the third and fourth measures are labeled "Phrygian motive" and encompass specific rhythmic patterns.

The riff structure and deployment shapes my formal conception of “Apes and Peacocks.” Section **A** gradually brings in each instrumental group, introduces the Phrygian motive, and presents most of the rhythmic gestures. Gonsalves’ solo statement of the Phrygian motive nicely caps off this first section. Section **B** features a new trumpet riff that alternates between CM7 and Gm7 chords. After ten measures of this riff, the trumpets and clarinets cadence with long

Example 3.25. Ellington, *The Queen's Suite*, "Apes and Peacocks," reduction of section C, showing Phrygian, Lydian, and chromatically-inflected riffs Ellington deploys in the section. DEC Series 1, Box 299, Folder 6.

extended chords while the trombones state a new riff based on a Cm7 arpeggio. The intervening transition further develops this cadential gesture, as the trumpets contract to a C^o7 harmony, reflected in a modified version of the trombone riff.

Section C begins with a Lydian figure in the clarinet and tenor, answered by the Phrygian motive in the trombones. Interplay between these two figures dominates the section, though Ellington introduces a number of other chromatically inflected licks in this section (see Ex. 3.25). The three whole steps present in the Lydian figure reappear to connect B \flat to G \flat , which is then reinterpreted as F \sharp and resolves to G \sharp (see the sixth through eighth measures of the example). In

the second half of the section, Ellington writes the two motives back to back in the same voice, reconciling them into one gesture. The final section (**D**) features the previously mentioned dissonant chords for trumpets and clarinet. The trombones provide support for this section, playing an inflected riff during the first half and providing chordal support for the second.

“Northern Lights” and “Apes and Peacocks” reflect the different approaches of their composers, despite exhibiting similar episodic construction, nonfunctional harmonic language, and emphasis on riffs. Walter van de Leur argues that Strayhorn created gradually unfolding pieces indebted to the developmental techniques in Western classical music.³⁸ “Northern Lights” follows this model, as Strayhorn builds from the initial motive statements in the **A** section, even burying the basic materials in the scalar passage that closes the introduction.³⁹ Unlike Strayhorn’s carefully developed “Northern Lights,” “Apes and Peacocks” presents a variety of loosely related riffs and a rhythmically dense texture. Its organization reveals Ellington’s tendency toward juxtaposition and contrast. The consistent drum and bass groove, along with the regularly recurring (if altered) Phrygian motive, provide continuity in the wake of the new material. The pieces complement one another well and provide more active and driving selections to round out *The Queen’s Suite*.

3.2.5 Conclusions

The above analysis has examined several aspects of Ellington’s compositional technique that are most salient in *The Queen’s Suite*. Several scholars have noted Ellington’s penchant for juxtaposition and contrast, which emerge overtly in the episodic nature of “Apes and Peacocks”

³⁸ Walter van de Leur, *Something to Live For: The Music of Billy Strayhorn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³⁹ Strayhorn’s autograph short score only includes the ten-measure **Outro**; he begins the piece with section **A**. In rehearsal, Ellington or Strayhorn decided to use the **Outro** as the **Introduction**, as all the ensemble’s parts have handwritten indications to start at the last section of the piece.

as well as in Ellington's treatment of timbre in "Lightning Bugs and Frogs." His "on the man" writing enabled him to employ a broad timbral palette, and he often juxtaposed the band's smooth blend with a heterogenous array of voices. Most movements of *The Queen's Suite* do not include extreme juxtaposition, however, instead revealing that Ellington sought to mitigate repetition through subtle variation. In "Sunset and the Mockingbird," the melodic fragment repeats over a several different chords, each adding a new color to the fragment. The piece also relies on a variety of background orchestrations, including the *emergent harmony* technique where Ellington combines sections to produce a harmony but maintains a rhythmic distinction between their entrances. Finally, his "on the man" writing allows him to entrust the same melodic fragment to a variety of his players, who transform it and add their own gloss on the repeated idea.

As with most jazz players, Ellington employs extended harmonies in most of his pieces. For slower ballads such as "Le Sucrier Velours" and "The Single Petal of a Rose," he preferred the gentler sound of 13♭9 chords, and this voicing emerges at the piano in "Sunset and the Mockingbird" as well, an indication that for Ellington there may have been a tactile component to this harmony. The dominant turnaround in "Lightning Bugs and Frogs" and the sonorities in "Apes and Peacocks" show that his language could be more dissonant and biting, when he wanted that effect.

From a formal standpoint, Ellington often turned to 32-bar song form when writing movements for his suites, as is the case for four of the six movements of *The Queen's Suite*. But he continued to write episodic, motivically driven pieces as well. Ellington's "Apes and Peacocks" present a series of loosely related musical vignettes, in contrast to the developmental progression to the episodic sequence in Strayhorn's "Northern Lights."

We know from the arrangements of “Mood Indigo,” “Sophisticated Lady,” and “Solitude” discussed in Chapter 1 that Ellington was constantly reworking his compositions. With “Le Sucrier Velours” from *The Queen’s Suite*, we see this process played out on a more private level, as the piece underwent a variety of transformations but only saw commercial public release after Ellington’s death. One might say that for Ellington, a composition was never truly completed, as he would constantly revise. Extant recordings however do present a momentarily fixed text for closer examination even if Ellington revised the piece later.

Though the focus of my discussion will change as I turn to the other suites included on *The Ellington Suites*, we will see these compositional techniques resurface, even in compositions from over a decade later. Ellington continues to balance repetition with variety. He continues to exploit the sonic diversity of his band members even as he coaxes a sonic blend from them. His piano continues to shape and in some cases dictate the course of his compositions. The thirty-two bar song form continues to play a role in his formal designs for suite movements, although in these later suites the form is a smaller segment of a larger formal design. And we see in the discrepancies between scores, extracted parts, and the recordings a composer who continued to revise his compositions even after the engineer pressed “stop” on the recording rig. These techniques serve as the grounding from which my discussion of *The Goutelas Suite* and *The UWIS Suite* begins, but I wish to consider these recordings from a different perspective.

3.3 Collaboration by way of history and place

Many of Ellington’s extended works invoke places, such as the *Liberian Suite*, *The Deep South Suite*, *Harlem*, *The Far East Suite*, *The New Orleans Suite*, and *The Latin American Suite*. While the historical circumstances and resonances of those works have been treated more

extensively (though not exhaustively), the events surrounding *The Goutelas Suite* and *The UWIS Suite* remain relatively obscure outside of what Ellington presents in his autobiography.⁴⁰ *The Goutelas Suite* celebrates a restored chateau in the south of France, while *The UWIS Suite* was written for the final concert of The Ellington Festival at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1972. Only Ellington had any personal encounter with Goutelas, while the full orchestra had personal experiences with the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

In what follows, I detail Ellington’s connection to each place and sketch an interpretation of the studio recordings based on those connections. Following these side-by-side narratives of place and piece, I consider a live recording of the two works made at the conclusion to the band’s residency at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The experience of place will provide a way to view these two suites through the lens of collaboration. The individual voices of the Ellington Orchestra have something personal to add to *The UWIS Suite*, while Ellington has to lead them through *The Goutelas Suite*.

3.3.1 “Duke Ellington a Goutelas”

Ellington wrote *The Goutelas Suite* to commemorate his 1966 visit to a chateau in rural France, where he was received like a king, complete with torches and a fanfare. Ellington devotes a seven-page chapter in *Music Is My Mistress* to the “Goutelas Journal, 1966,” detailing a brief history of the Goutelas restoration and his involvement with the project. For comparison, the chapter on Billy Strayhorn, Ellington’s closest collaborator and friend, lasts only six pages, two of which are simply full-page pictures. Stanley Dance remembered that Ellington “told me later that he had been more moved by this friendly occasion in the countryside than even that

⁴⁰ Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 340–45 (Goutelas), 405–407 (UWIS).

night in 1960 when 100,000 people had heard him play ‘Come Sunday’ at the Christmas mass in Paris.”⁴¹ Ellington obviously cherished his trip to Goutelas, finally expressing his gratitude in musical form with the suite’s premiere on April 16, 1971.

In his autobiography, Ellington begins his history of Goutelas in the thirteenth century, when it was a fortified house owned by the family Guillemetz Beez de Goutelas.⁴² In 1558, the regional Lieutenant Jean Papon acquired the fortress on behalf of Catherine de Medici and transformed it into a Renaissance mansion.⁴³ An eighteenth-century Italian renovation updated the building to suit the times, but it was abandoned in the following century.⁴⁴ By the mid-twentieth century, the decaying building had passed into the possession of Noël Durand, a neighboring farmer. The chateau had become so dilapidated that France’s historic monuments commission had elected not to repair it because the task seemed too great.⁴⁵ In 1961, brothers Paul and Louis Bouchet explored the decaying property and marveled at the “beautiful Renaissance pieces,” though it took them a while to recognize that beauty among all the collapsed walls and overgrown vegetation that swallowed what was left of the building.⁴⁶ Paul Bouchet, a wealthy lawyer, tracked down the owner Durand in July of 1961 and approached him with his proposition to restore the chateau. The eager Bouchet contacted a number of friends from Lyon to get them involved, including the lawyers Yves Berger, François Delay, and Jean

⁴¹ Derek Jewell, *Duke: A Portrait of Duke Ellington* (New York: Norton, 1977), 160. Interestingly, Jewell does not include the visit to Goutelas in the Chronology to Duke’s Life at the back of the book.

⁴² Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 340.

⁴³ “Une demeure Renaissance dans le Forez par Jean Papon,” <<http://www.chateaugoutelas.fr/une-demeure-rennaissance/la-rennaissance-dune-demeure.html>>

⁴⁴ François-Xavier Moulé, “The ‘French’ Ellington: My Brothers at Goutelas,” *International Jazz Archives Journal* 1, no. 3 (1995): 127–28.

⁴⁵ Colette H. Dupin, “Au château de Goutelas-en-Forez: Devant cent cinquante privilégiés le ‘Duke’ a joué Ellington...,” *Actualités du rhône*, February 27, 1966, 4.

⁴⁶ Maurice Damon, *Goutelas par lui-même: Mémoire intime d’une renaissance* (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l’université de Saint-Etienne, 2006), 26.

Bonnard, and the doctor Marcel Colin.⁴⁷ He also got in touch with the painter Bernard Cathelin, a friend of Ellington who got the composer involved with the project. In *Music Is My Mistress*, Ellington casts Cathelin as an important player in the restoration, their friendship leading to an exaggeration of his role. Bouchet was the true mastermind of the project, and his dedication (and resources) saw the project through to completion.

Ellington's visit to the chateau was set in motion at a concert in Lyon in January 1965 where Ellington met Paul Bouchet's wife Simone, who promoted the project.⁴⁸ During the same trip, Ellington had extensive conversations with Bouchet, and after hearing about the Goutelas restoration, Ellington promised that he would bring his orchestra to play for the volunteers.⁴⁹ The next time Ellington was in France, he made sure he had time to visit the newly restored chateau—and his friends made sure that he would be treated “like a king.”⁵⁰ The opportunity came in early 1966, when Norman Granz booked the Ellington band for a month-long European tour from January 24 through February 24. The band played concerts on 29 out of 31 days, many times two concerts a night, traveling to Portugal, Spain, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, and England.⁵¹ On February 25, while the rest of the band flew back to New York, Ellington lingered in Europe.

At nine in the morning on February 25, Ellington flew into Geneva from Madrid, where the previous day he had received “President Johnson's Gold Medal for outstanding performance and the creation of goodwill.”⁵² He was picked up from the airport and rushed the two hundred

⁴⁷ Dupin, “Au château de Goutelas-en-Forez,” 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Moulé, “The ‘French’ Ellington,” 128–29.

⁵⁰ Damon, *Goutelas par lui-même*, 55.

⁵¹ Some of the dates also featured Ella Fitzgerald, who appeared with the orchestra on 15 of the 29 engagements.

⁵² Ken Vail, *Duke's Diary* (Lanham, Md.; Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 284.

kilometers east to Forez.⁵³ The Magnans, a wealthy landowning couple, housed Ellington during his stay. Bouchet made sure their accommodations were suitable for the “modern aristocrat” they deemed Ellington to be.⁵⁴ Later that evening, Ellington made his way to the Château de Goutelas, finally arriving at nine in the evening.⁵⁵ Cathelin reminisces that on each side of the road stood “twenty farmers, twenty farm boys and twenty farm girls who were holding Kodak torches for 45 minutes” while students from Lyon played the Washington Post March.⁵⁶ Ellington does not mention this last group of young people, but he estimated that fifty children were holding the torches that lined the path.⁵⁷ He made his way into the left wing of the chateau, which had recently been restored and transformed into an auditorium.⁵⁸ Some 150 people sat in silence, a mixed crowd of peasants, farmers, workers, and intellectuals, all of whom had contributed countless hours to the restoration.⁵⁹ Suddenly, the crowd erupted into applause, and Ellington was visibly moved by their enthusiasm.⁶⁰ As Moulé points out, most of the people present were rural workers and farmers who were not familiar with Ellington’s music and hardly knew who he was; this detail makes his overwhelming reception even more remarkable.⁶¹

Once the crowd quieted, Bouchet gave a brief speech about the restoration project and the spirit that sustained it. Concluding, he turned to Ellington and said: “In exchange for what you bring, we want to offer you something, a token of deep fellowship. I welcome you, Duke

⁵³ Dupin, “Au château de Goutelas-en-Forez.”

⁵⁴ Damon, *Goutelas par lui-même*, 74.

⁵⁵ Jean-Jacques Lerrant, “Duke Ellington dédie une symphonie aux paysans du Forez,” *Le Progres-Lyon*, February 27, 1966.

⁵⁶ Damon, *Goutelas par lui-même*, 55.

⁵⁷ Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 341.

⁵⁸ Lerrant, “Duke Ellington dédie une symphonie.”

⁵⁹ Dupin, “Au château de Goutelas-en-Forez.”

⁶⁰ Lerrant, “Duke Ellington dédie une symphonie.”

⁶¹ Moulé, “The ‘French’ Ellington,” 127.

Ellington, our brother.”⁶² Ellington offered his own remarks, which were translated by Cathelin’s wife Régine: “I have been welcomed in a multitude of different places. But never in a place like Goutelas. I am happy and proud to be here in a house that was built and rebuilt by good people for a good cause. Hail, brothers!”⁶³ He then proceeded to the Steinway that had been brought in for him to perform a solo piano rendition of “New World a-Comin’,” which the reporters misunderstood as a recent composition. The piece had actually been premiered at Carnegie Hall in 1943, where Ellington had characterized it as “a representation of the postwar racial optimism expressed in Roi Ottley’s 1943 book, *New World A-Coming: Inside Black America*.”⁶⁴ It originally took the form of a piano concerto with jazz orchestra and was later rescored for Ellington’s performances with symphony orchestras, but Ellington occasionally played the piece as a piano solo. At Goutelas, Ellington introduced it as a piece “in anticipation of a time when there would be no pettiness, no categories.”⁶⁵ The Goutelas restoration provided a rare glimpse of that “New World A-Comin’,” where people from different creeds and background could join together for a common cause. Of course, part of Ellington’s reasoning behind performing the piece may have been purely practical: he had performed the piano solo version at Coventry Cathedral four days earlier as a prelude to his Concert of Sacred Music. Following the rendition of the serious and contemplative piece, Ellington charmed the Goutelas crowd with a medley of his popular hits. Afterward, a party followed that included an impromptu jam session among the attendees. The piano recital was recorded and released as a limited edition 10-inch microgroove

⁶² «En échange de ce que vous nous apportez, nous voulons, nous aussi vous offrir quelque chose, un témoignage de fraternité profonde. Je vous salue, Duke Ellington, notre frère...» in Dupin.

⁶³ Lerrant, “Duke Ellington dédie une symphonie.”

⁶⁴ John Howland, “*Ellington Uptown*”: *Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, & the Birth of Concert Jazz* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 251.

⁶⁵ Dupin, “Au château de Goutelas-en-Forez.”

LP, with the proceeds from the sale going to the restoration of the chateau.⁶⁶ For the LP, “New World A-Comin’” was renamed “Symphonie pour un monde meilleur.”

The cover of the LP was attached to the front of a large black photo album given to Ellington to commemorate the occasion.⁶⁷ Some of the photographs depict the transformation of the chateau, but most focus on Ellington and his interactions with the people of the region. There is a photograph of Ellington signing the chateau’s guestbook “To My Brothers Of Goutelas, With Love”.⁶⁸ There are few pictures from the night of the recital; most are snapshots of Ellington’s tour around the surrounding area that took place the following day. Ellington is dressed in a white coat, his friend Bernard Cathelin often at his side. Mayor Jean Duclos and Père Dumas also regularly appear with him. Despite his role in the restoration, Paul Bouchet only appears in a few large group shots. There are two pictures of Ellington with his hosts André and Madame Magnan, their gestures and expressions breaking through the language barrier. Madame Magnan recounted how she and her husband wanted to offer Ellington a drink, and he asked for no alcohol. Moments later, André asked if he liked champagne; Ellington responded in the affirmative, thinking that André had asked if he liked Chopin.⁶⁹ Apparently Ellington stayed at the Magnan’s with a woman named Vanda, whose tiny swimsuit embarrassed the hosts on numerous occasions.⁷⁰

Ellington also posed for pictures with some of the farmers and workers at the chateau. Paul Verdier relays an amusing anecdote of how he was summoned to drive the cart that took Ellington around the various rural sites on February 26 because the horse’s owner, Marcel Marceau, had a dentist appointment. He arrived at nine in the morning, but Ellington had still not

⁶⁶ Moulé, “The ‘French’ Ellington,” 136–37.

⁶⁷ DEC, Series 7, Box 14.

⁶⁸ Moulé, “The ‘French’ Ellington,” 132.

⁶⁹ Damon, *Goutelas par lui-même*, 72.

⁷⁰ Moulé, “The ‘French’ Ellington,” 72.

awoken. By the time he finally roused around one in the afternoon, Marceau had returned, and so he ended up carting Ellington around after all.⁷¹ The photo album contains pictures of Ellington sitting side by side with Marceau on the cart, both men laughing. Filled with humanizing and personal scenes, it seems rather curious that so few of the pictures reached the press.

Ellington's trip to Goutelas could have been exploited as a publicity stunt, with headlines praising how the great American artist traveled into rural France to entertain the poor inhabitants for free. From Moulé's sources, it seems that the European press bought into the story more or less in that vein, but there were still only nine articles printed about it across multiple countries, some of them years later. Others were reprints of articles that had already appeared elsewhere. In the American press, there were only two mentions of Ellington's trip to Goutelas, and neither really focused on the event itself. The *New York Herald Tribune's* Theater Page ran an Ellington feature on March 13, 1966. John Molleson wrote, "In southern France, a castle had been illuminated with red flares for his visit, and a hundred children carried torches in a procession. The next day he paid his respects to the mayors of six surrounding towns and was invited to sample the local wines." As if continuing a litany, he details, "On his way back, he arrived at Orly, took a room at the airport hotel, slept for 24 hours and then flew home. He still had the airport matches in his pocket." The anecdote is clearly included to provide an example of Ellington's hectic schedule and a taste of his regal character, and Molleson does not provide us with any more details. Similarly, *Life* magazine ran a picture of Ellington playing a piano outside with a chicken perched on the keyboard in the issue from March 18, 1966, with the explanation, "Duke Ellington, on a European tour, was giving a benefit concert at the Chateau de Goutelas near Boën, France to help turn the run-down castle into a cultural center." The photograph is

⁷¹ Damon, *Goutelas par lui-même*, 74–75.

rather amusing, but serves as filler and fails to provide any real detail about Ellington's visit and provides a rather misleading description instead. In fact, the castle was no longer as "run down" as it had been, and the concert only indirectly benefited the chateau through the sale of the LPs pressed afterward.

The American press's nonchalant attitude toward Ellington's visit to Goutelas manifested again at the premiere of *The Goutelas Suite* on April 16, 1971, at a concert in Philharmonic Hall at Lincoln Center, New York. Only three critics weighed in on that concert. John S. Wilson, writing for the *New York Times*, made brief mention of "a suite in five brief sections inspired by the rebuilding of a 10th-century church in France, largely orchestral except for a brief saxophone fling by Paul Gonsalves and an 'everybody stand up and shout' finale for the first half."⁷² A review in *Variety* mentioned a "four-part untitled suite," which was "the highlight of the event." According to this critic, "Ellington said it had been inspired by the restoration of a medieval castle in Southern France." He dismisses those extra-musical considerations and describes the music, which "comprised a formal, triumphant first section, with heavy emphasis on brass colorings. It was excellent, and should be recorded immediately."⁷³ Stanley Dance, longtime Ellington friend and jazz critic, also weighed in on the performance in his "Lightly and Politely" column from London's *Jazz Journal*. According to Dance, the piece "was inspired by Ellington's reception at the renovated thirteenth [century] castle in France during his 1966 tour," and Ellington had worked with copyist Tom Whaley all through the previous night to prepare the piece for one rehearsal before the concert.⁷⁴

In all cases, the critics seemed unaffected by the circumstances surrounding the piece, so much so that all three of them provided slightly different accounts for its inspiration. One person

⁷² *New York Times*. April 19, 1971, in DEC, Series 8, Roll 6.

⁷³ *Variety*, April 28, 1971, in DEC, Series 8, Roll 6.

⁷⁴ Stanley Dance, "Lightly and Politely," *Jazz Journal*, reprinted in Vail, *Duke's Diary*, 396.

seemed to recognize the significance of the performance, however, for the on day of the premiere at 1:59 in the afternoon, Ellington received a telegram from Bouchet in Paris that read “Merci de tout coeur a notre frère inoubliable affectueusement,” (“Thank you wholeheartedly to our unforgettable brother, fondly”).⁷⁵ The telegram is the only extant correspondence between the two men that survives in the Duke Ellington Collection, but it suggests that Ellington sent word that his long-awaited musical tribute to Goutelas was completed and about to be premiered.

Despite the press’s vague notions of the piece’s inspiration, Ellington seemed perfectly content to leave them uncorrected. In fact, after he recorded the piece eleven days later, he rarely played it, and only on a few occasions did the orchestra perform it in its entirety. Unknown selections from the piece were performed at Ellington’s next concert in Lyon, which was the closest he would ever come to returning to Goutelas, and he only played three of the six parts at a concert days later in Paris. These French concerts would have been the perfect opportunity for the people whom Ellington commemorated in *The Goutelas Suite* to hear the work, yet he did not seem to make it a priority. Perhaps Ellington sensed that his musicians lacked a meaningful relationship to Goutelas and could not convincingly realize his personal tribute to his visit.

3.3.2 *The Goutelas Suite*

The Ellington Orchestra recorded *The Goutelas Suite* on April 27, 1971, eleven days after its premiere. On *The Ellington Suites*, the suite constitutes the first half of side B (see Table 3.1, p. 158). By this time, the band had lost many of its senior members (see Table 3.10, which lists the personnel for the session).⁷⁶ Lawrence Brown retired for good in 1970, ending his thirty-five-

⁷⁵ DEC, Series 5, Box 1.

⁷⁶ I am not suggesting that the later members of the orchestra were inferior players; Ellington continued his “on-the-man” writing and chose replacements based on what they could contribute to his band’s sound. However, the newer members lacked the interpersonal experience and mutual insight into one another’s character that Ellington had

Table 3.10. Personnel for *The Goutelas Suite* recording session at National Recording Studio in New York on April 27, 1971.

Section	Musician	Instrument(s)
Reeds	Harold Minerve	Alto saxophone
	Norris Turney	Alto saxophone; clarinet
	Harold Ashby	Tenor saxophone; clarinet
	Paul Gonsalves	Tenor saxophone
	Harry Carney	Baritone saxophone; bass clarinet; clarinet
Trumpets	Cootie Williams	Trumpet
	Mercer Ellington	Trumpet
	Money Johnson	Trumpet
	Eddie Preston	Trumpet
Trombones	Booty Wood	Trombone
	Malcolm Taylor	Valve trombone
	Chuck Connors	Bass trombone
Rhythm	Duke Ellington	Piano
	Joe Benjamin	Bass
	Rufus Jones	Drums

year tenure with the band. Booty Woode, who played with the orchestra in the late 1950s, returned ostensibly to fill Brown’s role but instead took over the plunger-mute chair. His friend Malcolm Taylor became the lead chair. Chuck Connors, who had been with the band since 1961, anchored the section with his bass trombone.⁷⁷ The ever-revolving trumpet section had two veterans in Cootie Williams and Mercer Ellington, but Money Johnson and Eddie Preston were two newcomers, the latter only serving in the band briefly. The steadfast reed section present on *The Queen’s Suite* and intact for almost two decades had disbanded: Jimmy Hamilton had retired in 1968, Johnny Hodges died in 1970, and for two months in 1971 (during which this recording session took place) Russell Procope briefly left the band. Harold Minerve, Norris Turney, and

developed with his long-tenured players. *The Goutelas Suite* was a very personal reflection for Ellington, and the fluctuating personnel in the band contributed to uneven performances of the suite.

⁷⁷ My discussion of the trombone section draws on Kurt Dietrich, *Duke’s “Bones: Ellington”s Great Trombonists* (Rottenburg: Advance Music Rottenburg, Germany, 1995), 181–183. Dietrich touches on the long-standing resentment between Ellington and Brown, and claims that the tension finally led to Ellington punching Brown in the mouth, knocking out several teeth. This anecdote is not cited, but may be drawn from Patricia Willard’s oral history interview with Brown, cited several sentences later.

Harold Ashby were able replacements—Turney and Minerve even brought new instrumental voices, the flute and piccolo, into Ellington’s sonic palette—but they struggled to step out from the shadows of their predecessors.

The Goutelas Suite opens with a short brass fanfare, under which drummer Rufus Jones adds a snare roll.⁷⁸ The fanfare reappears at the end of the suite as well, creating a sonic boundary. With its stylistic markers and association with ceremony, the short piece effectively conjures an imagined place, removed from day-to-day reality and marked by elevated decorum. The second movement, “Goutelas,” continues the regal tone established in the fanfare, adding reeds to the slow, chordally-focused piece. Jones continues with snare drum rolls, although here he articulates a march rhythm.

As the suite moves into “Get-With-Itness,” a punchy D-minor chord from the brass disrupts the regal mood. In the fast-paced, almost frenetic piece, Ellington seems to be exploring rhythmic intricacies.⁷⁹ The straight-ahead introductory figure, a four-measure, blues-inflected riff that passes through the member of the reed section (Ex. 3.26), leads into a syncopated and breakneck **AABA** unit. The section of the piece that follows the 32-bar chorus structure features the most complex rhythmic configurations. Jones keeps a fast 3/4 time, striking the high hat on the quarter-note beats. The trombones play a different rhythm, essentially dividing the measure in half and shifting that beat over an eighth note. On bass, Joe Benjamin initially marks the downbeat of each measure, but then adopts a duple subdivision of the 3/4 measure, replicating the trombone’s rhythm but shifted onto the downbeat (Ex 3.27, mm. 69-76). The saxophones enter with a syncopated figure, ending with eighth note runs that crisscross (mm. 77-84). Then

⁷⁸ Ellington may be recreating the atmosphere from his visit, since a small band played the “Washington Post March” when he arrived at the chateau.

⁷⁹ The working manuscript title “Math” may reflect the extensive counting and subdivisions the band members had to track.

Example 3.26. Ellington, *The Goutelas Suite*, “Get-With-Itness,” main riff. DEC Series 1, Box 135, Folder 07.

The musical score is presented in three systems, each containing three staves. The first system (measures 1-8) features a Clarinet (Cl.) staff in the top position, an Alto 2 staff in the middle, and a Tenor 1 staff in the bottom position. The second system (measures 9-14) features an Alto 2 staff in the top position, a Tenor 1 staff in the middle, and a Bari. Sax. staff in the bottom position. The third system (measures 15-18) features a Tenor 1 staff in the top position and a Bari. Sax. staff in the bottom position. The music is written in 3/4 time and includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth-note runs and sustained notes.

Ellington overlays the trombone and saxophone figures, reinforces the bass line with the baritone, and includes a sustained note in the clarinet (mm. 85-88, not shown). During the repetition, Ellington does not drop the trombones once the reeds enter, and he also brings in the trumpets with a unison eighth-note run that accents the bass’s duple subdivision of the bar. The shifted accents create a complex polyrhythmic texture, and on the recording the orchestra seems to struggle with the passage.

The heart of *The Goutelas Suite* is its fourth movement, titled “Something,” though the working manuscripts for the piece contain the labels “Brot” and “Roth,” a possible truncation of the familiar “Brothers” greeting Ellington cherished from his visit. Establishing a pensive atmosphere through its orchestration and brief, episodic statements, “Something” does evoke a

Example 3.27. Ellington, *The Goutelas Suite*, “Get-With-Itness,” polyrhythmic cross-currents in the contrasting middle section. In mm. 85-89 (not shown), Ellington overlays the trombone riff from mm. 73-76 and the saxophone riff from mm. 77-81. DEC Series 1, Box 135, Folder 07.

69

Tbns.

Bass

77

Alto

Tenor 1

Tenor 2

Bass

Table 3.11. Form chart for “Something.” Ellington’s piano interludes link the formal sections.

Section	Length	Musical Features
A	16	Flute, clarinet, baritone saxophone and muted trumpet play an ascending figure (8 m.), then repeat it in retrograde
Interlude 1	4	Solo piano interlude
B	8	Same instruments as above in chorale texture
Interlude 2	4	Solo piano interlude
C	8	Low brass + baritone sax answered by flute + clarinet (4 m.); trumpet and tenor saxes answered by flute + clarinet (4 m.)
D	8	Ascending melody in baritone sax supported by low brass and high reed harmony (4 m., repeated)
E	12	Ensemble chorale texture (7 m.) elides with a 2 m. piano fill; final 4 measure chorale statement
Interlude 3	4	Solo piano interlude
F	20	Faster trombone riffs, tenor sax melody (10 m., repeated)
Coda	10 (4 + 6)	Slow-moving chords in reeds with trumpet (4 m.); first 4 measures of F leads to a solo tenor statement (1 m.) and the concluding chord

musical place, but ultimately Ellington must lead the listener—and his orchestra—on the tour. The form of the piece is given in Table 3.11; one can see the discrete sections, many of which are bridged by a piano interlude.

The piece opens with a sustained D-minor chord between flute, baritone saxophone, and muted trumpet, colored in by alto. Then the flute and trumpet ascend in parallel diatonic thirds while the alto climbs chromatically in double time to fill in the chordal root; after reaching the peak of their ascent, the opening measures are repeated in retrograde. The idea is constructed simply, yet the interesting timbral choices provide a unique and engaging opening to the piece. Visually, this opening creates an arch (Ex. 3.28), which may be a deliberate attempt on Ellington’s part to present a grand entryway to the movement, perhaps even recalling the gates to Goutelas. In Figure 3.2 I have included two photographs of archways at Goutelas. The first is a

Example 3.28. Ellington, *The Goutelas Suite*, “Something,” section A. The palindromic section creates an arch on the page.

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Trumpet (Tpt.), and Bari. Sax. (Bari. Sax.). The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The music is arranged in a palindromic structure, with the first two staves (Fl. and Cl.) mirroring the last two staves (Tpt. and Bari. Sax.) in reverse order. The Fl. and Cl. parts play a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics, while the Tpt. and Bari. Sax. parts play a supporting harmonic line. The overall structure creates a symmetrical arch across the page.

Figure 3.2. Photographs of two arches from Goutelas, which Ellington may be attempting to evoke with his opening section.



Image from Goutelas Souvenir Album
Duke Ellington Collection, Series 7, Box 14



Image from KissKissBankBank.com page for
Laurent Lukic's documentary
«Une Poule sur un Piano»
<http://www.kisskissbankbank.com/fr/projects/une-poule-sur-un-piano?ref=similar>

photograph from the Goutelas Souvenir album from the DEC, showing Ellington with several members of the restoration team posed in front of an archway in the courtyard at the castle. The second photograph is of modern-day Goutelas and present the arch of the chateau's main gate.⁸⁰ The opening musical figure approximates the latter more convincingly, as its up-and-down slope can either be linked to the arch itself or the decorative pediment above it.

Having passed through the opening frame, Ellington offers a four-measure piano interlude, the first of many transitional moments that bridge from one idea to the next. The introduction's instrumental group then harmonizes a series of chords in another eight-measure chorale-phrase (Ex. 3.29). The steady, plodding chords on the page might be another architectural allusion, perhaps to the austere walls of Goutelas (see Fig. 3.3). Ellington takes another four-measure interlude to transition into the third section of the piece.

The architectural metaphor breaks down here, but Ellington continues to present a series of vignettes, as if we are passing through a number of different rooms. Having established a formal pattern that presents the piano as a guide, the listener is primed to hear each new section of music as a new stop on a tour of ideas. Thus, even as the piece's fourth and fifth sections (**D** and **E**) arrive without Ellington's pianistic linkage, the musical precedent allows each section to function as a discrete (though related) area within Ellington's virtual place. Ellington does interrupt the close of section **E** to play a lead-in to the section's final cadential figure, as a tour guide might offer closing insights before the group moves to the next site.

Another four-measure interlude from Ellington leads into the final segment of the piece. The final episode lasts the longest, taking about two minutes of the five-minute track in a repeated ten-measure phrase. The phrase repetition leads to a four-measure interlude, not by

⁸⁰ The present-day cultural center at Goutelas uses the castle gate's archway as part of its branding, suggesting that the structure is an iconic visual aspect of the chateau. See www.chateaudegoutelas.fr, accessed 13 March 2016.

Example 3.29. Ellington, *The Goutelas Suite*, “Something,” section **B**. Ellington arranges the ensemble from section **A** into a chorale texture. The steady, plodding chords evoke the imposing and austere walls of Goutelas. DEC Series 1, Box 135, Folder 08; REC, Series 2A, Box 10, Folder 7.

21 **B**

Figure 3.3. Photographs of the courtyard at Goutelas, showing the chateau’s walls.

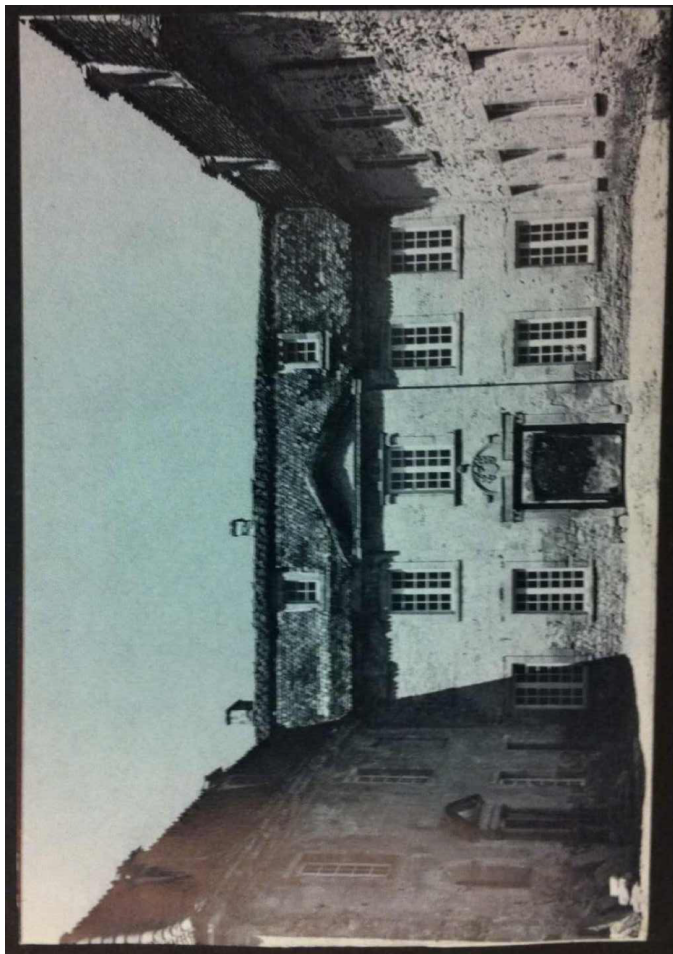


Image from Goutelas Souvenir Album
Duke Ellington Collection, Series 7, Box 14

piano, but by winds and trumpet in a widely spaced chorale. The initial phrase begins again, but Ellington transforms it to usher in the final chord: trombones and reeds voice a DM13(#11) before the trumpets enter with the flatted-seventh, flatted-ninth, and flatted-thirteenth, yielding a ten-note chromatic chord. This harmony could stand in metaphorically for the restored chateau, its totality brought together by a diverse group of people.⁸¹

“Having At It,” is the last new movement in *The Goutelas Suite*. Distinct from all other movements on *The Ellington Suites*, “Having At It” was written as solo vehicle for tenor saxophonist Paul Gonsalves. The full orchestra moves quickly through chords while Gonsalves improvises through the orchestra’s rests, creating a call-and-response between the band and soloist. Programmatically, the movement could be a representation of the impromptu jam session that followed Ellington’s concert, but barring a direct reference to that event, it seems out of character and unrelated to the subject at hand. It is likely that only Ellington knew about the jam session. *The Goutelas Suite*, as a kind of musical place-making, could only be seen as a strongly personal evocation of place by the bandleader, the only one who had been moved by this remote community in rural France.

Ellington’s seven-page treatment of his trip to Goutelas in *Music Is My Mistress* and his musical response’s five-year gestation period both suggest that the event touched Ellington deeply. Goutelas appeared as a realized utopian vision for brotherhood and cooperation, regardless of race, class, or creed. His band members did not have firsthand experience with this community. Their own realities were filled with the retrenchment policies of the Nixon administration in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement and the looming threat of the Cold War. To the band members, who lacked direct contact with Goutelas, Ellington’s impressions may

⁸¹ People who stereotypically do not “go together” (Catholics and communists, peasants and aristocrats, etc.), much like the chord members.

have seemed naïve, unrealistic, or overblown. We can hear the orchestra's recorded performance as a reflection of the members' skepticism or confusion about what Goutelas actually meant to their leader. For all Ellington's deep feeling about Goutelas, he struggled to make that personal impression accessible to his band.

3.3.3 The Duke Ellington Orchestra at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

On July 17, 1972, the Duke Ellington Orchestra began a unique engagement at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The weeklong "Ellington Festival Extension Course," attended by upward of 100 students, provided academic credit to those enrolled for a series of clinics, master classes, and concerts by the Ellington Orchestra. The festival was coordinated by associate Professor of Music James Latimer, whom Ellington first met in June of 1971 when he received an honorary doctorate from the university.⁸² "It was a great challenge, and I was determined," Latimer told Patricia Willard, "especially since Cress Courtney, Duke's manager, told me six times it couldn't be done."⁸³

The business contracts for the event were finalized on February 4, 1972. The university agreed to two separate contracts, the first a \$20,000 agreement for "Concerts plus afternoon 'workshops' with students" at the university, the second a \$5,000 fee for a concert in Milwaukee on Thursday, July 20. A two-page addendum to the contract delineated a schedule.

Latimer wrote to Ellington on July 12 with a revised master schedule. Monday featured afternoon clinics with members of the orchestra and the student body "in an informal workshop atmosphere," followed by a two-hour concert in the evening. Tuesday followed the same schedule; both days including rehearsal in the morning to early afternoon with the Ellington

⁸² Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 405.

⁸³ Patricia Willard, "Love and Learn: The Ellingtonians at UW," *Downbeat*, October 12, 1972, 12.

Orchestra and university-assembled Ellington Festival Chorus. On Wednesday, an extensive dress rehearsal for the orchestra and chorus in the afternoon culminated in a performance of Ellington's Second Sacred Concert that night. Thursday saw the first of Ellington's master classes and more afternoon clinics, and afterward, a trip to Milwaukee where the Orchestra performed another concert. Friday featured another Ellington master class, the final clinics, and the final concert. Willard's feature in *Downbeat* shows an added interview for the local broadcasting station that Ellington and Stanley Dance taped at 3:30 a.m. on Friday.

In addition to the revised schedule, Latimer's correspondence to Ellington included a handwritten note to the bandleader and a typed letter to all the members. The handwritten letter shows Latimer's excitement, gratitude, and deference to Ellington as he outlines the arrangements for the festival. He encourages Ellington to review the schedule and the attached "idea letter" for the band members, granting him the latitude to amend either as he saw fit.

Ellington was obviously the centerpiece of the university's Ellington Festival, but Latimer displayed a careful concern for the rest of the band's experience. In his letter to the band members, he stressed, "my only concern is for you to be comfortable and realize, your coming to Madison is really appreciated." He uses the word "relax" several times, ending the letter with the encouragement: "You have years of practical, useful knowledge and experience. Yours may differ from those who have studied more than they have performed. You have worked in the 'dust of the arena' and conquered the 'test of time.' Relax and tell us about it." Realizing that the members of the band generally operated under Ellington's authority and leadership, Latimer sought to validate them as authorities in their own right and assuage any fears any of them may have had about leading workshops. The festival's program also featured brief biographies of each band member, nine of which included photographs. Again, though Ellington—whose face

appeared prominently on the program's cover and whose biographical sketch took up several pages—was clearly the star of the event, the festival organizers nevertheless featured the band members more prominently than usual, which may have customarily included only verbal acknowledgement from the stage following a solo.

Willard's article highlights the enthusiasm surrounding the band's residency in Madison. Local shops hung Ellington posters in the windows and created Ellington displays. Record stores ordered huge stocks of Ellington albums, which quickly sold out. Students buzzed around the band's hotel in between the organized clinics and concerts, hoping to chat with members of the band, in many cases continuing conversations and debates begun in the workshops. Willard observed that "a new kind of off-the-bandstand camaraderie and vitality appear to develop in the ranks – each man carefully addressing the other as 'Professor.'"⁸⁴ Willard provides brief exchanges of dialogue from each workshop, which were organized by the orchestra's sections. In these brief excerpts, insights from each band member are validated and implicitly sanctioned by the academic environment, counting for university credit. Gonsalves' lecture at his workshop garnered particular praise from Willard, and Ellington also remembered it fondly in his autobiography.⁸⁵ Although Ellington's "master classes" still create a distinction between leader and the members of the ensemble, the appreciation and elevation of each member holds particular importance for my interpretation of *The UWIS Suite*. Although not every member of the orchestra participated in workshops (Cootie Williams and Harold Minerve declined), the experience at the University of Wisconsin gave them something concrete to say in their realization of Ellington's composition.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁸⁵ Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 406.

3.3.4 *The UWIS Suite*

The UWIS Suite received its premiere at the Ellington Festival's final concert on June 21, and evening which was dubbed "The Night of Suites."⁸⁶ The band recorded parts of *The UWIS Suite* at a stockpile session on August 25, 1972, but the version released on *The Ellington Suites* was not recorded until October 5. This session features three notable personnel changes from the band's residency at Wisconsin (see Table 3.12). First, trombonist Booty Wood returned to the band for the October date, having been replaced by former Ellingtonian Tyree Glenn during the Wisconsin festival due to a hand injury. Secondly, Paul Gonsalves had been rushed to the hospital on September 25 and convalesced for a few months before returning to the band. Russ Andrews replaced him during this time. The absences of Gonsalves and Glenn do not impact the recorded performance since the bulk of the piece relies on strong ensemble work and neither was responsible for a solo. The third personnel change is the addition of electric bassist Wulf Freedman, who complements Joe Benjamin on one of the movements.

On the LP, *The UWIS Suite* takes up the second half of the B-side with three movements (see Table 3.1, p. 158). The movements appear in a different order from the premiere performance, placing "Loco Madi" at the end of the album. The placement creates better flow for the album, especially because the October 5 session's rendition of "Loco Madi" turned into full-blown solo opportunities for Harold Ashby, Norris Turney, and Money Johnson. On the initial LP release, "Loco Madi" had a track length of 5:52, ending with a fade on Turney's solo. Subsequent CD reissues have extended the track to 9:08. Given the technical limitations of the time, it made sense to feature the extended piece as a closing track, prompting Stanley Dance's observation that the train portrayed in "Loco Madi" is "closer to [Ellington's] general picture –

⁸⁶ See the next section of this chapter for more detail on the concert.

Table 3.12. Personnel at the Duke Ellington Festival at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, July 17-21, 1972, and at *The UWIS Suite* recording session at Mediasound Studios in New York on October 5, 1972. An asterisk (*) indicates musicians who did not participate in the workshops.

Section	Musician		Instrument(s)
	Ellington Festival	<i>UWIS</i> session	
Reeds	Russell Procope	%	Alto saxophone; clarinet
	Harold Minerve*	%	Alto saxophone; clarinet; piccolo
	Norris Turney	%	Alto saxophone; clarinet; flute
	Harold Ashby	%	Tenor saxophone; clarinet
	Paul Gonsalves	Russ Andrews	Tenor saxophone
	Harry Carney	%	Baritone saxophone; bass clarinet
Trumpets	Cootie Williams*	%	Trumpet
	Mercer Ellington	%	Trumpet; flugelhorn
	Money Johnson	%	Trumpet; flugelhorn
	Johnny Coles	%	Trumpet
Trombones	Tyree Glenn	Booty Wood	Trombone
	Vince Prudente	%	Valve trombone
	Chuck Connors	%	Bass trombone
Rhythm	Duke Ellington	%	Piano
	Joe Benjamin	%	Bass
		Wulf Freedman	Electric bass (“Loco Madi” only)
	Rufus Jones	%	Drums

trains no end, shuffling, hooting and wailing across the great plains, and fading into the American night.”⁸⁷

The suite on the LP opens with “Uwis.” As is common for many Ellington works, the rhythm section of Ellington, Benjamin, and Jones initiates the track with an eight-measure statement of the bluesy main theme. When the reeds and trombones enter on the next eight-measure phrase, Ellington drops out for the rest of the track, despite the long and complex piece that follows. Table 3.13 shows the form of “Uwis,” which in its pacing, abundance of musical ideas, and focus on orchestral variety merits comparisons with “Something” from *The Goutelas Suite*. Here, Ellington does not link the sections of “Uwis” or navigate the difficult transitional

⁸⁷ Stanley Dance, liner notes to *The Ellington Suites*, Pablo 2310-762, 1976, 33 1/3 rpm.

Table 3.13. Form chart for “Uwis.”

Section	Length	Musical Features
Introduction	16 (8+8)	Rhythm section for first 8 m.; reeds and trombones for second 8 m.
A	32 (8+10+8+6)	Carney with the main theme and trombone backing (8 m.); Carney introducing new melodic material with Ashby providing a phrase extension (6 m. + 4 m.); Carney with the main theme and trumpet backing (8 m.); Reed statement (6 m.)
B	20 (4+8+8)	Shift to 3/4 time: trombone vamp (4 m.); clarinet counterpoint (8 m.); chordal figure with bari riff (8 m.)
C	26 (8+10+8)	Return to 4/4: block saxophone chords (8 m.); phrase that moves from saxophone pad over trombone riffs to brass figure under saxophone riffs (10 m.); tenor solo with trumpet punches (8 m.)
B'	24 (8+8+8)	Shift to 3/4: chordal phrase (8 m., repeated); elaboration of previous phrase (8 m.)
D	16	Chords in reeds; clarinet eventually breaks from the saxophone choir to take a more prominent lead role
E	8	Shout figures in brass, unison riff in reeds
F	24 (8+8+4+4)	Wah-wah trombones (8 m., repeated); Wah-wah trombones with high clarinet (4 m.); allusion to main theme (4 m.)
G	10 (4+6)	Descending reed chords (4 m.); thematic wind-down (6 m.)
H	48 (24 x2)	“Amusing repartee” featuring a duet between flute and piccolo, punctuated by bass clarinet and tenor saxophone (on the repeat, piano)

moments with piano interludes, which we can take as a testament to the musicians’ investment in their experience at UW-Madison. “Something” depended on Ellington’s authoritative voice to guide the tour of musical events, but “Uwis” relies on the collective of “professors” to honor the people of Wisconsin.

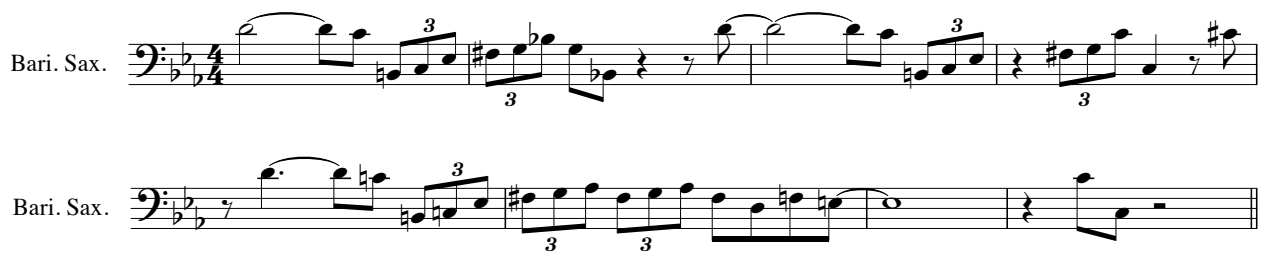
As it unfolds, “Uwis” constantly transforms. Ellington has written a variety of related material, but that material never returns exactly the same way. For instance, when Harry Carney plays the main theme in the first and third phrases of section **A**, he gives it two different rhythmic profiles while retaining the basic contour and pitch content (Ex. 3.30a-b). The saxes

Example 3.30. Ellington, *The UWIS Suite*, “Uwis,” thematic transformation. DEC Series 1, Box 398, Folders 9 and 10.


a) Initial theme statement, first phrase of section A.

Bari. Sax. 

b) Second theme statement, third phrase of section A. Note the shifted rhythmic profile

Bari. Sax. 

c) Thematic reference by saxophones in the final measures of section C.

Saxes 

d) Thematic reference by saxophones in the section E.

Saxes 

e) Final thematic statement in the last four measures of section F.

Cl. 

Saxophones 

Tpts. 

Tbns. 

reference the theme in the final measures of the second phrase in section **C** (Ex. 3.30c), and another variant appears in section **E** (Ex. 3.30d). The final statement appears in the last four bars of section **F** (Ex. 3.30e), and motivic fragments crop up throughout the final bars of section **G**. Contrasting thematic ideas, such as those introduced during the second phrase of section **A**, undergo a similar transformation as the piece unfolds. The thematic continuity enables the band to convincingly navigate the piece's many sections without Ellington's piano interludes to link the sections.

Example 3.31. Ellington, *The UWIS Suite*, "Uwis," transitions to 3/4 from 4/4. DEC Series 1, Box 398, Folders 9 and 10.

a) The first transition includes a trombone vamp to establish the new tempo.

$\text{♩} = 85 \text{ bpm}$ $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 150 \text{ bpm}$
 Saxes
 Bari. Sax.
 Flugelhorn
 Tbn.
 Cl.
 Cl. & Saxes 3
 Tbn.

b) The second meter shift moves directly into the new section.

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 92 \text{ bpm}$ $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 145 \text{ bpm}$
 Tenor
 Cl. + Saxes
 Tpts.
 Tbn.

“Uwis” also features several abrupt tempo and meter changes. Example 3.31a presents the first shift into triple-meter, which lacks any explicit preparation. To ease into this initial shift, Ellington writes a four-measure vamp for the trombones, who with the bassist and drummer establish the new groove. Only then do the reeds enter with the melodic material. For the second metric shift to 3/4 (Ex. 3.31b), more of the band is involved. Following a solo passage from Ashby with trumpet backing, the band moves straight into the waltz tempo. The reeds play a figure that emphasizes the first and third beat of the bar while the trombones attack on the weak second beat.⁸⁸ The repetitive nature of the 3/4 section gives it qualities of a vamp, but the figure constitutes the majority of the full twenty-four-bar section.

Each triple meter passage eventually shifts back into 4/4. In the first shift (Ex. 3.32a), a baritone riff leads to a brief quarter-note ritard in the trombones, which gives way to block chords in the original meter at a slightly faster tempo. For the second shift (Ex. 3.32b), a reed riff, again with slightly slowing quarter notes, moves into another block reed voicing. Because the same instrumental group prompts and executes the shift, the chords following the second shift back to 4/4 are simple half-notes in the new meter, rather than the syncopated melodic harmonization that follows the first shift back to 4/4. On the recording the band locks into tempo together and bridges the meter changes without audible guidance from Ellington.

Stanley Dance describes the closing section of “Uwis” as an “amusing repartee,” a duet between Turney on flute and Minerve on piccolo. Their phrases borrow motives and fragments from earlier in the piece but never directly repeat any material previously heard.⁸⁹ After an extensive dialogue, Carney plays a held low note on bass clarinet; as he ends Ashby adds a

⁸⁸ Note that the ensemble figures in 3.31b are less rhythmically complex than the reed figures in 3.31a, so additional metric preparation is not necessary.

⁸⁹ Interestingly, the score and parts to “Uwis” in the DEC do not include the music for this section.

Example 3.32. Ellington, *The UWIS Suite*, “Uwis,” transitions back to 4/4 from 3/4. DEC Series 1, Box 398, Folders 9 and 10.

a) First transition

The musical score for the first transition is written for three staves. The top staff is for Clarinet and Saxes (Cl. + Saxes), the middle for Baritone (Bari.), and the bottom for Trombones (Tbns.). The piece starts in 3/4 time with a tempo of approximately 150 bpm. The key signature has two flats. The first transition occurs at the end of the first measure, where the time signature changes to 4/4 and the tempo slows to approximately 92 bpm. The saxophone section enters with a complex rhythmic pattern in 4/4, while the baritone and trombones continue with their respective parts.

a) Second transition

The musical score for the second transition is written for three staves. The top staff is for Clarinet and Saxes (Cl. + Saxes), the middle for Trombones (Tbns.), and the bottom for Baritone (Bari.). The piece starts in 3/4 time with a tempo of approximately 145 bpm. The key signature has two flats. The second transition occurs at the end of the first measure, where the time signature changes to 4/4 and the tempo slows to approximately 90 bpm. The saxophone section enters with a complex rhythmic pattern in 4/4, while the baritone and trombones continue with their respective parts.

concluding thought on tenor. Turney and Minerve enter into another conversation that once again ends with Carney’s low clarinet, but Ellington concludes the piece with a fifth in the piano.

Like “Something” from *The Goutelas Suite*, “Uwis” features many disparate sections linked together in the same piece of music. Unlike that former piece, however, “Uwis” has strong motivic connections between the sections, enabling the band to transition through them without interspersing piano interludes from the leader. My interpretation of the suite also considers the musicians’ lived experience in realizing Ellington’s musical place-making. As I suggest in the next subsection of the chapter, the experiences at UW-Madison afforded the members of the band the ability to have a genuine statement on the place being evoked and an investment in that message’s communication.

Stanley Dance states that the polka that appears on the LP between “Loco Madi” and “Uwis” had been planned a month before:

“‘If I give you back the sawbuck borrowed from you yesterday,’ Ellington said one night after dinner, ‘will you go down to the Colony Record Shop and get some polka records?’ Incredulous, I departed on this unexpected errand, and was greeted at the store by equally incredulous salesmen. Upon my return, Ellington very much enjoyed my discomfort as he listened for some hours to the records, making very occasional notes, but pointing out all the finer features of polka playing.⁹⁰

The two-minute “Klop” conveys plenty of humor by presenting the renowned jazz ensemble playing in an unfamiliar style, but the piece never devolves into mockery or condescension.

Ellington uses a clarinet trio as the primary melodic ensemble throughout. The band executes the staccato rhythms crisply, distinguishing this miniature movement from the inexact fanfare from *The Goutelas Suite*. He also calls upon the trombones to employ tuba-like tonic and dominant alternations. These moments in particular evoke some of the hallmarks of the genre and imitate the idiom, allowing the situational humor, but also treating it with respect. We can hear this charitable interpretation reflecting the musicians’ respect and gratitude for their weeklong residence in Wisconsin, a state that has long-cherished certain strands of polka music.

The concluding track on the album, “Loco Madi” is an integrated arrangement of two free-standing compositions, each with one of the four-letter working titles that constitute the final track name. Table 3.14 presents a formal diagram of the recording. The piece starts with the rhythm section establishing the train shuffle groove and electric bassist Wulf Freedman chugging away on even eighths against the shuffle feel, outlining a chromatic motive. The eight-measure introduction moves seamlessly into “Loco.” The Ruth Ellington Collection houses a twenty-four-measure lead sheet for the piece in F major, which, given the parallel chord changes between mm. 1-4 and mm. 9-12 and the contrasting material that appears in mm. 17-24, suggests an **AA'BA**

⁹⁰ Liner notes to *The Ellington Suites*.

Table 3.14. Form chart for “Loco Madi” from *The Ellington Suites*. The jagged border shows where the initial fade for the LP release occurs; subsequent CD releases include an extended version of the take in which the ensemble returns to the “Loco” arrangement.

	Section	Length	Musical Features	Key
	Intro	8	Even eighth groove on electric bass, train shuffle rhythm, piano licks	F
Loco	A	16 (8+8)	Chordal figures for reeds, gradually joined by brass	
	B	6 (2+2+2) + 2	Sequenced riff in trumpets and reeds (6 mm.); concluding reed riff	
	Extension	2+2+2	Repetition of final 2 mm. of B , then modified repetitions modulating to D \flat	F \Rightarrow D \flat
	C	8	Chordal figures for reeds, low brass	D \flat
	Blues chorus 1	12	Tenor sax solo (piano comp)	
	Blues chorus 2	12		
Madi	Chorus 1	32 (AABA)	Harmon-muted trumpet solo over reed chords (A sections) and low brass and reed call-and-response (B section)	F
	Chorus 2	32 (AABA')	Competing chordal figures from brass and reeds (AA), reed riffs and alto solo (B), alto solo continues over piano comping (A')	
	Chorus 3	32 (AABA)	Alto solo continues over shout chorus-style arrangement (A sections) and reed riffs over brass pad (B section)	
	Vamp	2 (repeated)	Alto solo continues over piano licks and electric bass groove	
~~~~~				
Loco	<b>A</b>	16		
	<b>B</b>	8	Alto solo continues while the rest of the band follows the same arrangement from above	
	<b>Extension</b>	6		F $\Rightarrow$ D $\flat$
	<b>C</b>	8		D $\flat$
	<b>Blues Choruses</b>	12 (repeated)	Rhythm section continues to play blues in D $\flat$ , alto solo continues	

arrangement may have been intended. On the recording, the arrangement takes a turn from the copyrighted music with an **Extension** that modulates to D $\flat$ , and then a new eight-measure chordal figure (C), related rhythmically to what has come before. The new material provides a bridge into “Madi,” which features similar chordal figures and rhythmic construction.

Ellington joins the two pieces with two D $\flat$ -major blues choruses for Harold Ashby on tenor sax. Immediately following Ashby's second chorus, the band is back in F major and in the middle of the "Madi" arrangement, a 32-bar chorus structure. Money Johnson takes a solo in **Chorus 1** on Harmon-muted trumpet, and after a brief orchestral passage in **Chorus 2**, alto saxophonist Norris Turney begins to solo through the remainder of the track. The original LP releases faded during the **Vamp** that follows **Chorus 3**, but subsequent CD rereleases show that the band eventually returned and played the "Loco" section again, replicating the modulation to D $\flat$  while Turney continued his solo. The sequential **B** section and subsequent **Extension** throw Turney for a loop, as his blues-based solo figures do not work well over the ascending whole-step repetition, but he locks back into the blues idiom as the rhythm section continues in D $\flat$ .

The most salient aspect of the recording of "Loco Madi" from *The Ellington Suites* is how vibrantly the band is grooving. Ellington's cut-and-paste arrangement still left room for the band to jam together. Whether they were connecting their playing explicitly to their time in Madison or were simply feeding off the energy from the driving rhythm section and the soloists, "Loco Madi" provides a rousing conclusion to the suite as well as the album. The master fade even suggests that the band just kept on jamming, like the train, "endlessly" "into the American night."

*The Uwis Suite* provides a fitting close to *The Ellington Suites*, as it economically displays the hallmarks of the composer's approach to the medium. Each movement has unique qualities: "Uwis" a complex and intricate piece with a variety of integrated musical ideas, "Klop" an amusing musical tribute to an idiom foreign to the band's usual sound, "Loco Madi" an exciting showcase for improvisation and tight ensemble groove. The band inhabits this compositional assortment equally well, which we can hear as their shared vision for the piece's

realization. In short, the success of *The UWIS Suite* can be seen as the product of collaboration rather than composition. For the final part of this chapter, I offer a framework to consider the collaborative nature of these recordings, grounded in a reading of a live performance of the pieces that constitute the B-side of *The Ellington Suites*.

### 3.3.5 Place and the “Night of Suites” Concert

The last section of this chapter ventures into speculative territory, offering these anecdotes of place as an interpretive frame for hearing these two suites as products of collaboration. To ground my analysis, I focus on a concert recording where the orchestra performed both pieces—the “Night of Suites” concert that concluded the Ellington Festival at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on July 21, 1972. Though the two compositions receive equal billing by being showcased for the concert’s program, *The UWIS Suite* receives far more weight in terms of rehearsal, execution, and audience response. We can consider the place of the concert working in tandem with the places implied in the suites to create this particular musical moment, one in which the orchestra audibly delivers a strong performance of *The UWIS Suite* juxtaposed against a less well-executed rendition of *The Goutelas Suite*.

Geographers debate the definition of “place,” but many turn to John A. Agnew’s tripartite definition of the concept, which includes *locale*, the settings in which social relations are constituted; *location*, the longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates; and a *sense of place*, or the affective bond that people have to a place.⁹¹ For my analysis, the last component of Agnew’s definition is crucial. It is clear from Ellington’s written tribute and his verbal introduction (discussed below) that the composer had a strong sense of place when it came to Goutelas, a

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⁹¹ John A. Agnew, *Place and Politics: The Geographical Mediation of State and Society* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 28.

vivid picture of what that place meant to him. The members of the orchestra also had a strong sense of the University of Wisconsin as a place, especially since the concert took place there. Though we cannot claim definitively that the band members did not establish some sense of place about Goutelas, the performance from the “Night of Suites” concert suggests that Ellington’s musical tribute may have been too tightly wrapped in his personal and private sense of place.

My approach to place, especially as it relates to Ellington and his orchestra’s musical creations of place, has a precursor in Andrew Berish’s book *Lonesome Roads and Streets of Dreams*.⁹² Berish employs place as a frame to consider cultural trends of the 1930s and 1940s, especially the pace and mobility of American life around the Depression and Second World War. He also considers the physical boundaries of race inscribed in particular places and spatial practices.⁹³ The case study in this chapter admittedly does not point to such broad trends, but Berish’s frame leads him to important conclusions regarding the Duke Ellington Orchestra that are worth visiting here. First, Berish stresses the importance musical place-making held for Ellington and his music. Ellington uses place to structure much of his autobiography, and the list of place-inspired compositions extends further than the suites mentioned earlier in the chapter. But how does musical place-making work, particularly in Ellington’s music? According to Berish,

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⁹² Andrew S. Berish, *Lonesome Roads and Streets of Dreams: Place, Mobility, and Race in Jazz of the 1930s and '40s* (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

⁹³ Throughout his book, Berish describes his framing concept as a “hermeneutic of place,” but he does not engage with hermeneutic philosophers such as Hans Georg Gadamer or Paul Ricœur in defining the term. Instead, he seems to use “hermeneutic” as a synonym for interpretation, and he draws upon Henri Lefebvre’s ideas of space (abstract, socially produced, constantly changing) to inform his work. Berish’s reading of Lefebvre follows the French thinker’s reception through Marxist-leaning geographers such as David Harvey. As my work deals with these specific musical moments in offering musical readings and does not engage with the broader social ramifications of space, I have refrained from using the phrase “hermeneutic of place” and from bringing in discussions of economics and power.

Musical “places” are created when the formal and phenomenological spatiality of music meets the lived social experience of space. The musical performance of a place is not a thing but a dynamic process, a social interaction between people and musical sound. Thus, the places evoked in musical performances are more than metaphors; they are a kind of materialization of the places reference and of specific social relationships. We should not hear these Ellington performances as documentaries in sound or as a kind of musical tourism. Yet there was a change, a partial transformation of the space, and it provided a glimpse of other places and other social arrangements.⁹⁴

In a way, these musical performances of place transform the venues in which they are performed.

They do not transport audiences to the places evoked but create a new, idealized and simulated version of that place, rendered by composer, performer, and listener’s particular sense of the place and its interaction with the music unfolding in real-time.

The second insight Berish brings to the Ellington Orchestra is that this musical place-making was carried out collaboratively, even if Ellington provided the initial inspiration or wrote the entire composition. The in-the-moment realizations of these pieces, and the processes by which these musical places were created, were collaborations. In Berish’s words, drawing from literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, a frame of place “helps deconstruct [the] prevalent bias conveyed in jazz writing that Ellington *is* his orchestra and helps reinterpret the band’s music as dialogic, reflecting the basic heteroglossia of social practice where the meaning is always contextual and contingent.”⁹⁵ The band members bring their own personal geographies to bear on Ellington’s compositions, and the resultant performance carries a multiplicity of meanings derived from the variety of perspectives it contains. Place allows us to fracture our perception of these pieces as the product of one man, offering another way of considering the band members’ contributions.

At the “Night of Suites” concert, *The Goutelas Suite* was the second item on the program following a rousing performance of “C-Jam Blues.” The band would have started the concert

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⁹⁴ Ibid., 120–21.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 123.

without Ellington on stage, as the leader often made his entrance after the band had warmed up on a tune. The swell of audience applause after the conclusion of “C Jam Blues” seems to corroborate this, as an audience member is overhead hooting, “Duke! Duke!” Ellington approaches the microphone and flatters the audience with his typical charm:

Thank you, thanks very much ladies and gentlemen, you’re wonderful, absolutely I’ve never seen so many pretty people in an audience before in my life. I want to thank you for keeping our visit from being anti-climactic. It’s just *magnifique*. I am indebted to you.⁹⁶

He concludes these spoken remarks with a lead-in to *The Goutelas Suite*, saying, “and now with a little of the royal touch.” Ellington’s introductory remarks prepare them to be transported to a new place, but in a vague way.

The band then launches into “Goutelas,” omitting the fanfare from this performance. The short “Goutelas” serves as an introduction to the suite, setting the elevated mood that Ellington’s remark suggests. The brass plays uncertainly with fluctuating intonation, while the block chords in the reeds during the bridge are imbalanced. The overall impression is that of a band trying to navigate its way through an unfamiliar arrangement. The audience, who do not have a studio version with which to compare the performance, respond favorably to the short piece.

Ellington follows the applause with a lengthy description of the suite’s namesake, reproduced in full below.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is the first sound to be heard in the suite called “My Brothers of Goutelas.” Goutelas is a community about 50 miles from Lyon, France, where I think I saw the greatest manifestation of humanism that I have ever seen, where men of many extremes—religious, intellectual, the *paysans*, the *ouvrier*, the rich, the poor, people who related to the crown heads—all got together and rebuilt a 10th century castle. And at the opening of it, they called it the inauguration, I was presented, and I had to walk up this mountain between 100 children, fifty on each side of the street, each with torches in their hand. And a very moving scene in the middle of the night, a very dark night. And it was gorgeous. And all these people, many of the great artists of France and some of the great

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⁹⁶ My analysis is based on a bootleg recording of the concert, disseminated to Duke Ellington Music Society members and provided to me by the late Sjef Hoefsmit.

business men, and all extremes, they all got up, and I mean they didn't do it with money, they got together and rolled up their sleeves and did it together. And the greatest manifestation of humanism that I have seen, is titled "My Brothers of Goutelas." I was accepted as a brother.

Ellington's lengthy oration shows his attempts to communicate just how special he felt the event was. Note especially his insistence that "they didn't do it with money," reflecting how easy it might be for someone unfamiliar with Goutelas to have a mistaken impression of the community. He clearly takes pride in the fact that he was accepted as a brother, his pride swelling close to boasting at times. The tone of Ellington's voice, absent from the printed quote (although traces appear in the long sentences and the occasional repetition), also conveys a fervent effort to communicate something he felt ineffable. At no point does he offer an interpretation of his musical statement, however, which supports the idea that the suite is a very personal tribute.

The band move into "Get-With-Itness," taking the piece at a brisk tempo that exacerbates the technical challenges heard on the studio recording. During the second statement of the introductory riff, Minerve plays  $\hat{4}$  before correcting it to  $\flat\hat{5}$ . The reeds' scalar passages during the A sections get muddled. The middle section, with its polyrhythmic currents, sounds entirely lost: the trumpets enter early, whole passages are skipped, and the transition to the dominant seems to surprise the drummer and at least one reed player, who lingers on the preceding figuration. The driving rhythm of the piece prompts enthusiastic applause from the audience, despite the sloppy performance.

"Something" fares better, though the band sounds out of tune for many of the harmonies. As on the studio version, Ellington's piano transitions guide the form. On the concert recording, the piano emerges during the episodes as well, as the mic placement captures Ellington's time-keeping gestures of support. In his last interlude he rouses the band to a strong conclusion, as the entrances synchronize and the intonation improves.

As the conclusion to the suite, “Having At It” falters the most. Ellington provides an extended tempo-setting introduction, pounding out chords. The band actually navigates the rapid chord shifts rather well, but the piece is designed as a solo showcase for Gonsalves, and the tenor saxophonist does not rise to the occasion. His solo starts strong, but midway through the movement he seems to have exhausted all his ideas. It is especially noticeable through the 32-bar stretch where the rest of the band is tacet, with only the rhythm section providing support. Four to six measures pass before Gonsalves makes an utterance, often just a brief scalar passage. Ellington jokes good-naturedly with the audience following the performance, but he “punishes” Gonsalves in his usual way—calling up another solo number for the saxophonist.⁹⁷

The Ellington Orchestra’s rough performance of *The Goutelas Suite* can be attributed to a number of factors. First, the suite was performed early in the concert, so its possible the band was not fully warmed up. They did perform the opening “C Jam Blues” strongly, though that tune had been in the band book for years. The relative obscurity of *The Goutelas Suite* and the rarity with which it was performed were no doubt a factor, and the band likely did not devote as much time to the piece in rehearsal as it devoted to the in-progress *UWIS Suite*. However, knowing the particular history of the place, we can hear the uneven performance as a reflection of the band members’ lack of experience or interest in Goutelas. Ellington’s deep engagement with the place, evident in his opening remarks and piano playing, contrasts with his musician’s performance of the work.

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⁹⁷ Gonsalves struggled with substance abuse throughout his tenure with the band, which led to poor performances and instances of him falling out of his chair during concerts. Ellington valued him as a player, however, and tolerated his vice. Dan Morgenstern witnessed a similar “punishment” at a 1960s Newport Jazz Festival concert. Ellington featured Gonsalves on a two-tempo performance “Body and Soul,” followed by a breakneck rendition of “The Opener,” and lastly a slower “Happy Reunion.” The tenor saxophonist was visibly exhausted after the first solo but resignedly came forward each time. Dan Morgenstern, “The 1960s and 1970s: Triumph and Tragedy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Duke Ellington*, ed. Edward Green (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 160.

In fact, Gonsalves had “apologized” to Ellington earlier that day during the composer’s master class at the university, interrupting the class to play “Happy Reunion” with Ellington. By calling up the number after Gonsalves’ performance on “Having At It,” Ellington may have been punishing and forgiving his saxophonist simultaneously.



When the band premieres *The UWIS Suite* in the middle of the concert, they have locked into a confident and commanding groove. The premiere unfolds differently than it does on the album—Ellington begins with a four-minute, reflective piano solo. He then launches into his spoken introduction to the piece:

That, ladies and gentlemen, was me, quite a while ago, many many years ago when I was thinking about coming to Wisconsin. It's the beginning of the piece we've done as a salute to our friends in Wisconsin, and the real title is *UWIS*... And this is the "Anticipation," of course, we knew many wonderful, great people who came from Wisconsin.

He then lists a number of important people with ties to the state and also recounts an event from 1950 or 1951 where the band was featured at a concert with a number of polka bands. Though the band was booked to provide musical interludes but surprised everyone with their own rendition of a polka. The story indirectly prepares the listeners for "Klop," even if Ellington does not mention that the current suite also features a polka.

Ellington then defers to Harry Carney to add a number of audience members overlooked in the bandleader's list. Here in the spoken introduction to the piece we have evidence of a band member other than Ellington taking ownership and thanking the people of Wisconsin. While it does not allow us to assume that all members of the orchestra felt the same sense of gratitude, Carney's participation offers a glimpse that Ellington's desire to present a musical tribute to the University of Wisconsin may have been shared by others in the band.

After the list of thanks and anecdotes, Ellington concludes his introduction:

So we'll say, imagine that this is the beginning of some sort of suite or something, oh and then I finally came to Wisconsin and I came on a train, they had a train in those days, 1931, they had a train that went from Chicago and I think the big line was ninety miles in ninety minutes. Anybody remember? Oh well you're all too young to remember.

At the piano, away from the microphone, we overhear Ellington shouting alternately "Loco" and "Madi" to tell his band which charts to play. From the performance, we can conclude that he

ultimately decided to just play the latter. In Ellington's spoken introduction to *The UWIS Suite*, the train allusion and the polka story are the only signposts Ellington gives the audience on how to interpret the piece, but his high praise for the Wisconsinites in the audience would have prompted them to hear the work as a flattering tribute to them as a group.

Ellington begins "Loco Madi" at the piano with the rhythm section. He plays through the 32-bar "Madi" section of the piece. The bassist is working with a swung line rather than the train bass line heard on the LP. The live performance uses only this central segment of the LP's arrangement, with a Harmon muted solo from Money Johnson. Overall, the band swings tightly together, with Ellington adding ample encouragement and fills on piano.

The live recording moves immediately into "Uwis," with Ellington freely playing the main theme and gradually locking into the tempo. The band navigates the sprawling arrangement expertly, executing the meter changes deftly. Intonation problems and misaligned entrances do appear early in the performance, but the band quickly locks into a strong groove, driven by Benjamin's bass line. The flute and piccolo duet that closes the piece has a few technical complications and is the weakest moment in the suite's performance, but the acceleration and audible breathing captured in the recording suggests an impassioned visual display of the dueling wind instruments. When Ellington concludes the piece with his piano chord, the audience laughs and breaks out into loud applause. Ellington is heard yelling "Bravo! Bravo!" from the stage.

As Ellington begins his piano intro to "Klop," the crowd hollers, amused to hear the jazz artist channeling the polka idiom. Each instrumental entrance gets laughter from the audience, none as strong as when the trombones begin their tuba impressions. "Klop" is the tightest performance of the suite, with the band preserving the crisp rhythms needed to articulate the

polka.⁹⁸ The audience gives an extended and enthusiastic ovation following the suite's conclusion. Once again, the microphone picks up Ellington's enthusiastic shouts as well—he is clearly pleased with the band's performance.

Though named for particular places, these two suites ultimately are dedicated to people. *The Goutelas Suite* honored a group of people whom Ellington held very fondly but with whom his band members had no relationship. *The UWIS Suite*, however, was dedicated to the people in the audience at the “Night of Suites” concert. They had treated the Ellington Orchestra with a special kind of hospitality and respect: well-attended workshops and clinics, late-night conversations with eager students, enthralled audiences, a week-long celebration of their presence, and temporary titles of “professor.” The Ellington Festival offered them a rare opportunity to stay in place for an extended period of time, and the workshops and clinics offered band members an opportunity to step into the spotlight and speak as experts. The band had strong reasons to repay that kindness in their musical tribute.

Place offers an interesting way to hear these compositions as collaborations. The residence at University of Wisconsin yielded a strong musical result as the band members channel their personal experience into Ellington's score. The place of the venue would have had an effect as well, as the orchestra performed a piece dedicated to that particular audience. In announcing the suite as a dedication to the University of Wisconsin, Ellington prepared the audience to receive it even more enthusiastically while also calling on his band to rise to the occasion. The reciprocal nature of the audience/performer interaction cannot be overlooked. The audience responded favorably to *The Goutelas Suite*, but their enthusiasm was noticeably lower

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⁹⁸ The attacks in this live version of “Klop” are even more crisp than the attacks for the studio recording of the “Fanfare” from *The Goutelas Suite*, though both pieces require similar technique. This live recording shows the band was capable of successfully executing according to these stylistic demands, even if they do not in the studio recording.

than it was for *The UWIS Suite*. For all Ellington's personal investment in Goutelas, much of his musical tribute remained inaccessible to his band members and audience. While the band does not need a firsthand experience with all of Ellington's topical compositions for them to be realized, the peculiar circumstances of the Goutelas event, and Ellington's insistence on its uniqueness, all contributed to its opacity. In this regard, the band members were shut off from the possibility of collaboration. Berish argues that "music shapes and is shaped by our understanding of the specific places of our lives."⁹⁹ For an occasion so *sui generis* as what took place at Goutelas, Ellington alone had a reference. By contrast, *The UWIS Suite* comes alive as the Ellington band translates the experience of the very place in which they are performing into musical expression.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Though this chapter has approached the two sides of *The Ellington Suites* from different angles, it should be clear that collaboration and composition are intertwined in the album, as they are in all the Ellington Orchestra's recorded output. Ellington's compositional technique does emerge several times in the discussion of *The Goutelas Suite* and *The UWIS Suite*, and the chord construction in "Something," "Having At It," and "Loco Madi," as well as the motivic and thematic development in "Uwis," would be fertile grounds for further discussion, even as they are hinted at here. A collaborative discussion of *The Queen's Suite* might include greater emphasis on the soloists in "Sunset and the Mockingbird," for instance. Collaboration was mentioned explicitly in the band's ability to fluctuate between timbral blend and contrast in "Lightning Bugs and Frogs," and Billy Strayhorn's "Northern Lights" cannot be understood

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⁹⁹ Berish, *Lonesome Roads and Streets of Dreams*, 22.

except as a collaborative contribution to the suite. These currents flow together, and any separation is necessarily artificial.

Approaching these pieces from these perspectives expands our understanding of the recorded products of the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Focusing on compositional techniques in *The Queen's Suite* allows for a broader understanding of Ellington's musical language, not restricted to the mainstay compositions of the 1930s and 1940s ("Black and Tan Fantasy," "The Mooche," "Mood Indigo," "Ko-Ko," "Jack the Bear") nor the larger forms of *Black, Brown, and Beige* or *Harlem*. Rather than a thematically integrated composition, *The Queen's Suite* presents a set of distinct miniatures, each of which reveals a different facet of Ellington as composer. Similarly, by considering the lived experiences of composer and performer in *The Goutelas Suite* and *The UWIS Suite*, we can better appreciate how the sonic experiences of these compositions are mediated through collaborative performance. When Ellington taps into his band members' *sense of place* to evoke a particular place in his music, as he does in *The UWIS Suite*, the musical results can be quite satisfying.

Collaboration plays a further role in *The Ellington Suites*, since the posthumous release meant that Ellington had no direct say on the album's contents. The pieces do not have a unified conception like the arrangements on *Masterpieces by Ellington* do or even a coherent theme such as the one found on *At the Bal Masque*. Instead, Mercer Ellington and Stanley Dance, no outsiders to the Ellington organization, chose these selections. Duke Ellington's decision to feature all three suites at the "Night of Suites" concert at the University of Wisconsin-Madison shows that their grouping was not an arbitrary one.¹⁰⁰ Dance and Mercer would collaborate again on several other posthumous Ellington releases, most notably *The Private Collection* tapes, ten

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¹⁰⁰ Ellington only featured two movements from *The Queen's Suite* at the concert, "Le Sucrier Velours" and "The Single Petal of a Rose," which he performed as piano solos.

volumes of previously unreleased recordings from Ellington's stockpile sessions. It is to Volume Five of that series that we turn in Chapter 4, though the focus will not be on Dance and Mercer's collaboration. The two pieces on *The Private Collection, Volume Five: The Suites* were conceived as multimedia projects, the first music to accompany a documentary film and the second a ballet. Once again, Ellington's music lies at the nexus of composition and collaboration.



# Chapter 4: *The Private Collection, Volume Five: The Suites (New York, 1968 & 1970)*

## 4.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3, throughout his lifetime and increasingly in his later years, Ellington financed recording sessions of new material to add to his personal “stockpile” of music. He was constantly composing, and in many ways his recordings served as a more concrete sketch of material than his manuscripts did. Longtime Ellington confidant and ghostwriter for *Music Is My Mistress* Stanley Dance offers one explanation for the stockpile:

Duke Ellington became aware of the importance of records very early in his career, when they served nationally as a form of publicity second only to radio. Internationally, in as much as they extended his fame all around the world, they came first. He was well represented on major labels, but after World War II and a couple of union bans on recording, conditions in the record industry were chaotic. To safeguard his interests, he became a stockholder in the Musicraft company and also invested in the smaller but enterprising Sunrise. After both had failed, he set up his own Mercer label in 1950 and put his son in charge. Then as now, distribution was at once a key to success and a daunting problem. Despite a number of admirable records, Mercer also failed, but the name and license was retained for the purpose of recording what Ellington subsequently referred to as “the stockpile.”¹

Dance situates the contents of the stockpile as individual compositions for his band members that did not fit on the themed concept albums demanded by the major labels. Coupled with the sheer volume of material Ellington and Strayhorn composed, the labels could not absorb all of the material, and so “Ellington went ahead and recorded it anyway, at his own expense, so that he at least could *hear* how it sounded!”² We can also speculate that, despite his aversion to talking

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¹ Stanley Dance, liner notes to Duke Ellington, *The Private Collection, Volume One: Studio Sessions (Chicago, 1956)*, Saja 91041-2, 1987, compact disc.

² Ibid.



about his legacy and even mentioning his mortality, Ellington and his inner circle knew that the stockpile would be a way of augmenting and continuing his body of work posthumously.

Historian Harvey Cohen also traces the origins of the stockpile to the 1950s. Cohen proposes a two-fold reasoning for the stockpile, expanding on Dance's explanation: "[The stockpile recordings] served as a creative outlet since Ellington and Strayhorn composed and arranged more material than most companies were willing to release. But they also probably were used as a form of creative control over their work."³ The creative control was important because in the late 1940s and 1950s, Ellington found his newer material competing with leftover sessions for past labels. Former labels would time the releases of their backlog sessions to coincide with new Ellington albums, riding the wave of publicity from their competitors. The stockpile allowed him to hear his newest compositions without those works falling into the catalogues of record companies that would not release the material until Ellington had moved to a new label, if at all.

After Ellington's death, Mercer Ellington issued several of these stockpile sessions commercially, a way of continuing the Ellington revenue stream even in the wake of the leader's passing. *The Ellington Suites* was among the first stockpile recordings released, and releases continued for years. As Cohen put it, "he authored so much material during the last eighteen years of his life that, fifteen years after his death, 'new' Ellington compositions were still being released."⁴ Although not the last unissued Ellington material to see commercial release, in the late-1980s a large portion of the stockpile sessions was released on Saja Records. Spearheaded by Mercer Ellington and Stanley Dance, the ten-volume set emerged in two waves, first in 1987 and next in 1989, as *The Private Collection*. Two of the ten volumes are live concert recordings

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³ Harvey G. Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 287.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 317.

that offer a glimpse into the band's repertoire and sound outside the studio. The remaining volumes present a curated selection of Ellington's pet studio sessions, which include new arrangements of classic compositions, ensemble blues performances, and a few extended compositions. The tenth volume, for instance, provides the most complete recording of *Black, Brown and Beige* after its premiere in 1943.⁵ As a whole, *The Private Collection* offers a remarkable insight to Ellington's working processes. Perhaps more importantly, it reveals how, for Ellington, recording became an integral aspect of composing.

This chapter focuses on *The Private Collection, Volume 5: The Suites (New York, 1968 & 1970)*, an album that contains two of Ellington's long-form compositions: *The Degas Suite* and *The River*.⁶ Unlike the other volumes in the series, however, these recordings do not fit the traditional characterizations of Ellington's "stockpile" material, even though Ellington personally financed the recordings and did not intend them for commercial release. In both cases, the works were recorded in service of a larger collaborative project. *The Degas Suite* is actually the edited soundtrack for a 1968 documentary film by Sam Shaw titled *Degas' Racing World*, inspired by the racetrack paintings of Edgar Degas and his fellow Impressionists. The 1970 recording of *The River* is the Ellington band's interpretation of a ballet score that Ellington wrote for Alvin Ailey and the American Ballet Theater. It was intended as a temp track to assist Ailey with the choreography and to serve as a reference for conductor Ron Collier to orchestrate a symphonic version.

Unlike previous chapters, which have treated composition and collaboration separately as aspects of different pieces on a given album, each half of this chapter will address both aspects

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⁵ Duke Ellington, *The Private Collection, Volume Ten: Studio Sessions (New York & Chicago: 1965, 1966, & 1971)*, Saja 91234-2, 1989, compact disc.

⁶ Duke Ellington, *The Private Collection, Volume Five: The Suites (New York: 1968 & 1970)*, Saja 91045-2, compact disc.

simultaneously because of their centrality to the works at hand. I examine the pieces in reverse chronological order, addressing *The River* and then *The Degas Suite*. *The River* serves as a more typical example of Ellington's collaborative intermedia projects: composing at the last minute, not giving his collaborators their desired lead time, and constantly revising material. The recording of *The River* from *The Private Collection, Volume Five* nicely captures this fluid state, since the movements were later orchestrated by Collier for ballet performances. Ellington's working relationship with Ailey has also been well-documented, and I draw on those sources to provide the most complete account to date of this collaboration. Though it produced a critical and commercial success, the struggles of working collaboratively emerge more explicitly in this discussion than they have appeared elsewhere in the dissertation.

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to *The Degas Suite*, which tells a different story. First, the recording presents the finished soundtrack, a rare example of a final Ellington product.⁷ Second, the project's failure did not seem tied to Ellington's reluctance to finalize the music. Finally, using the previously unexamined script from the Duke Ellington Collection, we can revisit Ellington's music in light of the images they were intended to accompany, illuminating the way Ellington's visual imagination translated into musical expression.

## **4.2 *The River***

The commission for *The River* came from Lucia Chase, the director of the American Ballet Theater, in 1970. Chase tapped dancer and choreographer Alvin Ailey to collaborate with Ellington on a new ballet for the company. According to Ailey, Chase told him bluntly, "Alvin,

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⁷ Even if the soundtrack was finalized, however, Ellington still viewed the material as in development: he used a portion of *The Degas Suite* as a movement for *The River*.

I've got a ballet for you to make. You and Duke Ellington. We must have the two of you.”⁸

Ailey, who studied under Lester Horton, Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, and Charles Weidman, founded the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater company in 1958.⁹ His two signature dances, *Blues Suite* (1958) and *Revelations* (1960), focused on the experience of African Americans, and the latter became one of the most important dance works of the twentieth century.¹⁰ His focus on African American expression as well as his celebrated reputation made him an ideal collaborator for Ellington, though the American Ballet Theater was taking a chance on the unproven pairing. Chase flew Ailey to Vancouver where, in the early morning hours between 3:00 and 7:00 a.m., Ellington discussed his idea for “a suite of dances based on water, with a line about life that goes from birth to death.”¹¹ Ailey reported that Ellington familiarized himself with a number of classical water-inspired pieces, including Debussy’s *La Mer*, Handel’s *Water Music*, and Britten’s *Peter Grimes*.¹²

Ellington and Ailey had worked together in 1963 on Ellington’s show *My People*, which was written and performed to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. The composer had seen Ailey’s *Revelations* and asked him to choreograph some numbers for the Chicago performance. Ailey recalled that as the performance drew nearer, he began to assist with some of the staging and coordination because Ellington was attempting to do it all himself. Ailey

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⁸ Alvin Ailey, *Revelations: The Autobiography of Alvin Ailey* (Secaucus, N.J: Carol Pub. Group, 1995), 114.

⁹ Katherine Teck, ed., *Making Music for Modern Dance: Collaboration in the Formative Years of a New American Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 189.

¹⁰ Julia L. Foulkes, *Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey*, Cultural Studies of the United States (Chapel Hill ; London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 180.

¹¹ Ailey, *Revelations*, 115. In 1970, Ellington told Whitney Balliett that he and Ailey first discussed the ballet “about a year or so ago...in Vancouver.” Exhaustive accounts of Ellington and the band’s travel schedule do not document them in Vancouver any time in 1969, but the coincidence of Ellington and Ailey’s recollections points to a missing engagement in their touring schedule. Whitney Balliett, *Collected Works: A Journal of Jazz, 1954-2000* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 334.

¹² Hubert Saal, “Dance Me a River,” *Newsweek*, July 6, 1970, 86.

saw firsthand the composer's tendency to work up against a deadline, but the experience did not prepare him for their collaboration on *The River*.

Ailey had gotten a sense of Ellington's full schedule while working on *My People*, but he received a more complete picture while the two were staying in Toronto in March of 1970:

I had a room right down the hall from him... He would play something for me on an electric piano and ask if I liked it. His calls to me at four o'clock in the morning became a ritual. He would say, "Hey, Alvin, you ready to work?" he liked to work from four-thirty until seven o'clock in the morning. Then he would go to bed and sleep until three or four in the afternoon. He would tinker again on the piano before getting dressed up, looking for all the world like Big Daddy, and going down to orchestra rehearsal... At eight his room would be full of sixty-year-old ladies, probably Canadian, whom he called girls... The shows were at nine and eleven, and during the interval between shows he would party with the ladies.¹³

Ellington's hectic schedule left a profound impression on Ailey, who told Hubert Saal "That man thrives on momentum. It reproduces itself."¹⁴

Ailey was enamored with Ellington's music for the ballet, but he became increasingly frustrated with Ellington's compositional process. Ailey wanted to work with completed sections of the piece so he could have an overarching view of each movement's choreography, but Ellington would send him bars at a time and was constantly revising and reworking passages. According to occasional Ellington lyricist and friend Don George,

Three days before rehearsals were due to start, Ailey still hadn't received the written music. He had occasionally received bits and pieces in the mail, a few bars now and then that didn't quite seem to match up. One day he got a tape with four pieces, and he was trying to choreograph those. He finally threw up his hands. All the Ballet Theatre [sic] people were in the rehearsal studio and Ailey was all hot to go, but he was completely frustrated because he didn't have the music. He flipped. He went clean out of his mind. He hurled the whole thing—notebooks, tapes and all—up against the mirror and yelled, "Fuck it, I can't work like this."

At that precise moment the door opened and in walked Duke in his white cashmere coat, surrounded by his entourage. The whole room stopped. In fact, it fell to its knees. Ailey told me later that what he wanted to scream was,

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¹³ Ailey, *Revelations*, 116.

¹⁴ Saal, "Dance Me a River."

“Motherfucker, where’s the music?” Instead they went outside and sat and talked. Ailey told Duke he couldn’t work without the whole score.

Duke said to Alvin, “Listen, if you’d stop worrying about this music and do more choreography, we’d be a whole lot better off.”¹⁵

After this heated scene, George’s narrative concludes happily, with Ellington guiding Canadian conductor Ron Collier to produce the orchestral arrangements and the ballet coming together just in time. The reality was different: conductor Maurice Peress reports that the American Ballet Theater brought him to transcribe Ellington’s piano tape of the movements so the company’s rehearsal pianist could start and stop as needed; ultimately, jazz organist Wild Bill Davis (who was playing with the Ellington orchestra at the time) did most of the transcription work.¹⁶

Ellington did not linger to oversee the orchestration as George suggests, and his guidance was minimal. Collier later said:

...he gave me one piece. It was called “Lake” and it was up in his room. Just a little piece of sheet music, single-line chord changes and he said, “This is a pas de deux, two dancers.” I said, “What would you like me to do with it?” He says, “Well, you know what to do with it.” You know, it’s almost seven minutes long on the tape but that’s all the instructions: “You know what to do with it.” So I went home and it sat on the brief case.¹⁷

Collier also helped copy out band parts for the band’s rough recordings of the movements, so while he was intimately acquainted with Ellington’s scores and parts, he translated them into their orchestral guise largely independently of Ellington.

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¹⁵ Don R. George, *Sweet Man: The Real Duke Ellington* (New York: Putnam, 1981), 195–96. George’s biography is a problematic source, as it consists mainly of uncited anecdotes, many of them illicit, as a way of getting at “the real Duke Ellington.” George has a propensity for presenting elaborate details for scenes at which he was not present (in the above quote, for instance, his claim that “[the whole room] fell to its knees”). The exchange between Ellington and Ailey is well-documented, however, and George’s description captures the tension associated with the production, even if it contains some exaggerations.

¹⁶ Maurice Peress, *Dvořák to Duke Ellington : A Conductor Explores America’s Music and Its African American Roots* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 233, n.8.

¹⁷ Ron Collier (Ellington ’96, Toronto, 1996). Quoted in Stanley Slome, “The River,” *Duke Ellington Society, Southern California Chapter Newsletter*, accessed February 16, 2016, <http://ellingtonweb.ca/Slome-River.htm>.

Ailey staged six of the thirteen movements for the ballet's premiere on June 25, 1970. Clive Barnes of the *New York Times* reported that the program was given as "Seven Dances from a Work in Progress Entitled *The River*," which was a surprise to those who were expecting a full premiere. Nonetheless, Barnes and other critics received the work with much enthusiasm, calling it "the most considerable piece from Mr. Ellington since his *Black, Brown and Beige Suite*; it is quite lovely."¹⁸ Though the Ellington band had recorded all of the work's movements, the last was taped mere weeks before the premiere, and Ailey did not have adequate time to complete the choreography. Ellington's decision to provide Ailey with recorded versions of the music rather than written scores (for which the ballet company repeatedly asked) suggests that for Ellington, the act of recording was part of his compositional process.

In what follows, I proceed diachronically through the movements of *The River*. The recording by the Ellington orchestra serves as the anchor, but my analysis looks backward to Ellington's embryonic piano recordings of the movements and looks forward to Collier's symphonic treatment of the movements performed for the ballet. In addition to musical analysis, I draw on Ellington's two-page typeset scenario for the ballet, contemporary reviews, and dance scholar Thomas DeFrantz's examination of Ailey's choreography. Together with a consideration of the score and parts in the Duke Ellington Collection and Collier's conductor's score for the symphonic orchestration, I provide the fullest account to date of this collaboration.

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¹⁸ Clive Barnes, "Dance: Unfinished 'River': Ballet Theater Presents Ailey-Ellington Work," *New York Times*, June 26, 1970, 30. In his biography of Ellington, Terry Teachout claims that the ballet "was danced to a tape of the score." Barnes' review credits Jamie Leon as the conductor, however, and makes no mention of the tape; nor do any other sources I have seen. Mr. Teachout has not responded to requests for information on the source of his claim. Terry Teachout, *Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington* (New York: Gotham Books, 2013), 350.

### 4.2.1 Scenario and Score(s)

Ellington's typeset scenario for the ballet presents twelve discrete movements, ending with a reprise of the work's opening.¹⁹ He appears to have had a great affinity for the ballet's program: he verbally recounted it to Whitney Balliett in a 1970 interview, reprinted it in full in his autobiography *Music Is My Mistress*, and included it as the text for his 1971 Christmas card.²⁰ Each movement corresponds to a different point of the titular river's course, starting in "The Spring," passing through "The Lake," "The Falls," and ultimately ending in "The Mother, Her Majesty the Sea." Table 4.1 provides a listing of the movements as well as their timings on *The Private Collection* track.²¹ The Ellington orchestra recorded all twelve movements over the course of several weeks in 1970 leading up to the ballet's premiere. Ellington also recorded preliminary piano versions of many of the movements on May 11, 1970. Ailey choreographed six of the ballet's movements for the premiere, but the finished ballet and Collier's completed orchestration included eight different movements, some under different titles. Table 4.2 presents a matrix of the various recordings and versions of the movements from *The River*.

Ellington's opening to *The River* is a movement titled "The Spring," "which is like a newborn baby," to quote Ellington's written scenario. Musically, the piece consists of a D major pedal, a brief shift to G major, and a return to the D major pedal. Above these static pedal points, Ellington flits between major, minor, and other modal inflections. The piece changed little from its first recording in May—Ellington kept the opening as a piano piece. On the later recording he

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¹⁹ Duke Ellington, typeset scenario to *The River*, Duke Ellington Collection, Series 4, Box 9, Folder 5.

²⁰ Balliett, *Collected Works*, 334; Duke Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), 201–203; Duke Ellington, Christmas card, Ruth Ellington Collection, Series 3, Box 2, Folder 2.

²¹ The CD issue of *The Private Collection, Volume Five* presents each suite as a single track, although certain CD players can skip to "bookmarks" embedded in the tracks that correspond to the individual movements.



**Table 4.1.** *The River* movements and track timing (total timing — 43:47)

	Movement	Start time
I.	“The Spring”	00:00
II.	“The Run”	02:28
III.	“The Meander”	05:04
IV.	“The Giggling Rapids”	10:13
V.	“The Lake”	14:34
VI.	“The Falls”	21:28
VII.	“The Whirlpool”	24:28
VIII.	“The River”	27:51
IX.	“The Neo-Hip-Hot Kiddies Communities”	31:47
X.	“The Village of the Virgins”	33:34
XI.	“The Mother, Her Majesty the Sea”	38:44
XII.	“The Spring” (reprise)	41:20

is more deliberate with his playing, however, and he has removed the rippling accompaniment he used during the initial piano solo.

In the ballet, Ailey draws from Ellington’s conception and designs the movement around a single man, rising from the ground as if born from the earth. Throughout the dance he learns to control his movements, which mature from a crawl to confident leaps. He interacts with an ensemble of fourteen paired dancers who symbolize a stream already in motion. According to DeFrantz, “the newborn man’s movements build on modern dance conventions of everyday gesture and the visible release of breath, while the ensemble maintains a classical balletic carriage of held upper body and full extension of the limbs.”²² The choreography suggests a deference to the tradition of ballet while also suggesting modern dance’s maturation. Dance critic Jennifer Dunning reveals that Ailey’s initial ideas for the movement exceeded the aquatic program of the ballet: “a magnet offstage RIGHT. Being drawn into life...into the future reaching always up & out carried on shoulders—girls frightened—sheltered by men.” “Young

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²² Thomas DeFrantz, *Dancing Revelations: Alvin Ailey’s Embodiment of African American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 148.

**Table 4.2.** Matrix of The River recordings/performances. The Ellington Orchestra's 1970 recordings form the complete work as issued on *The Private Collection, Volume 5*. The titles vary based on the ensemble, but they are placed in the appropriate row that matches the movement listing on Table 4.1.

	Piano		Ellington Orchestra (1970)				Ballet performances		
	May 11, 1970	May 25	June 3	June 8	June 15	1970	1971	1972	
I.	"The Spring"	"The Spring"				"Spring"	"Spring"	"Spring"	
II.	"The Run"	"The Run"							
III.	"The Meander"	"The Meander"					"Meander"	"Meander"	
IV.	"Grap"	"The Giggling Rapids"					"Giggling Rapids"	"Giggling Rapids"	
V.	"The Lake"	"The Lake"				"Lake"	"Lake"	"Lake"	
VI.				"The Falls"		"Falls"	"Falls"	"Falls"	
VII.			"The Whirlpool"			"Vortex"	"Vortex"	"Vortex"	
VIII.			"The River"			"Riba (Mainstream)"	"Riba"	"Riba"	
IX.	"Stud"		"The Neo-Hip-Hot Kiddies Communities"						
X.			"The Village of the Virgins"			"Two Cities"	"Two Cities"	"Two Cities"	
XI.					"The Mother, Her Majesty the Sea"		"The Sea"	"The Sea"	

**Example 4.1.** Introduction to “The Spring.”

a) Collier’s orchestral arrangement

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a horn (Hn.). The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 5/4 time signature. It starts with a *solo* marking and a *mp* dynamic. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with a triplet of eighth notes at the end of the first line. The second staff continues the melody, starting with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a section marked *accel...* and *rit.*, and ending with a section marked *rit.* containing a triplet of eighth notes and a group of seven eighth notes.

b) Ellington’s written score (REC, Series 2A, Box 22, Folder 3)

The image shows a single staff of musical notation in a treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody features two triplet markings over eighth notes, followed by a quarter note, and then a series of eighth notes.

people of U.S.A. moving toward a new freedom.”²³ Like his earlier successes, Ailey designed his work to tap into political realities. His statements on American life—especially concerning race—do appear elsewhere in *The River*, even if they were excised from “The Spring.”

Collier opens the orchestral version of “The Spring” with a solo horn repeating the D4 tonic, decorated with upper and lower neighbors (Ex. 4.1a). The alternation between E and E_b as neighbor to D immediately sets the stage for the modal shifts that define the movement. This introductory line demonstrates that Collier’s score is based primarily off of a two-page piano sheet that Ellington had prepared: neither of Ellington’s piano recordings include this neighbor figure, but it was indicated on the written version (Ex. 4.1b). At the same time, the rhythmic delivery of the movement’s themes also suggest that Collier was familiar with Ellington’s performance of the piece, as it shifts constantly between meters of 5/4, 4/4, and 3/4, just as the melody shifts between its modal inflections (Ex. 4.2 compares the two interpretations of the main

²³ Jennifer Dunning, *Alvin Ailey: A Life in Dance* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1996), 256.

**Example 4.2.** Main theme of “The Spring.”

a) Ellington’s written score (REC, Series 2A, Box 22, Folder 3)



b) Collier’s orchestral arrangement



theme to “The Spring”). To his credit, Collier successfully adapts Ellington’s free, ruminative piano interpretation of “The Spring” into a fixed and measured work, and its simple melodic gestures are well-suited to the changing timbres of the orchestra.

The ballet’s next intended movement, “The Run,” reuses a theme from *The Degas Suite*, where it appears as the cue “Improvisations—Marcia Regina.” In *The Degas Suite*, the piece is a simple 16-measure march theme that occurs first as a trombone solo and next in a tutti orchestration. Ellington’s piano recital of “The Run” shows that he elaborated the original version substantially, adding an introduction that returns as a conclusion along with two contrasting sections as episodes to create an **IABACAI** form.²⁴ The introduction is a cadenza-like melody for flute. The **B** section departs from the steady march of the **A** sections and explores a jazz waltz time, while the **C** section features a dramatic quickening of the tempo. In the full band orchestration, reed players Norris Turney and Harry Carney split a contrapuntal adaptation of the march theme for flute and bass clarinet, respectively, for the first **A** (Ex. 4.3). The full band enters for the waltz time episode, the overall shift similar to the meter shift in “Uwis” from

²⁴ I use **I** here for “Introduction” (though it is also used as the “Outro”), since here as in many Ellington compositions the musical idea is appended to either side of the main formal design.

**Example 4.3.** Ellington’s contrapuntal treatment of the main theme in “The Run.” The bass clarinet plays the main melody while the flute provides ornamental counterpoint. DEC, Series 1, Box 308, Folder 13.

The musical score consists of four systems, each with two staves: Flute (Fl.) and Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.).

- System 1 (Measures 1-4):** Flute starts with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) marked with a first ending bracket. Bass Clarinet plays a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G3, and a quarter rest.
- System 2 (Measures 5-8):** Flute continues with a triplet of eighth notes (C5, D5, E5) and a quarter note F5. Bass Clarinet plays a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G3, and a quarter rest.
- System 3 (Measures 9-12):** Flute features a triplet of eighth notes (F5, G5, A5) and a quarter note B5. Bass Clarinet plays a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G3, and a quarter rest.
- System 4 (Measures 13-16):** Flute plays a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G4, and a quarter rest. Bass Clarinet plays a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G3, and a quarter rest.

*The Uwis Suite* (see Ch. 3), though here the band sounds more tentative.²⁵ Ellington’s shifting of meters may have been prompted by his desire to make a compelling dance work, but it also clear from the remaining movements of *The River* as well as “Uwis” that Ellington was concerned with metric juxtaposition in his later years. The tutti **A** section that follows the waltz of **B** most resembles the original formulation in *The Degas Suite*. For the **C** episode, Ellington rushes the

²⁵ Even though “Uwis” was also recorded for the stockpile, because the session came on the heels of the work’s public premiere at the University of Wisconsin—Madison it had most likely been better rehearsed. The recording session for *The River* may have been the first time the band encountered Ellington’s score for “The Run.” The band’s smoother execution of the meter shifts in “Uwis” would have been a result of more time with the piece, in addition to the place-connections discussed in Chapter 3.

tempo as he had on his solo recording and plays the segment on piano unarranged. The march theme returns for flugelhorn and muted trumpet against Turney's flute countermelody, and then Turney repeats the introduction to close the movement.

It is worth noting how the bizarre shifts in rhythmic feel and tempo closely match Ellington's written scenario for *The River*: "he feels compelled to march like his little toy soliders," then is attracted to a pretty puddle that "momentarily becomes the object of his affection." He recalls his duty to march and returns to it, before he notices a "big bubble running down on him. He scrambles to get out of the way and escape." He does, and relieved, continues his march "until it becomes boring."²⁶ Ellington was very attached to the details, recounting all the elements in his conversation with Balliett, and it is clear from his manuscripts that he wanted the music to communicate this specific story.²⁷ "The Run" never appeared in Ailey's ballet and was not orchestrated by Collier, possibly because the music seemed too overdetermined by Ellington's program.

Following his purposeful march and the narrow miss of the bubble, the river finds himself "considering whether to go back to the cradle or pursue his quest in the wake of the big bubble." Ellington names the next movement "The Meander," and his music attempts to evoke the wandering sense of the word as well as its literal sense as a course of a river. The main musical idea of the movement is given in Example 4.4. Over a static chord, Ellington slinks up and down a chromatic line, audibly referencing the winding course of a meandering river. In the original piano version, Ellington repeats this idea twice, plays an improvisatory middle section, and then returns to the theme again to close the two-and-a-half-minute track.

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²⁶ Ellington, scenario for *The River*.

²⁷ Balliett, *Collected Works*, 334. The fast piano section of "The Run" is labeled "Big Bubble Comin'" on many manuscripts in the Duke and Ruth Ellington Collections.

**Example 4.4.** Ellington’s short score for “The Meander.” DEC, Series 1, Box 308, Folder 8.

**Table 4.3.** Basic form of “The Meander,” as recorded on May 25, 1970.

Section	Primary instrument
Theme	Piano
<b>Cadenza</b>	Flute
<b>New section</b>	Ensemble
Theme	Trumpets
<b>Waltz</b>	Piano
Theme (4/4)	Saxes
<b>Waltz</b>	Ensemble
Theme	Trumpets
Theme (4/4)	Saxes
<b>Interlude</b>	Ensemble
Theme	Piano
<b>Cadenza</b>	Flute

When the orchestra visited the studio a few weeks later, Ellington had expanded the piece’s conception (see Table 4.3). Ellington starts the track with the theme on piano, but then Turney plays a solo flute cadenza that meanders between F minor and dominant-inflected arpeggios. As in “The Run,” Ellington has notated the introduction, though Turney takes rhythmic liberties with the music. A new section of music follows, which Ellington has derived from the closing measures of the main theme. The winding chromaticism appears in the new

section as well. Ellington plays a solo piano phrase following an orchestrated arrangement of the theme. Once again Ellington has shifted into a waltz time; the rhythm section, playing tentatively along, sounds poised to commit toward the end of the phrase, but then Ellington brings in the saxophones to repeat the main theme in a more direct 4/4 meter. Waltz time returns for the members of the ensemble, who struggle through the passage.

The relative formal stasis of “The Meander,” which returns to the theme in 5/4 and 4/4 versions a total of six times, coupled with the back and forth chromaticism of the main theme, provides a musical analogue to the indecision depicted in Ellington’s scenario, while the contrasting waltz episodes look ahead to “The Giggling Rapids.” Ailey did not choreograph this movement for the premiere, though he added it the following year with Collier again providing the orchestration. In Collier’s hands, the rhythmic shifts are more precisely executed, and the overall character is lightened. The mood shift reflects Ailey’s choreography, which features two men alternately partnering with a woman “as a playful representation of a curvy tributary... The dancers...shift frequently from portentously weighted strides to light bourées, the whole requiring broad physical projection.”²⁸ Perhaps the departure from the Ellington orchestra’s brooding delivery of “The Meander” comes from an attempt to recapture and integrate the tone of the discarded movement “The Run.”

Like “The Meander,” by the time the band recorded it on May 25, 1970, “The Giggling Rapids” underwent a number of transformations from Ellington’s initial piano solo. The copyright lead-sheet presents a 64-bar tune in triple-meter, stitched together from two 32-bar **AA'BA''** choruses. The choruses are identical except for chord substitutions at the end of the **B** phrases and more importantly the turnaround between the two choruses (**A''**). When he arranges

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²⁸ DeFrantz, *Dancing Revelations*, 153–54.



**Example 4.5.** Melody of Ellington’s “The Giggling Rapids,” with chord changes from A. REC, Series 2A, Box 22, Folder 2.



the piece for his full band, Ellington adapts the double-chorus structure with alternate endings to organize the movement. The melody uses three notes and repeats in each eight-measure phrase (Ex. 4.5), again the lone exception coming in the turnaround where the melody stays on G instead of falling to the tonic Eb. On the piano solo version, Ellington plays through the tune once and then repeats the form twice more, articulating the chord changes without including the simple melody. From this recorded sketch, we can hear that Ellington casts the piece as a fast, lighthearted waltz, as he stresses the rhythmic element during his comping choruses. As he told Balliett, “he skips and he dances and he runs until he’s exhausted.”²⁹ The tune’s strong upbeat in each phrase propels the music forward. Again, Ellington seems to be consciously exploring rhythmic effects in his composition.

When the full band recorded “The Giggling Rapids” a few weeks later, Ellington opens with the main theme on piano, and he plays the full head. He continues to play the melody for most of the movement, but the saxophone passages draw more attention. In essence, the piece has been recast as a virtuosic showcase for the saxophone section, whose ensemble passagework suggests the rolling waters of the rapids, such as the chromatic passage in Example 4.6. The bass part shows that the ensemble version still follows the same basic chord progression, although there are additional substitutions throughout. Two moments in the recording point to the band’s unfamiliarity with the piece, bolstering the sketch-like nature of the track. First, through the most technically demanding stretch of the piece (Ex. 4.7), several members of the saxophone section

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²⁹ Balliett, *Collected Works*, 334.

**Example 4.6.** Chromatic “rolling” saxophone riff in the Ellington orchestra’s recording of “The Giggling Rapids.” REC, Series 2A, Box 2, Folder 1.



**Example 4.7.** The most technically demanding series of riffs for the saxophone section in “The Giggling Rapids.” Many members of the section drop out over the course of this passage in the band’s recording of the movement. DEC, Series 1, Box 308, Folder 6; REC, Series 2A, Box 2, Folder 1.



drop out until the passage lands on firmer footing in the final ensemble double-chorus. Second, in the last chorus, the band members abandon the written music early, leaving Ellington to close the piece on piano. His chordal playing here references the tutti passages written for the previous chorus rather than the melody he has been playing throughout. The final chorus shows that for all its elaborate instrumental flourishes and elaborations, Ellington conceived “The Giggling Rapids” at the piano, and the initial May 11 recording provided a solid basis from which to build.

As with “The Meander,” Ailey did not choreograph “The Giggling Rapids” for the premiere in 1970, but he included it when he revisited the ballet in 1971. DeFrantz calls the choreography “a frothy parody of the virtuosic exhibitionism inherent in pas de deux convention.”³⁰ As jazz walks are set against unexpected off-beat leaps and tilts interrupted with

³⁰ DeFrantz, *Dancing Revelations*, 149.

dynamic turns to musical accents, “the dancers express giddy playfulness in terms of exaggeration.”³¹ Collier matches Ailey’s playfulness, arranging a new piano introduction with the performance direction “playfully.” In the first double-chorus, Collier sets the three-note melody for flute, oboe, glockenspiel, and piano, while the brass, horns, clarinet, and bassoon play the saxophone part. In subsequent choruses, the strings take the saxophone passages with doubling from the winds. Following an Ellington short score, Collier transforms the tune’s melody from a sustained pitch to a rhythmic delivery from the brass, but Collier “straightens” Ellington’s syncopation for the symphonic performance (Ex. 4.8 compares the two settings). The final chorus in Collier’s version features tutti orchestration building to a climax rather than the outro piano solo from the Ellington orchestra’s recording.

**Example 4.8.** Ellington transforms the simple melody in “The Giggling Rapids” from a sustained line of a rhythmic one. Ellington syncopates the first note of the figure, while Collier straightens the delivery in his orchestral arrangement.

a) Ellington (REC, Series 2A, Box 2, Folder 1)

The musical notation for Ellington's version consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It features a syncopated melody starting with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bottom staff is in bass clef and provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

b) Collier

The musical notation for Collier's version consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. It features a more rhythmic and sustained melody starting with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bottom staff is in bass clef and provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

³¹ Ibid., 150.

**Example 4.9.** Principal themes in “The Lake.” The two themes flow into one another easily, and Ellington often adds a leap up a diminished fifth to the end of the first theme to create stronger drive into the second theme (not shown). DEC, Series 1, Box 308, Folder 7.

a) First theme



b) Second theme



Ellington’s solo piano version of “The Lake” communicates three basic ideas: the main theme in C minor, the Latin-flavored left hand pattern that accompanies that theme, and the contrasting second theme in the relative major. The second theme includes a turnaround that points back to C minor, and the main theme slides easily into the second via the F minor pivot chord, which functions as a pre-dominant chord in both keys. Ellington generally plays the first theme twice before moving into the second theme. Both melodies feature upward yearning motions and arpeggiated descents, each returning to its off-tonic origin (D and B $\flat$ , which are  $\hat{2}$  and  $\hat{5}$  of C minor and E $\flat$  major, respectively; see Ex. 4.9). Ellington’s scenario for the ballet calls the lake “beautiful and serene. It is all horizontal lines that offer up unrippled reflections.” From this description, Ellington moves into a more erotic depiction of the human beings inspired by the lake’s beauty to find beauty in one another. Ellington taps into this erotically charged description by the sweeping gestures of his themes (especially the second), by the slower tempo, and by the way the two themes feed into one another.

Most of Ellington's solo piano performances of *The River* adopt a free tempo and meter, but "The Lake" is the only ensemble recording to do the same. At times the band seems to take several unmarked beats to begin a phrase, and Ellington has some members repeat phrase endings beyond their written parts. Bassist Joe Benjamin adopts the bass pattern from Ellington's left hand, but very tentatively, only setting a danceable groove when Carney joins the arpeggio on bass clarinet. Ellington has also added two sections to the piece: a new melodic phrase in C major, and a final coda that leads out from the new C major phrase. The new melody shares traits with the other two in its grand gestures and held notes, as it essentially arpeggiates up a Cmaj7 chord from B $\flat$ 3 to G6 via B $\flat$ 4 and E5. On its first hearing, the C major theme leads back to the first theme, but its second appearance triggers Ellington's coda, a musical phrase that comes to rest on a D $\flat$ maj7(#4) chord. The unexpected and portentous harmony likely foreshadows the coming movement, "The Falls."

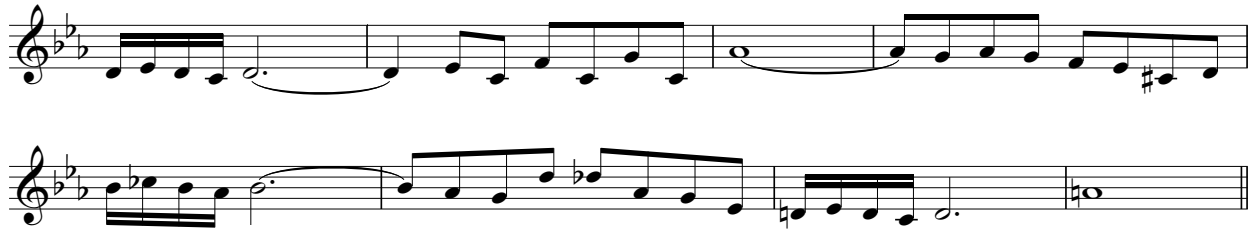
At over six minutes, "The Lake" is the centerpiece of *The River*, and Ailey choreographed the movement as a sensual dance between partners leading an ensemble of fourteen. DeFrantz argues that Ailey "treats the corps de ballet as a consensual community rather than a company of dancers, who bestow ritual authority on [female lead Cynthia] Gregory and her partner as leaders of a tender, erotic rite."³² At the same time, there are moments of tension, as the initial encounter between Gregory and her male partner is marked by resistance and wariness. She acquiesces to his advances during the first presentation of Ellington's new, major-mode section.

Because the dancers benefit from a defined pulse in order to time the choreography to the music, Collier does not adopt the Ellington orchestra's free tempo in his orchestration of "The

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³² Ibid., 151.

**Example 4.10.** Ellington’s short score for “The Lake” includes the following elaboration of the first theme; Collier uses this melodic configuration in his orchestral arrangement. DEC, Series 1, Box 308, Folder 7.



Lake.” He lengthens the introduction by writing in a slower version of Benjamin’s tentative bass line for the low strings and adds melodic fills in the winds. In the many repetitions of the two principal themes, Collier weaves in countermelodies, some inspired by Ellington’s score, others possibly of his own design. Example 4.10 shows an elaborated version of the first theme that Ellington included in his short score and that Collier adapts in his orchestration.

Ellington pairs the next two movements of *The River* musically and narratively:

Now you can always see the top of THE FALLS, which stays exactly the same and you can always hear the bottom of THE FALLS. You can also always hear the spirit that has gone over THE FALLS and into THE WHIRLPOOL, yelling and reaching to get back up THE FALLS and regain the serenity of THE LAKE. But what is to follow is THE WHIRLPOOL itself, an experience in which of course, you must really immerse yourself to appreciate the hazard.³³

Ellington intends this section of the scenario to portray some sort of rite of passage, an inevitable experience of violence that gives way to the broadening maturation present in the mainstream of “The River.” The musical through line between the pieces is a steady percussion roll. In “The Falls,” the roll is on the tympani first, followed by the snare and glockenspiel; the snare roll reappears for “The Whirlpool” while the other percussion instruments take on a more varied role. The constant barrage of percussion creates a high-intensity atmosphere as a musical manifestation of the tumult present at these stages of the river.

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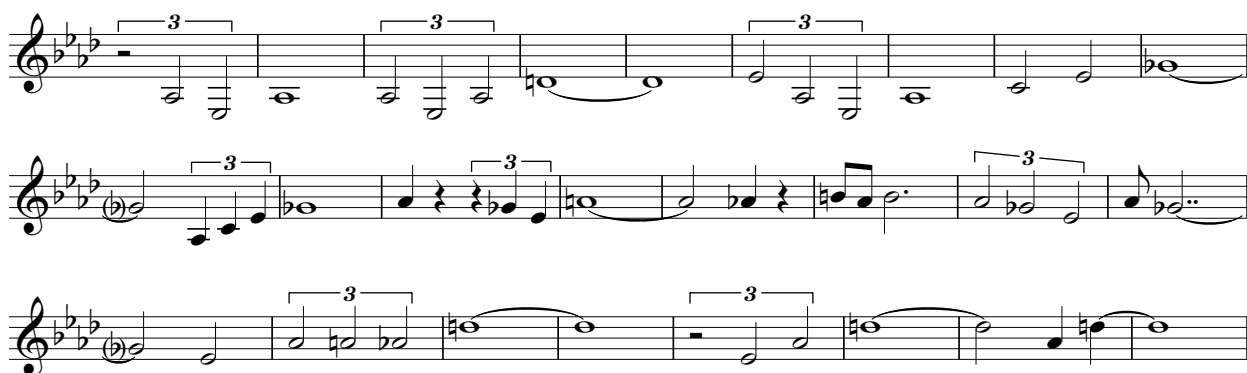
³³ Ellington, scenario for *The River*.

**Example 4.11.** Gonsalves' solo passages in "The Falls." Ellington writes the melody, which in broad terms arpeggiates through an  $A\flat 7$ , in a way that accentuates its tritone leaps. REC, Series 2A, Box 22, Folder 1.

a) First solo passage



b) Second solo passage



From the shared musical base, Ellington constructs the two pieces rather differently.

Balliett was present for the recording of "The Falls" and described the music as "quite unlike anything I had heard Ellington do... The section passages of 'The Falls' are brief but dense and booting, there are solo parts by Paul Gonsalves, and there are heavy, dissonant full-band chords."³⁴ Ellington voices the full-band chords in a way that creates large leaps in the outer voices. Gonsalves' solo statements come between the chordal passages, and Ellington writes an angular melody that features prominent leaps of a tritone (Ex. 4.11). Ellington creates continuity with other movements of *The River* by also including up-and-down chromatic lines.

"The Whirlpool" departs from the regular phrasing of "The Falls" in a percussive showcase in changing meters. The piece begins in 3/4, then moves to phrases in 4/4, 5/4, 4/4, 3/4, 7/4, 2/2, 9/4, and back to 4/4 before repeating earlier sections of the score. The Ellington

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³⁴ Balliett, *Collected Works*, 331.

**Example 4.12.** Motive for xylophone in “The Whirlpool.” Ellington cycles the motive’s rhythmic placement through each beat of the measure. DEC, Series 1, Box 309, Folder 9; REC, Series 2A, Box 22, Folder 3.

Xyl.

Xyl.

**Example 4.13.** Metric shifts in “The Whirlpool.” DEC, Series 1, Box 309, Box 309, Folder 9; REC, Series 2A, Box 22, Folder 1.

Xyl. Glock.

Timp.

Xyl.

Glock.

Xyl.

Glock.

orchestra is augmented by tympani and glockenspiel (both also featured in “The Falls”) as well as xylophone. The latter takes the lead in this piece, as Ellington transforms the basic motive over the course of the movement (see Ex. 4.12). Except for the 5/4 phrase, Ellington uses his usual ensemble sections sparingly in coloristic, swelling background dyads. It is clear that Ellington employs the rhythmic and metric shifts to disorient the listener, although the repetitions of each section undermine some of the unpredictability of the piece. The most metrically unstable portion of the score is given in Example 4.13. Note that despite the asymmetric meter,



Ellington articulates the pulse very clearly, providing a framework upon which to build the choreography.

Ailey treats “The Falls” and “Vortex” (as “The Whirlpool” is named in ballet performances) as a pair as well, with the former serving as a virtuosic display for four male dancers and the later movement a solo female counterpart. Saal described “Vortex” as “a nonstop, whirling, leaping, twisting solo danced like a tireless naiad by Eleanor D’Antuono.”³⁵ In both numbers, narrative elements are cast aside to focus on the technical execution of the dancers. The showcase of physicality matches Ellington’s narrative depiction of tumult as well as the percussive insistence of the score. In most performances of the ballet, “Vortex” is placed ahead of “The Falls.”

Collier orchestrates “Vortex” according to a number of different Ellington scores of the piece. He removes many of the sectional repeats, which makes the unpredictable metric shifts more effective. Xylophone and tympani appear as they were used in the Ellington recording, but the glockenspiel part is replaced by winds, trumpets, and occasionally harp or piano. With this substitution, Collier preserves pitch content but shifts the octave of the glockenspiel parts, so what were once solo statements now appear with greater timbral contrast against the xylophone lines. Given the larger ensemble, Collier thickens the percussive xylophone lines with the upper woodwinds and violins. Collier’s major alteration to Ellington’s score is his newly composed four-measure introduction. He also changes the last new section of Ellington’s score to include the roll-like figure on the xylophone rather than the syncopated chord strikes (Ex. 4.14). Given the discrepancies between Ellington’s various scores and his band’s recording, Collier had to

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³⁵ Saal, “Dance Me a River.”

**Example 4.14.** Metrically stabilizing passage in “The Whirlpool,” following Example 4.13.

a) Ellington writes the passage for the percussion instruments  
(DEC, Series 1, Box 309, Folder 9; REC, Series 2A, Box 22, Folder 1)

Score for percussion instruments (Xyl., Glock., Timp.) in 4/4 time. The Xyl. and Glock. parts feature chords on the second and fourth beats of each measure. The Timp. part has a simple rhythmic pattern.

b) Collier modifies the passage, filling each beat with a rhythmic attack

Score for modified percussion passage (Xyl., Vln. I & II, Vla. & Vc., Timp.) in 4/4 time. The Xyl. part has triplet eighth notes on every beat. The Vln. I & II, Vla. & Vc. parts have chords on the second and fourth beats. The Timp. part has a simple rhythmic pattern.

make a variety of decisions in order to orchestrate the piece. In the case of Example 4.14, Collier’s decision makes for a much more compelling section of the piece.

“Vortex” drew a high amount of praise and was even featured in a 1977 Herbert Ross film *The Turning Point*, overshadowing its companion dance “The Falls.” Conductor Stephen Tucker has noted that the curious nature of the conductor’s score to “The Falls” likely accounts for the movement’s frequent omission from performances of *The River*: in true Ellingtonian fashion, the score consists of a two stave short score with instrument annotations added besides the notes on the staff.³⁶ The work was likely transcribed as a piano score for the rehearsal

³⁶ Stephen Earl Tucker, “Edward Kennedy ‘Duke’ Ellington’s Ballet, ‘The River’: A Conductor’s Approach to the Preparation and Performance of the Score” (D.M.A. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2007).

accompanist, and then annotated by Collier, who did not have enough time to write the orchestration on larger paper. Collier gives Gonsalves' melody to the horns, and passes the chordal accents between woodwinds and strings, with the rest of the brass section providing the sustained chord backing behind the melody. He gives the chromatic figures that appear in between the chordal and solo passages to the violins. Viewing the conductor's score to "The Falls," we can understand why despite its ultimate critical and commercial success, Collier and Ailey reported that the collaboration with Ellington was a difficult one, especially due to the time constraints imposed by Ellington's reluctance to commit anything to paper as definitive.

"From THE WHIRLPOOL, if you're lucky," Ellington writes, "you get into the main train of THE RIVER, which rushes sprightly [sic] onwards, passing several inlets." After the tumultuous and orchestral flavors of "The Whirlpool," the next movement, "The River" (known alternatively as "Mainstream" or "Riba") returns to the Ellington band's idiom. The movement is structured as a riff-based twelve-bar blues that moves progressively flat-ward as the piece unfolds, from F to B $\flat$  to E $\flat$ . Despite the change of style to blues, Ellington retains compositional elements from other movements, such as the up and down chromatic slink from "The Meander" and the simple melodic process from "The Giggling Rapids." Ellington carries some of the metric and rhythmic misalignment from the preceding movements, as he writes the saxophones' low, bass-outlining melody for the first blues chorus on a persistent upbeat pattern, its beat four articulation pushing against the steady 4/4 backbeat (Ex. 4.15). He writes in a Charleston rhythm once the piece modulates to B $\flat$ , a symbolic musical gesture that reflects on the history of black music-making while naming it a part of the "mainstream." Ellington also uses saxophone riffs to provide the melodic focus for much of the composition, just as he did in "The Giggling Rapids."

**Example 4.15.** Ellington’s short score for the first blues chorus of “The River.” The upper line is harmonized in the brass while the reeds play the anticipatory bass “melody.” REC, Series 2A, Box 22, Folder 3.

Ailey takes Ellington’s invasion of the ballet stage by the blues and raises the stakes in a scene that features a trickster character coordinating the dance. In his review of the performance, Saal wrote, “[Ailey] turned ‘Riba (Mainstream)’ into a great joke, high-style burlesque, putting white dancers through Cotton Club routines, doing a jazz parody of the four little swanlets in ‘Swan Lake,’ and turning the male chorus into a bunch of high-kicking Rockettes.”³⁷ In DeFrantz’s words, “‘Riba’ signifies on stereotypical modes of public black performance,” forcing the audience to see the black body transposed upon the white body.³⁸ Ailey’s political commentary on race and gender in this movement may have been presented comically, but judging from his past work he did not view these matters as amusements. Some of the humor at the premiere was unintentional, as Dennis Nahat remembers that his exasperated demeanor as the

³⁷ Saal, “Dance Me a River.”

³⁸ DeFrantz, *Dancing Revelations*, 152.

trickster, especially his spot-lit hand-waving that closed the performance, was born out of the incomplete choreography for the movement.³⁹

In many ways, Ailey's parodic interpretation follows as a result of Ellington score because of the difficulty in transforming his band's driving swing into an orchestral setting. Just as Ailey's choreography puts white bodies through stereotypically black movements, an orchestration of Ellington's score puts white instruments (as the symphonic idiom traditionally codes) through black performance.⁴⁰ Collier attempts to capture the jazz spirit of Ellington's movement by writing in trailing slides in the trombones as well as the strings, though the techniques are not particularly effective. Collier introduces Ellington's score with a newly composed, bluesy melody for strings, and ends with that theme's repetition to a fade. Musically, "Riba" is Collier's least successful adaptation, because the timbral qualities of Ellington's jazz band are so tied to the musical idiom employed for the movement.

Ellington describes another pair of movements that follow "The River," each depicting a community on either side of the river delta's banks. The first, "The Neo-Hip-Hot Kiddies Communities," is a fast-paced, modernistic swinger with Ellington's angular riff-melodies (see Ex. 4.16). Despite appearing in Ellington's solo piano recital as "Stud" (according to Dance, because it was intended to accompany a solo male dancer), this movement never made it into the ballet. As its title suggests, the movement represented a community with all the flashy trappings of modern life. The city's foil is found in the "The Village of the Virgins," a portrayal of serenity and purity. Ellington employs a gospel hymn style here, writing slow-moving homophony throughout the twelve-measure **A** phrase, while the ten-measure **B** phrase incorporates some

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³⁹ Dunning, *Alvin Ailey*, 257.

⁴⁰ The transposition of racial codes could apply to the symphonic orchestration of all Ellington's movements for *The River*, but it is especially pronounced in this movement because of the clear 12-bar blues structure and idiomatic riffs.

**Example 4.16.** “The Neo-Hip-Hot Kiddies Communities,” angular riff structure. In the example, I have committed the trumpet parts; they provide upper extensions to the trombone chords in mm. 9-11 and double the reed lines in m. 12. DEC, Series 1, Box 309, Folder 4.

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with two staves: Saxes (Saxes) and Tbns (Trombones). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). Measure numbers 6, 11, 15, and 18 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. The Saxes part is written in treble clef, and the Tbns part is in bass clef. The score shows a complex angular riff structure with various rhythmic patterns and chordal textures.

sectional melodic material. Throughout, the melodies are shorn of the usual Ellington chromaticism, and he employs a few modal variants to preserve a mostly major triad harmonization of the staid theme. Ellington uses the plagal cadence in each four-measure subphrase of the **A** to underscore the community’s religious devotion.

Even though Ailey only choreographed a dance to “The Village of the Virgins,” the piece was presented as “Two Cities” in performances. He taps into Ellington’s scenarios that suggests

“There is always something on one side of THE RIVER that you cannot get on the other,” presenting the dance with a man and a woman on opposite banks. Ailey makes a somber remark on race in his casting and choreography. Saal recognized the racial message explicit in the movement: “a white girl (Sallie Wilson) and a black boy (Keith Lee), each bathed in a spotlight, dance a blues adagio, expressing yearning and loneliness. Gradually the spotlight unites them, and their pas de deux, touching in the complexity of intertwined limbs and intricate lifts, makes a wordless comment that lays waste racial divisions.”⁴¹ Ailey carries his commentary further, however, because the dance ends with both partners on the floor, reaching toward one another, only to be foiled by the rest of the ensemble passing between them as the river.⁴² The hope expressed by the tender union of the dancers faces the harshness of reality, as the curtain falls on the two dancers, separated as before.

Once again, Collier’s conductor’s score provides insights into the collaboration process. Ellington’s title “The Village of the Virgins” appears on the original first page of the score, but the first two pages are crossed out and include the direction “Start 4 bars of pg. 32 no. 7 then to letter A.” The appended final page (p. 32) of the conductor’s score includes a newly-composed four-measure introduction, titled “Intro to Twin Cities,” and coda to the movement on the verso. An amusing Ellingtonian twist to a standard orchestral score, Collier’s directions require the conductor to flip to the back of the score, then flip back to the front while omitting the first written section of music, which is an arrangement of the gospel chorale for woodwinds. In one of two famous orchestral recordings of *The River*, Akira Endo leads the Louisville Symphony Orchestra according to Collier’s directions and adopts a slow and stately tempo.⁴³ Neeme Järvi

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⁴¹ Saal, “Dance Me a River,” 86.

⁴² DeFrantz, *Dancing Revelations*, 153.

⁴³ Akira Endo and the Louisville Symphony Orchestra, *Duke Ellington: Suite from “The River” and Toshiko Mayuzumi: Essay for String Orchestra*, LS 777, 1983, 33 1/3 rpm.

and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra include Collier's excised woodwind chorale, but adopt a much faster tempo as if to compensate for the repetitions of the gospel chorale.⁴⁴ While the faster tempo may create a more exciting conclusion to the orchestrated suite, its forced swing rhythms detract from Ellington's intended mood. Although the Ellington band plays "The Village of the Virgins" with a gentle swing rhythm, the rhythm section's translation into an orchestral setting evidently poses some problems for interpretation.

Ellington's idea for the penultimate movement of the ballet was "The Mother, Her Majesty the Sea." In his words, "Now at this point THE RIVER is no longer a river. It has passed its point of disembarkation, and we are at the climax of heavenly anticipation, which is, of course, the foundation of all religion." Manuscripts suggest that Ellington was working on two separate pieces for this movement with the four-letter title "Moth," differentiated by a Roman numeral. Perhaps Ellington planned to stitch the two together into a longer movement, but when the band entered the studio on June 15, 1970, to record a movement from the ballet for the final time—a mere ten days before the premiere—they recorded only "Moth II."⁴⁵

"The Mother, Her Majesty the Sea" is, in Balliett's words, "slow and ruminative," an atmospheric orchestral piece.⁴⁶ Drummer Rufus Jones occasionally marks the beat with a swung pulse on the ride cymbal, but for most of the movement he supplies rolls on the cymbals or toms to add to the orchestra's unfolding wash of sound. Ellington's brief melodic statements reference earlier movements obliquely, such as the chromatic lines from "The Meander" and "The River," the modally-inflected turns from "The Spring" and "The Lake," or the tiered melodies from "The

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⁴⁴ Neeme Järvi and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, *William Grant Still: Symphony No. 1 (Afro-American) and Duke Ellington: Suite from "The River,"* Chandos CHAN 9154, 1993, compact disc.

⁴⁵ Without access to the master recordings from the session, I cannot say definitively that the band did not record "Moth I," but the movement released on *The Private Collection, Vol. 5* is a recording of "Moth II."

⁴⁶ Balliett, *Collected Works*, 332.



Meander” and “The Whirlpool.” “The Mother, Her Majesty the Sea” also includes whole tone melody passages. The music comes in waves without any sense of true direction, an apt analogue to the scenario’s suggestion of the sea as a fulfillment that subsumes the river that we have followed throughout the work. Ellington’s scenario points to a cycle of “heavenly rebirth” as the waters of the sea return to “The Spring.” On *The Private Collection* release, Dance and Mercer Ellington include a repetition of Ellington’s previous performance of “The Spring.”

Because Ellington did not record a solo piano version of “The Mother, Her Majesty the Sea” on May 11, 1970, and the full band version was not recorded until June 15, it seems understandable that Ailey lacked sufficient time to choreograph that section of the ballet prior to the June 25 premiere. According to DeFrantz, Ailey’s expansion of the ballet in June 1971, where he added “Meander” and “Giggling Rapids,” also included a duet entitled “The Sea” and a reprise of “Spring,” bringing the ballet closer to Ellington’s original scenario, but by 1972 “The Sea” and the “Spring” reprise were dropped.⁴⁷ Consequently, even if Collier orchestrated “The Sea” for the 1971 performance, the music is not included in G. Schirmer’s rental score for *The River*.

#### **4.2.2 Conclusion**

Ellington, Ailey, and Collier’s collaboration on *The River* stretch and challenged all parties involved, and not only in the form of their collaboration. The manuscripts in the Duke and Ruth Ellington Collections suggest that Ellington continued to revise his musical interpretation of *The River*; while it is not uncommon to find several iterations of a piece that spanned several years in the band book, it is more unusual to see so many versions of pieces that

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⁴⁷ DeFrantz, *Dancing Revelations*, 148.

he worked on for a relatively short amount of time. Though a few pieces on his orchestra's recording could have received his final approval for commercial release, most of their performances would have benefited from additional rehearsal. Dunning recounts that Ailey "wanted to explore the classical idiom in *The River*, putting the ballerinas on toe and giving them ballet steps, although in the end the overall group configurations reminded some of *Revelations*." Ailey benefited from dancer Judith Jamison's ability to translate his wishes into the ballet vocabulary and style, but that likely prevented him from embracing the idiom on his own terms.⁴⁸ Collier's conductor's score shows that it was a challenge to orchestrate the work in time, as every notational shorthand is employed. In the case of "The Falls," Collier did not even have time to write out a full score.

Despite these challenges, "*The River* was an enormous and immediate popular and critical success."⁴⁹ Ailey revisited the ballet constantly throughout his career, and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater company performs it to this day. For all the tensions and frustrations Ailey experienced in his collaboration with Ellington, he still venerated the man, choreographing a number of dances to the composer's (pre-existing) music, especially as a tribute following the composer's death. Collier's orchestration has also been embraced by pops and symphony orchestras. Tucker reports 239 performances of the piece between May 1994 and May 2006.⁵⁰ Echoing Barnes review half a century later, Cohen calls *The River* "one of the most significant pieces of Ellington's later career."⁵¹

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⁴⁸ Dunning, *Alvin Ailey*, 255.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁵⁰ Tucker, "Edward Kennedy 'Duke' Ellington's Ballet, 'The River': A Conductor's Approach to the Preparation and Performance of the Score," 61–67.

⁵¹ Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America*, 519.

Privately, it seems that Ellington was unhappy with the final production. According to Derek Jewell's interview with Stanley Dance,

He never did think anything was as good as it should have been—except for *My People*, when he did the lot. I suppose he was unreasonable, really, because he never gave people too much of a chance. He was always working up to the very last minute, so how could you expect a dance company to have had the time to fit everything together with the music.⁵²

John Franceschina suggests that Ellington's disappointment was based on what he saw at rehearsals, since Ailey recounted that Ellington never attended a performance of the work.⁵³

Ellington may have also been disappointed that Ailey's choreography did not fully embrace and replicate the scenario that he had represented in the music. Although he constantly cut, copied, pasted, and reordered sections of his own compositions (and those of others, especially Strayhorn), Ellington most likely did not appreciate Ailey and Collier taking the same liberties with *The River*. The frequency and consistency with which he relayed the program to *The River* suggest that the scenario was an integral part of the work.

Even though the Ellington band recorded what the scenario suggests is the full program for *The River*, we cannot say for certain the Ellington had finished writing it to his satisfaction. The Duke Ellington Collection contains a full set of parts for "The Spring," for instance, which suggests that Ellington was trying to orchestrate the first movement for his band.⁵⁴ There is also the unused "Moth I" manuscript, which may have constituted another part of "The Mother, Her Majesty the Sea." Ellington thrived under the pressure caused by deadlines, and he once

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⁵² Derek Jewell, *Duke: A Portrait of Duke Ellington* (New York: Norton, 1977), 197.

⁵³ John Charles Franceschina, *Duke Ellington's Music for the Theatre* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland, 2001), 164.

⁵⁴ The parts do not match the existing version of "The Spring" and visually resemble parts of a different era (they have a number as if they are part of the band book); there is also a guitar and drum part. However, the third reed (alto) does double on flute, which suggests a later work from Turney's tenure with the band.

remarked that he only finished his compositions when he had to.⁵⁵ But in the end, with *The River*, Ellington may have simply run out of time.

### 4.3. *The Degas Suite (or Degas' Racing World)*

#### 4.3.1 Production History

Film producer Sam Shaw developed a vision for the documentary *Degas' Racing World* after seeing an eponymously titled loan exhibition by Wildenstein for the benefit of The National Museum of Racing, Saratoga, in 1968. Shaw and Ellington (along with Strayhorn) had worked together for the 1961 film *Paris Blues*, and Don George documents a friendly relationship between the creators.⁵⁶ According to Dance, Shaw, “saw the opportunity to do a film without the kind of big-company interference he and Ellington had experienced in Paris.”⁵⁷ Ellington agreed to produce the score and was enthused about the project. In his autobiography *Music Is My Mistress*, Ellington shares a particular fondness for the Impressionists, so his enthusiastic involvement with Shaw’s film is not surprising.⁵⁸ Given Ellington’s background in the visual arts and his own Impressionistic painting style (see Fig. 4.1), Ellington likely felt a kindred spirit with the painters featured in the film.

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⁵⁵ Stuart Nicholson, *Reminiscing in Tempo: A Portrait of Duke Ellington* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), 406.

⁵⁶ George, *Sweet Man*, 195–96.

⁵⁷ Dance, liner notes to *The Private Collection*, Vol. 5.

⁵⁸ From Ellington’s “Russian Journal, 1971,” written about his State Department Tour: “We visit the Hermitage, which is said to contain eighteen thousand paintings, many of them owned by Russian aristocrats before the Revolution. I really welcome this opportunity to see firsthand the work of Impressionists like Corot, Daubigny, Manet, Monet, Degas, Renoir, Rodin, Signac, Sisley, Cézanne, and Pissarro, as well as such post-Impressionists as Gauguin, Marquet, Matisse, Vuillard, Rousseau, Van Gogh, and Van Dongen. I am also impressed by the craftsmanship and subjects of some of the eighteenth-century painters like Greuze, Restout, Detroy, and Vernet. War was evidently still regarded as a rather glorious adventure in their day. However, the biggest surprise, to me, is Picasso’s pre-Cubistic “The Rendezvous” from 1902, in which the technique is so very much unlike what we now associate with him.” Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*, 366.

**Figure 4.1.** Painting by Duke Ellington of the late Billy Strayhorn entitled *Ever Onward and Upward*, 1973.



DEC, Series 12, Map Case 2/17, Folder 25.  
<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/d5301.htm>

My research is the first to examine Ellington’s score alongside the thirty-nine-page typeset script for the documentary from the Duke Ellington Collection.⁵⁹ Despite Shaw’s spearheading of *Degas’ Racing World*, his name does not appear at all on the script. Penned by writer and journalist Herbert Mitgang, the script includes details for the paintings featured, notes on the character of the music at key points, and even directions to the film’s editor on how to cut and frame certain shots. Mitgang’s script puts forth a strong vision for the film that weds historical and biographical information with the

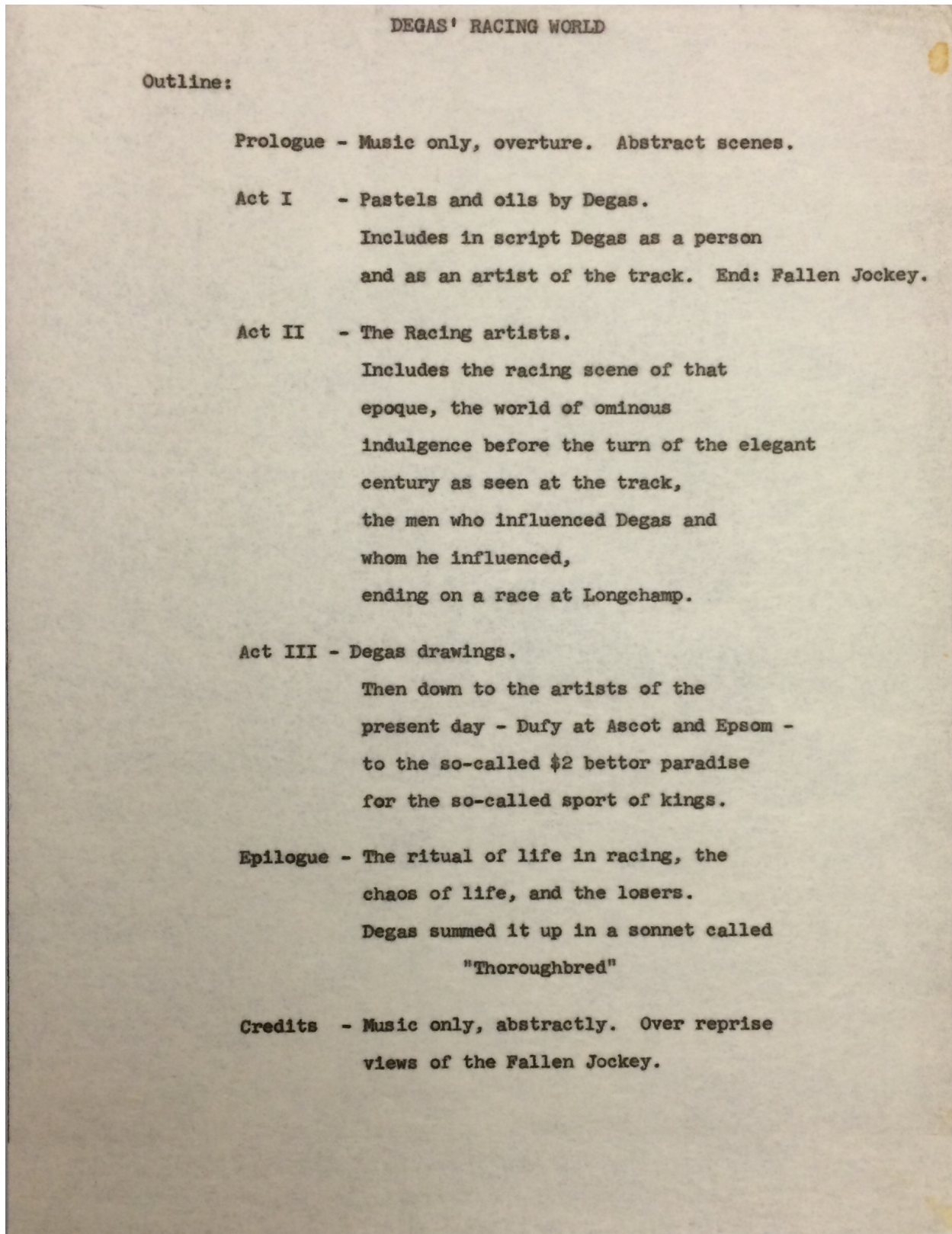
artists’ depictions of the racetrack scenes. Degas provides the focus, but like the 1968 Wildenstein exhibition, other artists appear prominently throughout. Figure 4.2 reproduces Mitgang’s typeset outline for the film, which unfolds in four acts.

Actor Anthony Quinn, the intended narrator, became so enthused by Mitgang’s script and Ellington’s music that he persuaded actors Charles Boyer and Simone Signoret to join him on the narration. Despite all the enthusiasm and star power, the filmmakers ran out of money and abandoned *Degas’ Racing World*. Because the project was canceled, no account of the film or the music exists outside of Dance’s liner notes to *The Degas Suite*. Importantly, Dance notes that “some performances were omitted altogether from the soundtrack and others curtailed,” an

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⁵⁹ Herbert Mitgang, typescript for *Degas’ Racing World*, Duke Ellington Collection, Series 4, Box 4, Folder 6.

**Figure 4.2.** Mitgang's outline for the film *Degas' Racing World*, Duke Ellington Collection, Series 4, Box 4, Folder 6.



indication that the recording presents a curated selection of Ellington's musical contributions to the unreleased film as a finalized score.⁶⁰ Dance makes no mention of Mitgang, however, and his script has not been examined alongside Ellington's musical decisions. Part of the goal of this section is to recreate how this intended collaboration between Ellington, Shaw, and Mitgang may have looked and sounded. I also explore Shaw's role in filtering Ellington's compositions, as well as the deliberate correlation made between Ellington and the artists depicted in the film through the foregrounding of Ellington's piano playing.

#### 4.3.2 The Soundtrack, the Script, and the Film

*The Degas Suite*, as a soundtrack, merits analysis as a "sound object" because it was assembled into a whole from a number of discrete and individual components. Importantly, although Ellington may have approved the final takes used in the construction of the soundtrack, the actual editing would have been carried out by someone else, presumably under the oversight of Shaw as the film's producer.⁶¹ Thus, *The Degas Suite* is Ellington's reflection on the French Impressionists filtered through someone else's vision. Of course, all of Ellington's studio recordings in the post-war period were subject to this kind of manipulation at the hands of producers and sound engineers. But the soundtrack to *Degas' Racing World* wears its production more explicitly, as much was discarded, reused, and spliced together to match the film's narrative. Although the suite is presented as a single track, Dance provides a breakdown of the cue titles, based on the manuscripts and take titles that were used to form the soundtrack. Table 4.4 presents the cue listing, along with the time markings for the track.

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⁶⁰ Dance, liner notes to *The Private Collection, Volume Five*.

⁶¹ Throughout my discussion, I assign this editorial agency to Shaw, although other individuals likely performed the actual editing of Ellington's recordings.

**Table 4.4.** Cue chart for *The Degas Suite*.

Timing	Cue (from liner notes)	Alternative title(s)
00:00	“Introduction—Opening Titles”	“A-C”
00:46	“Race”	
02:44	“Racing”	
04:53	“Piano Pastel”	
07:47	“Improvisation—Marcia Regina”	“Dega”
09:11	“Piano Pastel”	“Race”
10:51	“Daily Double”	
15:09	“Drawings”	“A-C”
19:36	[untitled piano musing, spliced into next cue]	
20:35	“Promenade”	“Picture”
24:19	“Sonnet”	
25:27	“Race”	

The opening to *The Degas Suite* provides an excellent example of the editing procedures involved in creating the soundtrack. To start the track, Ellington pounds a low chord on the piano before Paul Gonsalves begins an elaborate tenor saxophone cadenza. The solo statement elides smoothly into a fast-swinging, lively theme. The ensemble theme shifts again at the 0:30 mark into a polyrhythmic riff in three against the steady 4/4 swing of the drums, a thematic idea that surfaces later in the soundtrack as “Drawings.” The cue closes with a master fade. The “Opening Titles” sequence was assembled from two separate studio takes—the piano and sax statements were recorded as Take 14 at the November 6, 1968, studio session, while the ensemble portion was recorded later that session as Take 49.⁶² While Ellington may have recorded the solo statements earlier in the session intending to have Shaw splice the takes together (his musicians notoriously took a while to show up for recording dates), it is interesting to hear that Ellington does not include the solo instrument introductions before the band records the ensemble passage,

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⁶² The studio takes are an unreleased portion of the stockpile. Mercer Ellington sold the entire stockpile to Danish Radio in the late 1980s, and the station has broadcast most of the tapes throughout the years. A group of Ellington collectors has recorded and disseminated copies of these broadcasts under the series title of *Azure*. My discussion of the unissued studio takes is based on these recordings, which were graciously provided to me by Pete Bainbridge.



instead singing the band's riff to count them off. The process shows that Ellington embraced the studio's potential for reordering and splicing together compositions not just in the case of mistakes or rough patches of a performance, but even in the creation of his music.

Because the film was never completed, there is no way to know exactly how Ellington's music matched up with the visuals and narration, but Mitgang's script provides enough detail that we can reasonably reconstruct an idea of how Ellington's music underscored the documentary. There are some signs that Shaw elected to depart from Mitgang's script in assembling the film's soundtrack, and a read through of Mitgang's full narration also demonstrates that Shaw must have made additional cuts because the timing is inexact.⁶³ Despite these discrepancies, the cue titles, Mitgang's music notes, and the proposed image selections allow us to make a plausible assessment of the film's content.

Mitgang calls for an opening overture with a visual montage of bits and pieces from the artists' canvases. He prescribes music "with the same impressionistic, erratic scene-setting feeling of the gaiety and color of the racing world."⁶⁴ After two minutes of this overture, Mitgang calls for thirty seconds of opening titles, naming the film, Ellington as its composer, Mitgang as the script's author, and Anthony Quinn as narrator. Ellington's "Introduction—Opening Titles" cue fits Mitgang's musical description, as the fast-paced and impressionistic fragments of the music complement the proposed visual presentation, but the sequence only lasts forty-six

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⁶³ Although my ensuing analysis and speculation does not factor in the possibility, Shaw may have also created longer silences between the soundtrack's cues than appear on *The Private Collection*. Dance's liner notes claim that Shaw provided Ellington with the finished soundtrack, and the implication is that *The Degas Suite* presents that soundtrack unedited. It stands to reason that if there were large stretches of silence on the soundtrack, Saja Records may have removed them for the commercial release of *The Degas Suite*. The additional silences may account for some of the unusual script/music relationships I discuss in the center of the film, as they would realign some of the unfolding processes, but these shifts would not drastically affect the reconstruction I offer here.

⁶⁴ Herbert Mitgang, typeset script for *Degas' Racing World*,

seconds compared to Mitgang’s suggested two-and-a-half-minute time frame. From the soundtrack’s opening cue, we can see that Shaw did not follow Mitgang’s direction exactly.

Because Ellington’s forty-five-second “Introduction—Opening Titles” sequence would score the film’s opening titles, it follows that the atmospheric and lyrical “Race” underscores the preliminary narrations, which wax philosophical and poetic about the appeal of the track and the aristocratic nature of racing in the late nineteenth century. The Degas paintings in Figure 4.3 provide the visual focus of this section. “Race” is the central element of Ellington’s score to *Degas’ Racing World*, and Shaw reuses this take to underscore the closing credits, though the tape is sped up ever-so-slightly.

**Figure 4.3.** Degas paintings featured in Act I of *Degas’ Racing World*, during “Race” cue.



Edgar Degas, Race Horses, ca. 1895-1899  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



Edgar Degas, Before the Start, ca. 1893  
imgc.allpostersimages.com

The mood music shifts to the faster cue “Racing,” which features dueling improvisations from clarinetist Russell Procope and trumpeter Willie Cook with rhythm section backing. Mitgang’s script names the famous racetracks (among them Epsom Downs, Ascot, and Longchamp), chronicles the shift from gentlemen jockeys to professional riders, and introduces Degas, the protagonist of the film. The camera passes over more of Degas’ works, given in Figure 4.4. The first image in particular suggests the faster, livelier cue because of the movement Degas captures on his canvas.

**Figure 4.4.** Degas paintings featured in Act I of *Degas' Racing World*, during "Racing" cue.



Edgar Degas, *Three Jockeys*, ca. 1890  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Partial and Promised  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Dillon, 1992.  
[www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436164](http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436164)



Edgar Degas, *Race Horses*, 1885-88  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Walter H.  
and Leonore Annenberg Collection, Gift of Walter  
H. and Leonore Annenberg, 1999, Bequest of  
Walter H. Annenberg, 2002 (1999.288.3)



Edgar Degas, *At the Races: Before the Start*, ca. 1880-92  
Virginia Museum of Fine Art

**Figure 4.5.** Degas paintings featured during Ellington's first "Piano Pastel."



Edgar Degas, *Before the Race*, ca. 1882  
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland  
Purchased by Henry Walters, 1925



Edgar Degas, *The Jockeys*, ca. 1895  
<http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=5522>

Ellington's "Piano Pastel" cues underscore most of the discussion of Degas' painting technique. During the first "Piano Pastel," Mitgang draws attention to Degas' unique approach to the paintings in Figure 4.5: the jockeys forming a line to the horizon in the first and the unusual and stark cropping of the horses in the second. The inclusion of Ellington's "Piano Pastel" cues during Mitgang's description of Degas as "the greatest 'composer' among the Impressionists" is likely a calculated one, and the first "Piano Pastel" showcases Ellington as an impressionist at the keyboard. The first fifty seconds of the track, transcribed by the author as Example 4.17, feature Ellington working through basic gestures in a wash of implied tonalities: first D minor, then a D major/G major area that shifts into B minor. As the Impressionist's brushstrokes approximated the sharp edges of figures, rendered in brilliant colors, so does Ellington's piano playing approximate clear tonality in a wash of sonority in repeated gestures. Ellington recordings of "A Single Petal of a Rose," from *The Queen's Suite*, slower tracks from the 1953 Capitol album *Piano Reflections* (such as "Reflections in D," "Retrospection," and "Melancholia"), and his solo sketches for *The River* show that these Impressionistic aspects of his piano technique are not unique to his work on *Degas' Racing World*, but instead form part of his musical idiom.

Ellington's piano reflection on Degas' mastery is broken by the minute-and-a-half-long "Improvisations—Marcia Regina." Admittedly, the transition seems a bit unusual, as the upbeat march underscores Mitgang's description of Degas' behind-the-scenes insight into the track, "where there was a sense of foreboding and a feeling of loneliness, of individuality in the crowd and of apartness for man and nature." The paintings selected for this section of narration, given in Figure 4.6., do not seem drastically darker than the preceding works, however, except for the lighting in *The Jockeys at Epsom*. Mitgang points specifically to Degas' detailed attention to the

**Example 4.17.** Ellington’s first “Piano Pastel” on *The Degas Suite*, transcription by the author.

1 freely

7

10

14

19

25

muddy track in this early painting. The lighter mood of “Improvisations” seems more appropriate for *The False Start*. Though the ultimate cue title does not reflect the script, the paintings, or even the music, Ellington’s working title “Dega” provides a clearer suggestion of the piece’s relationship to the film.

**Figure 4.6.** Degas paintings featured during Ellington’s cue “Improvisations—Marcia Regina.”



Edgar Degas, The Jockeys at Epsom, ca. 1862  
[www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=4756](http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=4756)



Edgar Degas, Race Horses at Longchamp, 1873-75  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts  
S. A. Denio Collection 03.1034  
<http://www.mfa.org/>



Edgar Degas, The False Start, c. 1869-72  
Yale University Art Gallery,  
John Hay Whitney, B.A. 1926, Hon. 1956, Collection  
(1982.111.6)

Ellington’s “Piano Pastel” returns for the final scene in Act I, which focuses on the painting *The Wounded Jockey* (Fig. 4.7). While Mitgang sees only the tragic vision associated with this work, Ellington evidently shared more optimism: Dance reports that Ellington “substituted gayer music in a witty twist, much as to say, *C’est la vie*—he’ll get up and ride

**Figure 4.7.** Painting featured during Ellington’s second “Piano Pastel.”



Edgar Degas, Studio Interior with “The Steeplechase” (Aux Courses, Le Jockey Blesse), 1880-81  
The Sam Spiegel Collection bequeathed to American Friends of the Israel Museum  
Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

again.”⁶⁵ Ellington’s second “Piano Pastel” is actually a solo piano improvisation on the “Race” theme. Unissued takes from the *Racing World* recording sessions show that the first several takes were small trio performances of that tune, and Ellington’s improvisations touch on many of the same ideas. The rhythm section gradually joins in after a minute, and Ellington shifts the tempo at 10:51 as the group transitions to an introduction to “Daily Double.”

Shaw and Ellington use “Daily Double” to score most of Act II, which introduces Degas’ contemporaries and followers. Although not apparent from Dance’s breakdown of the soundtrack’s movements, “Race” provides the structure for “Daily Double,” just as it structured the second “Piano Pastel.” “Daily Double” is a fast showcase for Paul Gonsalves, but the underlying chord changes and key (D $\flat$ ) map onto the “Race” changes as well. The faster section of the cue accompanies the introduction of Gericault, DeDreux, Princeteau, Boudin, and Forain. Paintings from these artists are given in Figure 4.8, although many are not the ones specified by

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⁶⁵ Dance, liner notes to *The Private Collection*, Vol. 5.

**Figure 4.8.** Paintings shown in Act II of *Degas' Racing World* to accompany Ellington's cue "Daily Double."



Theodore Gericault, Jockey on a Race Horse  
[imagecache6.allposters.com/LRG/53/5397/OVOJG00Z.jpg](http://imagecache6.allposters.com/LRG/53/5397/OVOJG00Z.jpg)



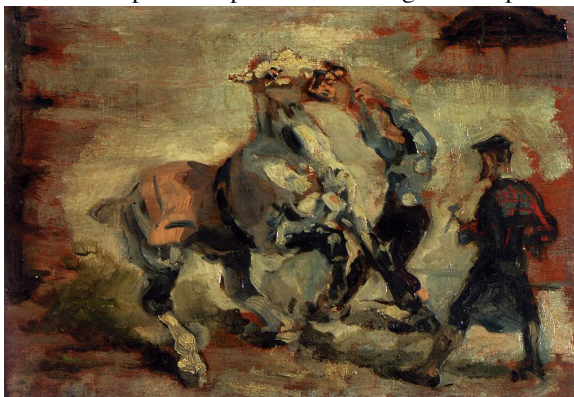
Alfred DeDreux, Racehorse and his Jockey*,  
 first half of 20th century  
 Réunion des Musées Nationaux  
<http://www.artres.com/c/htm/Home.aspx>



Eugène-Louis Boudin, Deauville, the Terrace*, 1882  
 Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Albert M. Greenfield  
 and Elizabeth M. Greenfield Collection, 1974  
<http://www.philamuseum.org/main.asp>



Jean-Louis Forain, The Race Track*, 1891  
 The National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.)  
 Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon  
<http://www.nga.gov/>



Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Horse Fighting His Groom*, 1881  
<http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=8765>

*Paintings not included in the exhibition catalog, but included here to show the artists' style.



Mitgang's script.⁶⁶ The cue's second chorus changes tempo for John Lewis Brown's "At the Races," the mood shift aligning with Mitgang's music note that, "this opens lyrically with lacy trees and sky." To achieve the lyrical effect, Harold Ashby references the "Race" theme directly, clarifying the relationship between the two pieces.⁶⁷ His slower "Daily Double" solo continues beneath the film's lengthy introduction to Henri Toulouse-Lautrec. This is the only stretch of script for which Mitgang does not specify any images to be shown. He seems to suggest that Lautrec must be established personally before his work can be understood. Whether he intended an absence of visuals or wanted Shaw to select them remains unclear.

To close the second act of the film, Mitgang suggests that "from this point onward for nearly a minute, sound should build toward swiftness of a race, lively and exciting, till we return again to Degas drawings." At first glance, the next cue of the soundtrack does exactly that in a longer and more developed version of the theme from "Introduction—Opening Titles." But the piece lasts four minutes and twenty-seven seconds, significantly longer than the timing suggested by Mitgang. Further complicating proper tracking of the score, the cue is titled "Drawings," which suggests that it more appropriately underscores the film's third act, a showcase of Degas' and Lautrec's sketches. It is impossible to know exactly how Shaw intended for Ellington's music to complement the script here, but because "Drawings" is preceded by Ashby's slow ballad playing, it is clear that Act III cannot begin with "Drawings" and still respect Mitgang's vision to close Act II with an exciting race scene. Based on the timing of the rest of the soundtrack, it is plausible to suggest that "Drawings" actually bridges the two Acts, its lively

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⁶⁶ As I note in the conclusion, many of the paintings featured in the Wildenstein exhibition were (and still are) privately held.

⁶⁷ Although many of Ellington's suites, such as those discussed in Chapter 3, lack any unifying musical idea, the recording of *The River* shows that he would integrate musical materials across movements if he wanted to create that sort of continuity. That said, it is rare for Ellington to reuse the harmonic framework between two distinct movements, even in a musically unified suite.

**Figure 4.9.** Selection of images from Act III of *Degas' Racing World* to accompany Ellington's cue "Drawings."



Edgar Degas  
Four Studies of a Jockey, c.1866  
Art Institute of Chicago  
ARTstor Slide Gallery



Edgar Degas, Jockey, 1898  
The National Gallery of Art  
Gift of Mrs. Jane C. Carey as an  
addition to the Addie Burr Clark  
Memorial Collection



Edgar Degas  
Study of a Jockey, c.1884  
The National Gallery of Art  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul  
Mellon



Henri Toulouse-Lautrec  
Jockey and Owner, [n.d.]  
ARTstor Slide Gallery



Henri Toulouse-Lautrec  
Paddock, [n.d.]  
ARTstor Slide Gallery



Henri Toulouse-Lautrec  
Sketches of Horses, [n.d.]  
Smith College Museum of Art,  
Northampton, MA  
Bequest of Selma Erving,  
class of 1927

tempo providing a suitable accompaniment to Bonnard and Anquetin's paintings while the extended track time and cue title point to an association with the lengthy narration of Degas'

drawings and studies.⁶⁸ In fact, “Drawings” is long enough to also underscore most of the section on Lautrec’s drawings that follows directly after the description of Degas’ work (Figure 4.9 shows some of the drawings and watercolors that Mitgang suggested for the script).

Following the frenetic pace of “Drawings,” the soundtrack transitions to more improvisatory piano musings. As in the “Piano Pastels,” Ellington plays at a slow tempo, repeating pensive gestures and gradually shifting to new musical ideas. The moody interlude nicely underscores Mitgang’s concluding thoughts on Lautrec, who in his own style discovered that “character could be revealed...with quick, economical and often brutal lines.” Suddenly, at 20:35, Ellington’s ruminations are cut through by a peppy pickup that begins the rhythm section introduction to the next cue of the soundtrack, “Promenade.” The shift of tempo flows seamlessly—too seamlessly, however, as Ellington’s gestures overlap in an unrealistic way.⁶⁹ Shaw’s edit sounds natural enough in casual listening, but a closer hearing reveals the overlapping edit of two separate takes.

Shaw’s cut to the rhythm section introduction to “Promenade” fits perfectly here, as Mitgang returns to Pierre Bonnard to set up a final reflection on the lasting legacy of Degas’ racetrack scenes. Two modern-day artists occupy the final portion of Act III: Kees van Dongen and Raoul Dufy (Fig. 4.10). Of Dufy, Mitgang writes, “Here [in Dufy’s paintings of Ascot and Epsom], at once, was the thrill of the promenade, the bet and the race.” Note that the direct reference to “Promenade” as the cue title assures its appropriate placement. Mitgang also provides a music note for the closing scene: “Let the music pick up and carry

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⁶⁸ Another plausible solution, which I revisit in the conclusion, is that Ellington intended for the “Racing” cue to occupy this stretch of the film, while slower, unused pieces (such as the cue “Pastel”) accompanied the earlier Act I discussion of Degas’ painting technique.

⁶⁹ Obviously the piano’s sustain pedal would allow a musician to begin a new idea while another continues to ring, but the mixing and coincidence of pitches suggests that the overlap is the result of a studio overdub rather than a performance transition.

**Figure 4.10.** Paintings from Act III of *Degas' Racing World*, Ellington's cue "Promenade."



Kees van Dongen, *Scene at a Racetrack*, 1906  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
The Rienzi Collection,  
gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harris Masterson III



Kees van Dongen, *At the Racetrack*, 1950s  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
Robert Lehman Collection, 1975  
<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/460969>



Raoul Dufy, *Longchamps*, 1923/28  
The National Gallery of Art  
The John U. and Evelyn S. Nef Collection



Raoul Dufy, *Epsom*, 1935  
The Phillips Collection

beyond the last comment here. Do so with much gaiety and no words over colorful final Dufy shots." Van Dongen and Dufy's vivid palettes pair with the lively improvisations of the Ellington band during "Promenade."

The film's fourth and final act summarizes the *Racing World* through a sonnet penned by the film's protagonist, Degas. As with "Promenade," the cue title here points clearly to a direct

link with the script. The sonnet is the only section of the script in the Duke Ellington Collection that has been annotated, with a note indicating that the sonnet is approximately forty-five seconds long. The penultimate cue in the soundtrack is “Sonnet,” which lasts a bit longer than the noted forty-five seconds but at one-minute-eight-seconds would serve as an appropriate background for that stretch of the film. Following the master fade of “Sonnet,” Shaw reuses the opening take of “Race,” played back slightly faster, to underscore the final credits.

### **4.3.3 Ellington the Pianist**

In addition to his “Piano Pastel” cues, Ellington’s role as pianist is highlighted throughout Shaw’s edit of the soundtrack. Practical reasons may account for this fact. The band at the session was a smaller subset of the usual big band, consisting of the full reed group, rhythm section, and one member of the trumpet and trombone sections. The music was likely newly written and would not have been rehearsed or prepared in advanced, so Ellington may have provided more support to guide his band through the unfamiliar charts. From the first unused takes at the initial November 6, 1968, recording session, it also sounds as if Ellington arrived at the session early enough to improvise through his sketches and finish composing the tunes. It is telling that these preliminary musings were also recorded: Ellington ensured that any new ideas that he created could be played back in the booth and expanded into written material. Shaw and Ellington seem to have been pleased with how the trio and solo recordings turned out and so included them on the soundtrack. As suggested above, Ellington’s more prominent role as pianist through *The Degas Suite*, especially in the “Piano Pastel” cues, may have been the creators’ way of implicitly linking Ellington to the Impressionists featured throughout the film.

Ellington plays as accompanist on “Racing,” providing active comping for Procope and Cook’s soloing. He ends the D $\flat$  major track with an unexpected D $\flat$ 7, then plays a forceful G3, the tritone substituted root for the tonic-turned-dominant. This unsettled ending becomes thematic, as he plays a similar gesture to close “Daily Double.” As noted above, Ellington’s second “Piano Pastel,” an improvisation around the “Race” theme, transitions directly into “Daily Double.” Both pieces are in D $\flat$  major, but the tempo shift from “Piano Pastel” to “Daily Double” is accompanied by a tonicization of the D $\flat$  minor ii chord that opens the chart, creating a disorienting tonal effect despite the continuity of tonality. Gonsalves can be heard testing his reed with the downbeat of Ellington’s piano intro to “Daily Double,” perhaps due to a misunderstanding of his entrance. Ellington plays through the basic changes for the track to prepare Gonsalves’ solo chorus, flitting between right hand melody lines and comping chords. Ellington emerges melodically to transition into Ashby’s solo chorus in the slower section of the piece, serving mainly as accompanist but occasionally stepping out with piano licks. In the final phrase of Ashby’s solo, Ellington comps emphatically and pushes the tempo, a technique we first saw during Hodges’ solo chorus of “Mood Indigo” on *Masterpieces By Ellington* (see Ch. 1). As in “Racing,” Ellington elaborates the D $\flat$  major ending of the piece with G in a two chord gesture.

Throughout “Drawings,” Ellington trades phrases with the band. His statements are always straight forwardly in 4/4, while the band’s riffs cycle through a three-beat figure eight times. After the frantic statements of “Drawings,” the edited intro to “Promenade” returns to the pensive “Piano Pastel” presentation of Ellington. His playing is much more chordal through this musing before launching into the overdubbed intro to “Promenade.” During the choruses of the piece, Ellington remains an active accompanist for the band statement of the head and for the saxophone solo before he takes the final solo chorus and brings the cue to a close.

#### 4.3.4 Conclusions

Considering that the script had been written, the narrator secured (and augmented, if Dance's liner notes are to be believed), and soundtrack recorded and pressed, it seems unusual on the face of it that the project could not be completed. Careful attention to the Wildenstein catalog may account for the project's steep costs, however: most of the paintings on display during the 1968 exhibit were temporarily loaned by private collectors. Indeed, the exhibition catalog lists fifteen institutions, compared to nineteen individuals, as well as those lenders who wished to remain anonymous. While a museum may have been more accommodating of Shaw's wishes to film certain paintings, it would have been much more difficult to convince the private collectors to allow film crews into their personal galleries. Whether Shaw and his crew were successful in capturing any footage, they evidently did not acquire enough to produce the documentary.

Ellington's manuscripts and the unissued takes from the studio session also demonstrate that there was even more musical material at Shaw's disposal. Most were slower movements, with titles like "Prat," "Pastel," and "Copa." All three of these pieces match the solemn mood of Mitgang's script. Dance mentions that Ellington initially composed "Prat" to score The Wounded Jockey scene, the title referring not to the scholarship Ellington was awarded to attend the Pratt Institute of Art in his late teens, but rather "pratfall."⁷⁰ The chordal movement of "Pastel" resonates with Ellington's improvisatory "Piano Pastels," though the band's sloppy execution of the score may explain its absence from the soundtrack. By the time the band recorded "Copa" on December 9, 1968, Shaw may have already moved forward with his vision for the project. Nonetheless, their inclusion on the soundtrack would have provided smoother

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⁷⁰ Dance, liner notes to *The Private Collection, Volume Five*.

spacing of the narration. Additional cues could have led to a reordering of the existing cues in a way that matched Mitgang's script more closely. One proposed alteration would be to substitute "Racing" toward the end of Act II, providing the exciting ending that Mitgang calls for while also allowing "Drawings" to score Act III in its entirety.

The preceding discussion has proposed a reconstruction of Shaw's film based on Mitgang's script, Ellington's music, and the images upon which the film was based. Ellington may have been able to see Wildenstein's Degas' Racing World firsthand, as he had several engagements in New York state during the exhibition's dates. Even if he was unable to attend, Shaw likely supplied him with a copy of the exhibition catalog, which Mitgang used to construct his script. Ellington balanced the wistful tone of the catalog's introductory essay and Mitgang's script with the bright palettes and bustling characters many of the artists captured in their racetrack scenes, pitting lyrical ballads and ruminative piano solos against hard-swinging and driving ensemble numbers. *The Degas Suite* makes for a compelling musical composition in its own right, but the full scope of Ellington's score is only partially recoverable without the full film of *Degas' Racing World*.

#### **4.4 Conclusion—The Costs of the Stockpile: Ellington and Recording**

Fans and scholars alike appreciate the wealth of music that Ellington was able to preserve through the stockpile, but the costs of its creation and preservation were high. In June 1971, Ellington owed New York's National Recording Studio \$13,487.93 for unpaid session fees between September 1970 and June 1971. A portion of this sum was settled, but in September 1971 National Recording Studio hit Duke Ellington with a lawsuit, demanding the debt, interest on the unpaid sum, and court fees. The Ellington organization presumably settled the \$12,223.32,



because Ellington returned to National Recording Studio in the first half of 1972. But in August, 1972, National Recording Studio again filed suit against Ellington for the \$1,971.46 he owed for the 1972 sessions. Ellington paid that balance as well, but it would be the last time the orchestra recorded at National Recording Studio. This last session produced *The Goutelas Suite* recording from *The Ellington Suites*, discussed in Chapter 3.

Both *The Degas Suite* and *The River*, discussed in Chapter 4, had ties to National Recording Studio. All takes from *The Degas Suite* were recorded there in November 1968. Ellington's early piano recital of movements from *The River* was recorded at National Recording Studio on May 11, 1970, and the full band recordings of *The River* from June 1970 took place there as well.⁷¹ Fortunately, the Ellington organization was current with its payments to National Recording Studio during the period, so Ellington and his collaborators had full access to their recorded products. But the eventual lawsuit, and the mere existence of *The River* recordings, are a testament to how essential the act of recording became to Ellington as a compositional process.

If Strayhorn argued in the 1950s that Ellington's true instrument was his band, *The Private Collection, Volume Five* makes a compelling case that in his later years magnetic tape became his instrument. Outtakes from the recording sessions for *Degas' Racing World* suggest that Ellington made splicing and editing a part of his compositional process. While his willingness to use magnetic tape to overdub mistakes was reported in the 1950s,⁷² the "Opening Titles" sequence from *The Degas Suite* represents a different approach to the technology. Ellington may not have done the editing and splicing himself, but his approach to the sessions showed that he could be economical with his time and allow his engineers to marry separate

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⁷¹ The full band recordings on May 25, 1970, took place in Chicago.

⁷² For an example, see John Fass Morton, *Backstory in Blue: Ellington at Newport '56* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 108.

takes of a piece. By the end of his life, Ellington's cut and paste composing had spread from his manuscripts to the tape upon which his music was preserved.

This claim may seem controversial, but given Ellington's history of embracing recording technology, it should not seem so extreme. Harvey Cohen has demonstrated how, in the earliest decades of his career, Ellington recognized the significance of recording and devoted more time and attention to the medium than many other contemporary artists. Even though most of the money was in sheet music sales, which "encouraged band anonymity," Ellington wanted to capture the distinctive sounds of his band.⁷³ That desire required careful engineering and close attention to detail. Ellington carried this attention to detail forward into the post-war period, and his close supervision of the *Masterpieces by Ellington* session would, in Cohen's eyes, have earned him credit as at least a co-producer by today's industry standards.⁷⁴

According to Cohen, "As in the 1930s and 1940s, Ellington paid special attention to playbacks, insisting on approving final takes in the control room."⁷⁵ Later firsthand accounts support this observation. Whitney Balliett's article on *The River* sessions, for instance, describe Ellington's demeanor: "While the piece was played back, he sat in the recording booth with his head bowed, his eyes closed, and a hand on each knee. He looked up when it was over..."⁷⁶ I suggest this close listening not only allowed him to adjust balances and dynamics in subsequent takes, but was also a way for him to listen to his compositions with an ear for adding, subtracting, and reordering material. How many of Ellington's charts were initially performed as written, before he determined to reorder them after playing back the first take?

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⁷³ Harvey G. Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 67.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁷⁶ Whitney Balliett, *Collected Works: A Journal of Jazz, 1954-2000* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 332.

Promotional footage from an RCA Victor recording session in the late 1960s provides an example of Ellington's studio practice.⁷⁷ The clip opens with Ellington in the booth, listening intently to a previous take. Once playback ends, he hops out of his chair and exits the booth for the studio. He talks things over with his band and rehearses a passage with them. Then he makes his way over to the piano, counts off, and sets the tempo and feel on the instrument. He remains there for two-thirds of the take, occasionally playing along, but once the band moves into the final third of the chart, he gets up and begins moving around the studio, dancing and directing his players. Almost immediately after the concluding chord, he hustles back into the booth to listen. As the camera focuses on him, once again intently listening to the playback, a voice-over interview with Ellington recounts his thoughts on the process:

So as long as there's music...it's feeding, I'm eating it. I'm taking it, not intravenously or whatever it is, you take it in mentally...you're absorbing, your regenerating. Music is very regenerating, when performed. If you write it, that's giving, that's the investment. When you hear it back, you get back the gross...and your system automatically takes out the investment and determines the profit in joy.

Gabriel Solis argues that Ellington's relationship with music technology in the LP era is a continuation of his embrace of new technologies throughout his career. His early experiments with longer forms that exceeded the capacity of 78-rpm discs and his early stereo recording of "Mood Indigo," "Hot and Bothered," and "Creole Love Call" decades before stereo playback equipment existed for the consumer market are early signs that he continually pushed the bounds of technology. Solis suggests that of all the LP era technologies—namely hi-fi-sound, stereo recording, magnetic tape, and the long playing disc— Ellington exploited magnetic tape the least.⁷⁸ Certainly insofar as magnetic tape manipulation existed in the rock era, where producers,

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⁷⁷ The clip can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/91801820>.

⁷⁸ Gabriel Solis, "Duke Ellington in the LP Era," in *Duke Ellington Studies Anthology*, ed. John Howland (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

engineers, and musicians created new sounds and sonic realities through splicing, speed adjustments, and backwards playback, Ellington's exploitation of the medium is limited. In part this is due to the jazz aesthetic of "one good take," as Solis points out, where musicians seek to capture as much of a performance at once rather than splicing together multiple takes. But as Solis notes, the ability to record so many takes was a direct outgrowth of studios and labels adopting magnetic tape over direct-to-disc recording. Ellington's extended studio time and intense engagement with playback would have been tremendously more expensive, if not impossible, without magnetic tape technology.

Ellington's decision to record his band's performance of *The River* also points to a reliance on recorded technology. Considering that the work was ultimately intended to be arranged for a symphony orchestra, and especially given Ailey and the American Ballet Theater's repeated requests for a rehearsal piano score, Ellington's attempt to use a recording to fulfill the role is very unusual. To start, it would have taken significant time to extract the individual parts from the scraps of Ellington's scrawled short scores. Simply recopying the short score itself would have saved time and satisfied the ballet company's request for a rehearsal version for the in-house pianist. Ellington wanted to hear his music performed by his band, as it allowed him to edit his compositions based on what he heard, but it is striking that he also felt the need to *record* it. Even though *The River* recordings were intended as rough sketches of each movement, Balliett indicated that the band proceeded through six or seven takes of both "The Falls" and "The Mother, Her Majesty the Sea" while he visited.⁷⁹ In this way, Ellington could employ the two modes of listening when composing his music—during the takes he would listen for proper execution of what he had written and lead the band through the piece, and during

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⁷⁹ Balliett, *Collected Works*, 332.

playback he could listen for additional compositional opportunities and more subtle ways to refine his scores.

When the band had downtime in its hectic tour schedule, Ellington would schedule recording sessions to fill the afternoon. It is true that the Ellington orchestra ended up using recording studios around the country as rehearsal spaces, but it is tempting to overlook the role the manipulability of magnetic tape played in Ellington's later compositions. The stockpile then, in addition to granting him creative control over his music and forming an important part of his posthumous legacy, served an additional purpose: it became the way he wrote.

## Conclusion

Duke Ellington penned some 2,000 compositions throughout his life, and though many works from the 1930s and 1940s have been exhaustively examined, this dissertation has shed light on a small subset of the comparatively unexplored music from the second half of his career. The sample displays Ellington's versatility: his ability to write formally intricate and motivically unified concert pieces in response to his detractors, as in *The Tattooed Bride*; his ability to create and contract interesting arrangements of popular tunes for albums such as *At the Bal Masque*; his impressionistic musical imagery as heard on *The Degas Suite* and *The River*. They are connected by Ellington's approach to compositional parameters discussed in Chapter 3: repetition, timbre, riffs, grooves, as well as Ellington's practice of writing from the piano. My analysis in these four chapters provides more nuance to discussion of Ellington's compositional style, demonstrating the ways he changed creatively as his career continued.

Of course, as I argue throughout, Ellington was surrounded by a number of individuals who enabled him to realize his compositions. Drawing attention to these collaborators provides a corrective reframe of Ellington scholarship, which has tended to isolate Ellington as a creative genius. No collaborator was more critical to Ellington's output than Billy Strayhorn, and his influence emerges throughout the first three chapters, primarily in his inventive arrangements on *Masterpieces by Ellington* and *At the Bal Masque*. The members of the orchestra also played an indispensable role, as I argue in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3. Applying frames of interaction and place to these albums, respectively, I draw the attention away from Ellington as creative individual and listen to the instrumental voices surrounding him. In Chapter 2, I consider the roles Dick Vance, Irving Townsend, and the audience all play in realizing the conceptual conceit of *At the Bal Masque*. Finally, Ellington's work with Sam Shaw on *Degas' Racing World* and

Alvin Ailey and Ron Collier on *The River* illustrate the range of difficulties and successes that Ellington had with his explicitly collaborative projects.

Even though I frame these relationships as collaborations, Ellington is still the glue that holds it all together. An apt comparison may be made with auteur film directors such as Stanley Kubrick or Wes Anderson, whose name unites the finished product under a single vision although it is the collaborative product of a number of individuals performing specialized jobs. Despite scholars' (and Hollywood's unions') efforts to reframe the films as multi-authored, the auteur schema persists as a marketing angle and as a heuristic for grouping films into a single body of work. Likewise, the albums discussed in this dissertation will still feature Ellington's name most prominently on the jacket, even as I have demonstrated their collaborative nature.

Future research could explore the full extent to which auteur theory can be used to discuss Ellington's music. Such a discussion would necessarily delve deeper into the financial arrangements of the Ellington orchestra, including the band's payroll and the organization's relationships with the industrial powers of record labels, booking companies, and managers. Ellington's revenue stream from his royalties granted him a significant amount of freedom when dealing with these industry players, but he still depended on them to move his career forward.

Another promising avenue for future research is interactional analysis of big band jazz. Chapter 1 demonstrates that analytic techniques traditionally reserved for small combos in the bop and post-bop periods can be fruitfully applied to larger ensembles as well. This research track also brings Ellington's music into greater alignment with the broader jazz discourse, focusing on performance rather than scores. Other research may bring the interpretive frame of place to bear on more of Ellington's place-themed compositions. Yet another possibility is further comparison of Ellington's later works with his earlier compositional practices.

Ellington's uses of recording technology in his later career, especially as discussed in Chapter 4, also merits closer consideration.

Though Ellington wrote prolifically in his later career, he refrained from presenting many of those works in concert. He deeply felt that he owed his audience the familiar material they came to see, and he claimed that most would have been disappointed to hear new works instead of "Mood Indigo." As he wrote new material, he brought it to the band in the studio and recorded it, using each take to workshop and hone the music. Afterwards, many of the pieces were rarely, if ever, performed. Ellington's new compositions were, in a sense, written for magnetic tape.

Tangible records of Ellington's attitudes to magnetic tape probably survive, either in the vaults of the labels with whom Ellington worked through the later part of his career or in the unissued portions of the stockpile. In a future project, I aim to access these recordings in order to better understand Ellington's approach to tape and recording technology.

Columbia producer George Avakian recalled that "Ellington was so involved with sound, to a degree that almost no one else was," and that Ellington was also willing to experiment with editing and effects if they could improve a track.¹ Whether Avakian and Ellington resorted to the techniques on *Masterpieces by Ellington* is unclear, but the composer's openness to the processes definitely emerged on a later collaboration, *Ellington at Newport*. In Chapter 2, the sonic manipulation of the applause between the tracks of *At the Bal Masque* also documents Ellington (or at least his collaborators at Columbia) exploiting the possibilities of magnetic tape. For Chapter 3, the mere existence of these recordings is a testament to Ellington's reliance on recordings, and especially the cheaper studio time afforded by magnetic tape, even if his organization would lapse in payments. James Latimer, in a letter to Ellington prior to the band's

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¹ Cited in Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America*, 291.



stay at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for the Ellington Festival in 1972, made it clear that he could arrange a rehearsal space with playback capabilities. The letter suggests that Ellington's use of recording technology for composition may have been openly acknowledged. Lastly, Ellington's workshopping of the demo recordings for *The River* demonstrates his incorporation of playback in his compositional process. As I mention in Chapter 4, these recordings were unnecessary for choreographer Alvin Ailey and conductor Ron Collier, both of whom would have preferred a completed piano reduction, but they seemed necessary for Ellington to finish writing the composition.

This dissertation has exposed a variety of snapshots of Ellington as composer and collaborator. As the dissertation shows, both aspects of Ellington's output became increasingly mediated by technology. Of course, his recorded products always featured engineers and producers, though some made their presence known more than others. But the collaborations in Chapter 4 suggest that Ellington's conceptions of his own work became centered on the recordings that he produced to document it. Even his interactions with his band and compositions became dependent on playback. When Ellington's closest associates, Strayhorn, Irving Townsend, and his physician Arthur Logan, presented him with a collection of newly copied scores of his compositions for his sixtieth birthday, Ellington brushed the gift aside because he did not want to be reminded of his mortality. Three years earlier, however, he had begun assembling his own documentation of his legacy: the stockpile. These recordings, along with the numerous albums and discs he recorded commercial, best capture Ellington's working medium, the record itself.

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**Appendix: Billy Strayhorn's fifth chorus arrangement  
of "Sophisticated Lady" for *Masterpieces by Ellington*,  
assembled from DEC, Series 1, Box 352, Folder 11**



# Sophisticated Lady

arr. Billy Strayhorn

30 (Chorus 4)

Alto 1

Alto 2

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Tenor 2

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

Trumpet 3

Trumpet 4

Trombone 2

**E**

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 2, and Bari. Sax. The second system includes Tpt. 1, Tpt. 2, Tpt. 3, Tpt. 4, and Tbn. 2. Each instrument part is written on a five-line staff with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as *f* and *mf*. A large letter 'E' in a box is placed at the beginning of the first system. The score is characterized by intricate rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs. Some parts feature slurs and accents, and there are several instances of triplets marked with a '3' over the notes.

Alto 1  
Alto 2  
Tenor 2  
Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1  
Tpt. 2  
Tpt. 3  
Tpt. 4  
Tbn. 2

4

Alto 1

Alto 2

Tenor 2

Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Tbn. 2

9 **F**

Alto 1

Alto 2

Cl.

Tenor 2

Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Tbn. 2

17 **G**

Alto 1

Alto 2

Cl.

Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Tbn. 2

20

Alto 1  
Alto 2  
Cl.  
Bari. Sax.  
Tpt. 4  
Tbn. 2

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains measures 20 and 21 for six instruments. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#).  
- **Alto 1:** Measure 20 has a quarter note B4 with a flat. Measure 21 has a quarter note B4.  
- **Alto 2:** Measure 20 has a quarter note B4 with a flat. Measure 21 has a quarter note B4.  
- **Cl.:** Measure 20 has a quarter note B4 with a flat. Measure 21 has a quarter note B4 with a flat. From measure 22, there is a dense, multi-measure rest consisting of many overlapping notes.  
- **Bari. Sax.:** Measure 20 has a quarter note B2 with a flat. Measure 21 has a quarter note B2 with a flat.  
- **Tpt. 4:** Measure 20 has a quarter note B4 with a flat. Measure 21 has a quarter note B4 with a flat.  
- **Tbn. 2:** Measure 20 has a quarter note B2 with a flat. Measure 21 has a quarter note B2 with a flat.

21

Alto 1

Alto 2

Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Tbn. 2

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a jazz ensemble. It begins at measure 21. The Alto 1 part starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a half note A4, and a quarter note B4. The Alto 2 part starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note F#4, a half note G4, and a quarter note A4. The Bari. Sax. part starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a half note A4, and a quarter note B4. The Tpt. 1, 2, and 3 parts have quarter rests throughout. The Tpt. 4 part has a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a half note A4, and a quarter note B4. The Tbn. 2 part has a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a half note A4, and a quarter note B4. There are triplets in measures 23 and 24 for Tpt. 4 and Tbn. 2. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4.

25 **H**

Alto 1

Alto 2

Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Tbn. 2



37

Alto 1

Alto 2

Bari. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4

Tbn. 2