

JAZZ VOCAL SERIES

Belwin™ JAZZ
a division of Alfred

Take the "A" Train

Words and Music by BILLY STRAYHORN

Arranged by VICTOR LÓPEZ

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor
Vocal Solo
Solo B \flat Part (Substitute for Vocal)
Solo E \flat Part (Substitute for Vocal)
Solo Bass Clef Part (Substitute for Vocal)
1st E \flat Alto Saxophone
2nd E \flat Alto Saxophone
1st B \flat Tenor Saxophone
2nd B \flat Tenor Saxophone
E \flat Baritone Saxophone
1st B \flat Trumpet
2nd B \flat Trumpet
3rd B \flat Trumpet
4th B \flat Trumpet

1st Trombone
2nd Trombone
3rd Trombone
4th Trombone
Guitar Chords
Guitar
Piano
Bass
Drums

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

Billy Strayhorn (1915–1967), an American composer, pianist, and arranger, composed *Take the "A" Train* in 1939. Duke Ellington had offered Strayhorn a job in his orchestra and gave him money to travel from Pittsburg to New York City. Ellington wrote directions for Strayhorn to get to his house by subway. The note started, "Take the 'A' train..." and Strayhorn used it as the title for his composition which was to become the theme song of Duke Ellington and his orchestra, one of their biggest hits, and one of the masterpieces of jazz repertoire. Billy Strayhorn is known as the prodigy behind much of Duke Ellington's music.

The chart is a vocal chart with flexibility. In lieu of a female or male vocalist, the chart can be performed as an instrumental solo using the included solo parts. Notice that the vocal part has been cued in many of the wind parts which provides the director with additional flexibility to include the cued parts.

At the beginning, the harmony is somewhat dense and correct intonation is extremely important. Young players sometimes forget to listen to one another and make proper adjustments in order to attain good intonation. Strive to encourage each wind player to practice their part to the point of memorization so that he or she may concentrate on playing in tune. Direct the students to always listen to their section and the ensemble sound.

Make certain that the rhythm section establishes a smooth transition from the 2-feel and the 4-feel with the walking bass. The difference is in the 2-feel—the pulse is only on beats 1 and 3. The 4-feel with the walking bass line has a 4-beat pulse. For the drummer, note that in the walking bass section, the bass drum (play it lightly) is written on beats 1 and 3 and the hi-hat is played on beats 2 and 4 (with the foot, to avoid a double bass effect).

Articulations are of the utmost importance when playing the swing style and to facilitate the teaching and learning, accurate concepts should be introduced as quickly as possible. Marcato or rooftop accents (▲) are played accented, and detached with a fat interior. Say the word "daht" and you'll emulate the appropriate sound. When playing swing eighth-note passages, all up-beats are to be articulated and lightly accented, and except for the very first and last eighths notes, all other notes are articulated softly, almost "ghosted." This is often referred to as "up-beat" articulations. To understand this concept, it would be of great help if students listen to professional recordings of the swing style and specifically of this tune. Additional, Alfred Music provides a promotional sound file of this arrangement that can be listened to or downloaded from alfred.com/downloads.

Starting with the sax soli break in measure 37, each wind section has a unison soli. The goal in these unison sections is to play as one. I recommend sectionals if time permits to lock in articulation, intonation, and interpretation. Depending on the technical ability of the ensemble, a soloist or any other group combination thereof may be substituted in these solis. Make certain the rhythm section as well as backgrounds are kept under the winds dynamically at all times.

As is the case with all vocal performances, the vocalist should know that just standing and singing well on stage will rarely keep the audience engaged in the performance. So, the young vocalist needs to (1) love the song—get into it as if he or she had written it; (2) convey a smile and sell the song; and (3) move around the stage a bit to avoid standing in a stationary location. Check out YouTube for ideas.

For the rhythm section, the piano, guitar, bass, and drum parts should be well-notated.

Enjoy!

—Victor López



**Victor
López**

Victor López is a highly acclaimed educator, composer, arranger, and adjudicator. He holds music degrees from the University of Florida and Florida International University, with an Ed.D. in Educational Administration and Supervision. He has served as director of bands at the middle and senior high school levels and as an administrator in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. He has recorded and performed with various artists and has appeared in numerous music videos. He has over 450 compositions/arrangements published as an exclusive composer, arranger and clinician for Alfred Music.

CONDUCTOR
40376S

TAKE THE "A" TRAIN

Words and Music by Billy Strayhorn
Arranged by Victor López

MEDIUM SWING ♩ = 152-160

VOCAL SOLO

1st Eb ALTO SAXOPHONE

2ND Eb ALTO SAXOPHONE

1st Bb TENOR SAXOPHONE

2ND Bb TENOR SAXOPHONE

E♭ BARITONE SAXOPHONE

1st Bb TRUMPET

2ND Bb TRUMPET

3RD Bb TRUMPET

4TH Bb TRUMPET

1st TROMBONE

2ND TROMBONE

3RD TROMBONE

4TH TROMBONE

GIUITAR

PIANO

BASS

DRUMS

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1 2 3 4 5 6

mp3

RIDE Cym. LIGHT FILL

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mp3
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performance recording!
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CONDUCTOR

TAKE THE "A" TRAIN

7 **TWO FEEL**

VOCAL
You must take the "A" Train to go to Sugar Hill way up in Harlem.

ALTO 1
ALTO 2
TENOR 1
TENOR 2
BARI.

TPT. 1
TPT. 2
TPT. 3
TPT. 4

TBN. 1
TBN. 2
TBN. 3
TBN. 4

GTR.
PNO.
BASS
DRUMS

7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

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SOLO

LIGHT FILL - -

Chords: F6, G9(b9), G#7, C7, F6, G#7, C7

VOCAL
If you miss the "A" Train, you'll find you've missed the quick-est way to Har-lem.

ALTO 1
ALTO 2
TENOR 1
TENOR 2
BARI.

TRP. 1
TRP. 2
TRP. 3
TRP. 4

TBN. 1
TBN. 2
TBN. 3
TBN. 4

GTR.
PNO.
BASS
DRUMS

VOCAL (PLAY IF NO VOCAL)

F6 G9(b9) G#m7 C7 F6 B13(#11)

H.H. (COOT) 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22



CONDUCTOR

TAKE THE "A" TRAIN

23

VOCAL
Hur-ry, get on, now it's com-ing, lis-ten to those rails a-hum-ming. All a-

ALTO 1
VOCAL

ALTO 2
VOCAL

TENOR 1
VOCAL

TENOR 2
VOCAL

SARI.

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

GRP.
B7m7 A6 A6% G9 Gm19 C7 B15(#1) F6

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS
BEASS

23 24 (TIME) 25 26 27 28 29 30

CONDUCTOR **31** TWO FEEL

TAKE THE "A" TRAIN

VOCAL
board, get on the "A" Train soon you will be on Sugar Hill in Harlem...

ALTO 1
PLAY UNISON SOLI

ALTO 2
PLAY UNISON SOLI

TENOR 1
PLAY UNISON SOLI

TENOR 2
PLAY UNISON SOLI

BARI.
UNISON SOLI

TPP. 1
VOCAL

TPP. 2
VOCAL

TPP. 3
VOCAL

TPP. 4
VOCAL

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

GR. (F6) G9(b9) G#17 C7(b9) F#6

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS
TONG. FILL

VOCAL

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BARI.

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

GR.

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46

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Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for the song 'Take the A Train'. It is labeled as a conductor's score for a swing ensemble. The page contains staves for vocalists (Vocal, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Baritone), four trumpets (Trp. 1-4), four trombones (Tbn. 1-4), guitar (Gr.), piano (Pno.), bass, and drums. The vocal parts are written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The instrumental parts are also in treble clef for trumpets and guitar, and bass clef for trombones, bass, and drums. The piano part is in grand staff. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A large red watermark 'Legal Use Requires Purchase' is overlaid diagonally across the page. At the bottom, measure numbers 39 through 46 are indicated.

VOCAL

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BARI.

TPR. 1
PLAY UNISON SOLI

TPR. 2
PLAY UNISON SOLI

TPR. 3
PLAY UNISON SOLI

TPR. 4
PLAY UNISON SOLI

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

GTR. F6 G9(b9) G#17 C13(b9) F6 C#17/F B7/F

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

SAXES

47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54

CONDUCTOR

VOCAL

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BARI.

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TBN. 1 UNISON SOLI

TBN. 2 UNISON SOLI

TBN. 3 UNISON SOLI

TBN. 4 UNISON SOLI

GRP. $Bb\flat_6$ $A\flat_6$ $A\flat_6$ G^9 $D\flat_7$ G^9 $G\flat_7$ C^9

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

SAXES/TRPS.

LIGHT FILL

55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62

CONDUCTOR

TAKE THE "A" TRAIN

VOCAL

ALTO 1 UNISON SOLI

ALTO 2 UNISON SOLI

TENOR 1 UNISON SOLI

TENOR 2 UNISON SOLI

BARI. UNISON SOLI

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

GRP.

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

All... a

63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70

F#6 G#9 G#9 C#9 F#6 B13(#11)

BASS A

VOCAL
board, get on the "A" Train, soon go to Sug - ar Hill way up in Har - lem.

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BARI.

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

GRP.

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78

SOLO

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VOCAL

ALTO 1

ALTO 2

TENOR 1

TENOR 2

BARI.

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

GTR.

PNO.

BASS

DRUMS

79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88

PLAY

FILL UNTIL CUT OFF

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If you miss the "A" Train, you'll find you've missed the quick-est way to Har-lem.

PLAY

PLAY

PLAY

PLAY

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

G9(b9)

FILL

FILL UNTIL CUT OFF

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