



Take the “A” Train

Words and Music by BILLY STRAYHORN

Arranged by VICTOR LÓPEZ

INSTRUMENTATION

- 1 Conductor
- 8 1st Violin
- 8 2nd Violin
- 5 3rd Violin (Viola T.C.)
- 5 Viola
- 5 Cello
- 5 String Bass
- 1 Piano Accompaniment
- 1 Drumset

PROGRAM NOTES

Billy Strayhorn (1915–1967) 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 the Duke Ellington Orchestra, one of their biggest hits, and one of the all-time masterpieces of jazz music. Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington (1899–1974) is considered by many to be one of America’s greatest composers, bandleaders, and recording artists. Duke Ellington called his music “American Music” rather than jazz, though he is considered to be one of the most influential figures in the history of jazz. Ellington and Strayhorn collaborated frequently over many years.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

All Belwin string parts have been carefully bowed and fingered appropriately by level. The Yellow Very Beginning series includes many bowings as well as reminder fingerings for first-time readers. The Red Beginning series includes frequent bowings to assist younger players. Fingerings for altered pitches are often marked. The Green Intermediate series includes appropriately placed bowings for middle-level students. Fingerings and positions are marked for notes beyond first position. The Blue Concert series includes bowings appropriate for the experienced high school player. Fingerings and position markings are indicated for difficult passages.

Bob Phillips
Belwin/Pop String Editor

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

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. Make certain that the rhythm section establishes a smooth transition from the "two feel" and the "walking bass feel." Notice that in the walking bass section, the bass drum is written on 1 and 3 and the hi-hat is being played on beat 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 teaching and learning, it must be introduced as quickly as possible. When playing straight-note passages, all up-beats are to be articulated and lightly accented, and, except for the very first and last eighth notes, all other notes are articulated softly. This is called 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 recording of this arrangement that can be purchased from www.alfred.com/downloads.

Starting with the violin solo break, all other instruments have a unison background feature. However, depending on the technical ability of the ensemble, a soloist or any combination of players may play the indicated solo. Make certain to keep the rhythm section as well as the background figures under the soloist at all times.

I know that *Take The "A" Train* will be well received by the students and audience as it has, and continues to have, great global appeal.



Take the "A" Train

3

CONDUCTOR SCORE

Duration - 1:45

Moderate swing (♩ = 148)

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Violins

Viola (Violin III)

Cello

String Bass

Piano Accompaniment

Drumset

Vlins.

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

Ride Cymbal

Two feel

Chords: CMaj7, D9(b5), Dmin7, Ab9, Dmin7/G, G7(b9), C6, D7(b5)

Tempo: Moderate swing (♩ = 148)

Dynamic Markings: f, mf

Performance Notes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

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Vlns. I (V)
 Vlns. II (V)
 Vla. (Vln. III)
 Cello
 Str. Bass
 Pno. Accomp.
 Drumset

D min7 G7 C6

10 11 12 13

Vlns. I (V)
 Vlns. II (V)
 Vla. (Vln. III)
 Cello
 Str. Bass
 Pno. Accomp.
 Drumset

15 Walking bass feel

D min7 G7 Solo C6 D7(b5)

f mf

14 15 16 17 18

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

D min7 G7 F6 Gb13(#11)

19 20 21 22

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

23 F Maj7 E⁶ Eb⁶

23 24 25 26

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

D9 Dmin9 G7 G^b13(#11)

27 28 29 30

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

[31] Two feel (V) (V)

[31] Two feel C6 D9(b5)

31 32 33 34

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

Solo

D min7 **G7** **C⁶ (Vln. I)**

35 36 37 38

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

Tutti **-3** **-2** **4** **4**

C⁶ Play **D7(b5)** **D min7**

39 40 41 42 43

[47] Walking bass feel

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

G7 **C6** **G^b13(#11)** **F^{Maj}7**

f

44 45 46 47 48

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

E⁶ **E^b6** **D9** **Dmin9**

49 50 51 52 53

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59

60

61

62

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