



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.

Victor Lopez

Take the "A" Train

CONDUCTOR SCORE

Duration - 1:45

Moderate swing (♩ = 148)

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Violins

Viola
(Violin III)

Cello

String Bass

Piano
Accompaniment

Drumset

Vlns.

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno.
Accomp.

Drumset

Violins I & II: *f* to *mf*, accents, slurs, and dynamic markings. Includes performance notes like "Hi 3 4" and "Lo 4".

Viola (Violin III): *f* to *mf*, accents, slurs.

Cello: *f pizz.* to *mf*, accents, slurs.

String Bass: *f* to *mf*, accents, slurs.

Piano Accompaniment: *f* to *mf*, chords (CMaj7, D9(b5)), accents, slurs.

Drumset: *f* to *mf*, performance notes "Two feet" and "Ride Cymbal".

Violins (Vlns.): *f* to *mf*, accents, slurs, performance notes "Two feet".

Viola (Vln. III): *f* to *mf*, accents, slurs, performance notes "Two feet".

Cello: *f* to *mf*, accents, slurs, performance notes "Two feet".

String Bass: *f* to *mf*, accents, slurs, performance notes "Two feet".

Piano Accompaniment: *f* to *mf*, chords (Dmin7, Ab9, Dmin7/G, G7(b9), C6, D7(b5)), accents, slurs, performance notes "Two feet".

Drumset: *f* to *mf*, performance notes "Ride Cymbal".



Vlns.
I (V)
II (V)

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.
Dmin7 G7 C6

Drumset
10 11 12 13

Vlns.
I (V)
II (V)

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.
15 Walking bass feel
Dmin7 G7 Solo C6 D7(b5)
f mf

Drumset
14 15 16 17 18

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

19 20 21 22

Dmin7 G7 F6 Gb13(#11)

This block contains the musical score for measures 19 through 22. It features five staves for strings (Violins I and II, Viola/Violin III, Cello, and String Bass), a piano accompaniment staff, and a drumset staff. The string parts include various articulations such as accents and breath marks. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords like Dmin7, G7, F6, and Gb13(#11). The drumset part features a consistent rhythmic pattern with a triplet in measure 22.

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

23 24 25 26

23 Fmaj7 E6 Eb6

This block contains the musical score for measures 23 through 26. It features the same five string staves, piano accompaniment, and drumset as the previous block. The string parts continue with similar articulations. The piano accompaniment includes chords such as Fmaj7, E6, and Eb6. The drumset part maintains the rhythmic pattern from the previous measures.

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

D9 Dmin9 G7 Eb13(#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 D9(b5)

31 32 33 34

Vlns.
I
II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Drumset

Solo

f

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 D7(b5) D min7

39 40 41 42 43

47 Walking bass feel

Vlns. I
Vlns. II
Vla. (Vln. III)
Cello
Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.
Drumset

G7 C6 C#13(#11) F#Maj7

Vlns. I
Vlns. II
Vla. (Vln. III)
Cello
Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.
Drumset

E9 Eb9 D9 Dmin9

55 Two feel

Vlns. I *mf*

Vlns. II *mf*

Vla. (Vln. III) *mf*

Cello *mf*

Str. Bass *mf*

55 Two feel

G7 Gb13(#11) C6 D9(b5)

Pno. Accomp. *mf*

Drumset

54 55 56 57 58

Vlns. I *f*

Vlns. II *f*

Vla. (Vln. III) *f*

Cello *f*

Str. Bass *f*

Pno. Accomp. *f*

Drumset *f*

Dmin7 G7 C6 N.C. CMaj9

59 60 61 62