

Presents

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

MY LITTLE BROWN BOOK

ARRANGED BY BILLY STRAYHORN

PREPARED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, ROB DUBOFF, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

FULL SCORE

JLP-7381

MUSIC BY BILLY STRAYHORN

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MY LITTLE BROWN BOOK (1952/1967)

Background:

William Thomas Strayhorn is hardly unknown, but his presence in the world of Ellingtonia has always been shrouded in a bit of mystery. It is only within the last ten years that mystery has been solved. The history of the family of William Thomas Strayhorn goes back over a hundred years in Hillsborough, NC. One set of great grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. George Craig, lived behind the present Farmer's Exchange. A great grandmother was the cook for Robert E. Lee. Billy, however, was born in Dayton, Ohio in 1915. His mother, Lillian Young Strayhorn, brought her children to Hillsborough often. Billy was attracted to the piano that his grandmother, Elizabeth Craig Strayhorn, owned. He played it from the moment he was tall enough to reach the keys. Even in those early years, when he played, his family would gather to listen and sing.

Originally aspiring to become a composer of concert music, he was heavily involved in jazz and popular music by the time he was a teenager, writing a musical while in high school and playing gigs locally with a trio. His father enrolled him in the Pittsburgh Musical Institution where he studied classical music. He had more classical training than most jazz musicians of his time. In 1938, he met and played for Duke Ellington, who was sufficiently impressed and invited Strayhorn to join him in New York. Neither one was sure what Strayhorn's function in the band would be, but their musical talents had attracted each other. By the end of the year Strayhorn had become essential to the Duke Ellington Band; arranging, composing, sitting-in at the piano. Billy made a rapid and almost complete assimilation of Ellington's style and technique. It was difficult to discern where one's style ended and the other's began. Strayhorn lived in Duke's apartment in Harlem while the Ellington Orchestra toured Europe. Reportedly, Strayhorn studied some of Duke's scores and "cracked the code" in Ellington's words. He became Duke's musical partner, writing original music and arrangements of current pop tunes. In the early fifties, Strayhorn left the Ellington fold briefly, arranging for Lena Horne and other singers, and writing musical reviews. By 1956, however, he was back almost full-time with the Ellington organization until his death from cancer in 1967.

Some of Strayhorn's compositions are: *Chelsea Bridge*, *Day Dream*, *Johnny Come Lately*, *Rain-check*, and *My Little Brown Book*. The pieces most frequently played are Ellington's theme song, *Take the A Train* and Ellington's signatory, *Satin Doll*. Some of the suites on which he collaborated with Ellington are: *Deep South Suite*, 1947; the *Shakespearean Suite* or *Such Sweet Thunder*, 1957; an arrangement of the *Nutcracker Suite*, 1960; and the *Peer Gynt Suite*, 1962. He and Ellington composed the *Queen's Suite* and gave the only pressing to Queen Elizabeth II of England. Two of their suites, *Jump for Joy*, 1950 and *My People*, 1963 had as their themes the struggles and triumphs of blacks in the United States. Both included a narrative and choreography. In 1946, Strayhorn received the Esquire Silver Award for outstanding arranger.

In 1965, the Duke Ellington Jazz Society asked him to present a concert at New York's New School of Social Research. It consisted entirely of his own work performed by him and his quintet. Two years later Billy Strayhorn died of cancer on May 31, 1967. Duke Ellington's response to his death was to record what the critics cite as one of his greatest works, a collection titled *And His Mother Called Him Bill*, consisting entirely of Billy's compositions. Later, a scholarship fund was established for him by Ellington and the Julliard School of Music.

Strayhorn's legacy was thought to be well-known for many years as composer of many classic pieces first played by Ellington. It was only after the Ellington music collection was donated to the Smithsonian Institute that Strayhorn's legacy was fully realized. As documented by musicologist Walter van de Leur in his book on the composer, several compositions copyrighted in Ellington's name were actually Strayhorn's work, including entire suites, and particularly *Satin Doll*. Ironically, perhaps his most well-known song, *Lush Life* was written during his years as a student in Pittsburgh. The Ellington band never officially recorded it.

In recent years his legacy has become even more fully appreciated following research and biographies by David Hajdu and Walter Van De Leur, which led to properly crediting Strayhorn for songs previously credited to Duke or uncredited. Billy Strayhorn wrote beautiful, thoughtful, classic, and timeless music, and was brilliant as both a composer and an arranger. While enhancing Ellington's style of striving to showcase the strengths of his band members, Strayhorn's classical background elevated the group and its sound even further and helped the name Duke Ellington become eternally synonymous with class, elegance, and some of the greatest American music ever known.

The Music:

In 1935 Billy Strayhorn was asked by members of the Westinghouse High School graduating class to assist in producing a short show of skits and songs to be featuring during an annual event called "Stunt Day." Strayhorn, a graduate of the school, had played piano for this review in the past. Rather than merely providing accompaniment, he decided to write a show titled *Fantastic Rhythm* featuring an orchestra of 12 musicians and a group of dancers. One of the songs written for this show was *My Little Brown Book*. In 1940, after having joined the Duke Ellington Orchestra, Strayhorn wrote an arrangement of this tune to feature a vocalist. However, it would go unrecorded until 1942 when the band went into the studio and produced a record featuring vocalist Herb Jeffries. In 1952 Strayhorn would once again revisit this early classic of his and re-arrange it and set it in the new key of C major (the original key was Bb) to suit vocalist Jimmy Grissom. This particular arrangement was re-recorded by Ellington for the 1967 Strayhorn tribute album *...and his mother called him Bill* as an instrumental. The formerly vocal melody was divided up between piano (Ellington), alto saxophone (Johnny Hodges), and trombone (Lawrence Brown). This publication has been based on the 1967 version.

Notes to the Conductor:

The arrangement begins with a soft and pensive trombone solo with subdued background saxophones barely above a whisper. The piano enters and states the first A section of the melody with saxophones and trombones providing moving harmonies underneath. The backgrounds need to be played very understated. At bar 19 the melody is handed off to alto saxophone I with a recap of the previous backgrounds but now with the addition of a clarinet soloist behind the melody. The clarinetist should be careful to not be in the way of the alto soloist, but merely provide background 'melodic commentary' in the cracks of the melody.

Measure 27 sees the return of trombone I to state the melody of the bridge while the clarinetist continues to add background color. The alto saxophone I re-enters to state the melody for the last A section which then ultimately gives way to a tenor saxophone solo with more vibrant band backgrounds. The arrangement finishes up with a return to the melody as performed by trombone I.

This publication was prepared from the 1952 set of parts that were modified and re-used for the 1967 recording session.

Doug DuBoff, Dylan Canterbury, and Rob DuBoff

- June 2018

Tizol LITTLE B. BOOK A-8 28

Handwritten musical score for Trombone 2. The score is written on ten staves. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The first staff contains a whole note chord (F2, C3, G2) followed by a series of eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The second staff is marked with a box 'A' and contains eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The third staff is marked with a box 'B' and contains eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The fourth staff contains eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The fifth staff is marked with a box 'C' and contains eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The sixth staff contains eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The seventh staff is marked with a box 'D' and contains eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The eighth staff contains eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The ninth staff is marked with a box 'E' and contains eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The tenth staff contains eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2.

Handwritten musical score for Saxophones. The score is written on ten staves. The first staff is marked with '(SAXES)' and contains a whole note chord (F2, C3, G2) followed by a series of eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The second staff contains eighth notes: F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2, F2, C3, G2. The third staff is empty. The fourth staff is empty. The fifth staff is empty. The sixth staff is empty. The seventh staff is empty. The eighth staff is empty. The ninth staff is empty. The tenth staff is empty.

Here is the trombone 2 part originally used by Juan Tizol in 1952.

MY LITTLE BROWN BOOK

SCORE

RECORDED BY THE DUKE ELLINGTON ORCHESTRA

COMPOSED BY BILLY STRAYHORN

ARRANGED BY BILLY STRAYHORN

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY ROB DUBOFF, DYLAN CANTERBURY, AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

SLOWLY ♩ = 80 ①

WOODWIND 1: ALTO SAX
WOODWIND 2: ALTO SAX
WOODWIND 3: CLARINET / TENOR SAX
WOODWIND 4: TENOR SAX
WOODWIND 5: BARITONE SAX
TRUMPET 1
TRUMPET 2
TRUMPET 3
TRUMPET 4
TROMBONE 1
TROMBONE 2
TROMBONE 3
PIANO
BASS
DRUM SET

(SOLD BEHIND MELODY)
(CLARINET)
(IN HAT)
(IN HAT)
(IN HAT)
(IN HAT)
(SOLO)
(BRUSHES)

mp *p* *mf* *f*

A7^(♯5) D⁹ G⁶ Gm⁷ Dma⁷/A⁹(♯5) E m⁹ B^b₉(♯5) A¹³ E⁹ A7^(♯5)

A^b7 G7 C⁶ G7^(♯5) C⁹ Gm⁷C¹³ Fm⁹ F⁶ Fm⁷ Dm⁷(♯5) Cma⁷/G D⁹(♯5) Dm⁹A^b₉(♯5) G¹³ Em⁷ E^b₁₃ Dm⁹ G¹³(^b9) Cma⁷ Am⁹ D⁹ G7^(♯5)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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