

*Presents*

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

**THE CHANT**

RECORDED BY THE FLETCHER HENDERSON ORCHESTRA

ARRANGED BY DON REDMAN

TRANSCRIBED BY DYLAN CANTERBURY, EDITED BY ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

**FULL SCORE**

JLP-7894

MUSIC BY DON REDMAN

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THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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# DON REDMAN SERIES

## THE CHANT (1926)

### **Background:**

The world of big band jazz would not be the same if it wasn't for the contributions of Don Redman. His arrangements would cement several of the cornerstones of the style as eventually codified by one of his greatest admirers, Duke Ellington. A native of West Virginia, Redman was a child prodigy. He was honking out notes on trumpet as early as age 3, and by the time he was a teenager he was proficient enough on all woodwind instruments that he was working professionally. Studies at Storer College and the Boston Conservatory followed, eventually leading to his moving to New York in 1923 to join the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra.

As Henderson's chief arranger, Redman was responsible for crafting some of the band's most memorable and innovative charts. In addition to being harmonically ahead of their time, they also incorporated revolutionary rhythmic and structural concepts. Rhythmically, Redman incorporated aspects of the burgeoning style of the band's star soloist, trumpeter Louis Armstrong, into his soli sections, infusing the band with an intense sense of swing and excitement. Structurally, he would often pit the sax and brass sections against one another in call-and-response, an idea that would become a hallmark of the great swing bands of the 1930s.

After leaving Henderson in 1927, Redman worked as the musical director for McKinney's Cotton Pickers before finally forming his own orchestra in 1931. The band experienced some surprise popular success, recording a Vitaphone short film for Warner Bros. in 1933 as well as providing the soundtrack for a Betty Boop cartoon the same year. Although he was forced to disband his group in 1940, Redman remained busy as an arranger for the bands of Count Basie, Jimmy Dorsey and Harry James, as well as serving as Pearl Bailey's musical director in the 1950s. He passed away in 1964, leaving behind an indelible legacy that continues to stand strong to this day.

In the 1930s, Fletcher Henderson (1897-1952) helped define the swing era sound with his own band's performances and big band arrangements he wrote for Benny Goodman. Born in Georgia, James Fletcher Henderson was the son of two educators. Growing up, his mother taught him to play the piano. Henderson did not intend to pursue a career in music, opting instead to study chemistry and math at Atlanta University. His career aspirations were limited by racism in 1920s New York, and Henderson found work demonstrating songs for a music publishing company. In 1921, he moved to Black Swan records, where he served as a session pianist.

With the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, Henderson became the leader of his own band. In 1924, the orchestra landed a regular gig at New York City's Roseland Ballroom, where they stayed for ten years. That same year, Henderson hired Louis Armstrong to join the group. After musical director Don Redman departed in 1927, Henderson soon stepped into arranging duty. He proved to be gifted in this area, creating pieces that would usher in swing music's reign of popularity. Despite the band's high profile members, Henderson's business struggled, and he ended up selling some of his arrangements to Benny Goodman, who was starting his own band. Henderson was then forced to see the white bandleader reach a stratospheric level of success—using Henderson's arrangements of songs like **King Porter Stomp**, **Sometimes I'm Happy** and **Wrappin' It Up**—that had eluded him. Though Goodman was up front about Henderson's contributions to his band, it was still a bitter pill for Henderson to swallow. In 1939, he became a staff arranger for Goodman.



In the 1940s, Henderson tried his hand at bandleading once more, though he maintained an association with Goodman, while also sending arrangements to other bands. Henderson retired after having a stroke in 1950, and died in New York City on December 29, 1952, at the age of 55.

### **The Music:**

***The Chant*** serves as an important document of the early days of jazz in New York City for multiple reasons. First, it showcases jazz's first great big band, the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, at their musical peak. Second, it serves as excellent example of Don Redman beginning to emerge as one of, if not the, first great arranger in jazz. Third, it is a wonderful collaboration between Henderson and one of the key personalities in jazz at the time: keyboard wizard Fats Waller.

### **Notes to the Conductor:**

Despite being recorded in 1926, ***The Chant*** features a number of surprisingly progressive musical choices over the course of its three minute run time. Things kick off with a somewhat mournful figure in the horns before Redman throws out his first surprise - a brief break from Waller playing reed organ (Harmonium). Another unique touch comes immediately after at measure 11 by way of the use of the trombone and tuba as melody instruments, with a plunger muted trumpet solo over the top for added flair. Redman continues to push boundaries by employing a couple of rapid-fire key shifts that begin at measure 20, first from a 4 measure trumpet fanfare followed by 4 measures of some simple syncopation in the woodwinds and piano.

The arrangement settles into the key of Ab for the remainder of the performance at measure 28. Two back to back solo choruses from plunger muted trumpet and banjo commence, with the full band accompanying the trumpet solo but just the rhythm section (with Waller back on organ) behind the banjo. At long last, the main melody occurs at measure 52, carried by trumpet (with no mute) over a simple but mildly harmonically abstract setting in the rest of the ensemble. This melody is followed up by a clarinet trio for a chorus at measure 68, followed by another blues chorus of plunger muted trumpet at measure 84. The ensemble trades some simple figures back and forth between the brass and woodwinds over one more blues chorus at measure 96 before the first few measures of the melody are recycled as an ending.

Dylan Canterbury

- November 2021



# SCORE

# THE CHANT

RECORDED BY FLETCHER HENDERSON

MUSIC BY DON REDMAN

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TRANSCRIBED BY DYLAN CANTEBURY, EDITED BY ROB DUBOFF AND JEFFREY SULTANOF

BRIGHT SWING ♩ = 165

The score is arranged for a jazz ensemble. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Woodwind 1:** Alto Sax/Clarinet. Part starts with a circled "ALTO SAX." and features a melodic line with notes like B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>, and B<sub>4</sub>.
- Woodwind 2:** Alto Sax/Clarinet. Part starts with a circled "ALTO SAX." and features a melodic line with notes like #0, #1, and #2.
- Woodwind 3:** Tenor Sax/Clarinet. Part starts with a circled "TENOR SAX." and features a melodic line with notes like #0, #1, and #2.
- Trumpet 1, 2, 3:** All three parts feature melodic lines with notes like B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>, and B<sub>4</sub>. Trumpet 2 has a circled "TO PLUNGER" annotation.
- Trombone:** Features a melodic line with notes like e, #e, and b<sub>e</sub>.
- Tuba (Opt. Bass):** Features a rhythmic bass line.
- Banjo:** Features a rhythmic pattern with chords: B<sup>b</sup><sub>9</sub>, B<sub>9</sub>, B<sup>b</sup><sub>9</sub> A<sub>9</sub> A<sup>b</sup><sub>9</sub>, C<sub>9</sub>, and F<sub>13</sub>.
- Organ/Piano:** Features a chord progression: B<sup>b</sup>, B<sup>o</sup>7, C<sub>m</sub>7, F<sub>7</sub>, B<sup>b</sup>, B<sup>b</sup>/D, G<sup>b</sup>7, and F<sub>7</sub>. It includes a circled "ORGAN" annotation and a "solo" section starting at measure 7.
- Drum Set:** Features a rhythmic pattern with accents (4) and (6) and a circled "TO PIANO" annotation.

The score is in 4/4 time and consists of 10 measures. The tempo is marked as BRIGHT SWING ♩ = 165. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

11

Ww. 1 (A. Sax.) *mp*

Ww. 2 (A. Sax.) *mp*

Ww. 3 (T. Sax.) *mp*

Tpt. 1 *mp* (SOLO)

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3 *mp*

Tbn. *mp*

Tuba *mf*

Bjo. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

D. S. *mf*

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

choke cym.

(4) (6) (8) (16)

END SOLO OPEN

1 2