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Author(s): Wolfram Knauer

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“Simulated Improvisation” in Duke Ellington’s *Black, Brown and Beige**

BY WOLFRAM KNAUER

I N A RECENT ESSAY, André Hodeir defines a certain aspect of his compositional oeuvre from the 1950s as “simulated improvisation” (1986, 97). This definition designates those parts of his arrangements which seem to be improvisational phrases invented more or less spontaneously by a soloist, but which are actually thoroughly planned in advance by the composer/arranger. Duke Ellington’s suite-like composition *Black, Brown and Beige* (1943) is an early example of a comparable technique of written instrumental passages that “camouflage” as improvised solos. This essay will discuss such “simulated improvisation” in the first movement of that work, *Black*. As a starting point we discuss briefly some of the events that led to the composing of *Black, Brown and Beige*.

By the early 1930s Duke Ellington had already made plans for a programmatic opus in several movements that would represent a “tone parallel to the history of the American Negro,” which is how he would later describe *Black, Brown and Beige*. Three sources dating from 1933 mention Ellington’s plan for a five-part suite, of which the movements were called, respectively: *Africa or Savage War Dance*, *The Slave Ship or Atlantic Voyage*, *The Plantation or Slavery Days on Southern Plantation*, *Harlem or Evolution of Ragtime*, and a finale, a reprise-like statement of the single theme called “Recapitulation to Exalt the Negro.” (Hobson [1933] 1966, 146; Jewell 1977, 52; Collier 1987, 216-217; Rye 1982, 142; Ulanov [1946] 1975, 155). Wilder Hobson, in his essay of 1933, predicts almost prophetically, “With this suite in his repertoire, Ellington may some day make his Carnegie Hall debut.” ([1933] 1966, 146).

In 1935 Ellington wrote his film soundtrack *Symphony in Black*, which is a direct programmatic precursor to *Black, Brown and Beige* (Schuller 1989, 72-74).¹ Parallels are apparent to the later “suite” in the division of the movements of this work: here, too, is a work-song theme (in the movement entitled “The Laborers”), a spiritual theme (“Hymn of Sorrow”), a blues (“Big City Blues,” sung by Billie Holliday), and as well

*This is a slightly revised version of a paper read at a symposium held at Heek-Nienburg, West Germany, in April 1989 by the German branch of the Association for the Study of Popular Music. I have translated it into English for publication in the present journal.



DUKE ELLINGTON

dance arrangements (the incorporation of Ellington's "Ducky Wucky").

Near the end of the 1930s, *Down Beat* magazine mentions a five-movement opera project planned by Ellington, which bears the working title "Boola" and is, once again, "based on the history of the Negro from Africa to the present" (Collier 1987, 217). Parts of this never-completed composition are the foundation for Ellington's "Ko-Ko" (1939) and for passages in *Black, Brown and Beige* (Ulanov [1946] 1975, 253; Cohen and Priestley 1975, 29).²

The Ellington literature, up to the recent biography by James Lincoln Collier, has tried to keep alive the legend that *Black, Brown and Beige* was finished in a last-minute effort just before the Carnegie Hall debut in January of 1943 (Collier 1987, 218).³ Actually, the orchestra's final rehearsal was held at Rye High School (in the suburbs of New York) on the day before the Carnegie Hall premiere (Ulanov [1946] 1975, 250; Feather 1986, 64). It is true, though, that Ellington made changes to portions of the composition up to January 23rd, the day of the concert. Thus, the first movement has a thoroughly worked-out structure, but the openness of the last movement, *Beige*, suggests a somewhat vague and unfinished working out of the compositional ideas.

Leonard Feather reports on some of the changes made between the Rye High School and the Carnegie Hall concerts, giving special attention to this last movement (1986, 64). The lyrics of the finale originally were: "We're black, brown and beige, but we're red, white and blue" (sung by Jimmy Britton). Feather, J. T. H. Mize (organizer of the Rye High School event), and William Morris (Duke Ellington's manager and producer of the Carnegie Hall concert) advised Ellington to eliminate this ending. At the Carnegie Hall concert this reference to the war raging in Europe at that time is retained in an announcement Ellington made preceding the performance of the last movement.

The year 1940 is generally regarded as the peak in the compositional career of Duke Ellington. This view is based mainly on the short arrangements Ellington made that featured improvised solos by one or another of the gifted soloists in the Ellington orchestra. It is well known that he wrote many of his compositions with the characteristic sound of individual soloists in mind. Together with the more conventional song and blues forms of these short arrangements, Ellington's longer compositions constitute the more important part of his output during this period.

He had begun experimenting in the previous decade. In the *Creole Rhapsody* (1932), *Reminiscing in Tempo* (1935), and *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* (1937) we find arrangements that exceed in length the usual three-to-four-minute limit of 78 rpm records. These pieces also exceed the twelve- or thirty-two bar limit of the most common forms, so that formal unity in the arrangements is no longer achieved through the conventional means of chorus succession, but rather through compositional contrast, and a toying with expectation and surprise.

Gunther Schuller calls Ellington a master of the small form (1986, 50). The experiments with larger, or "extended," forms usually were criticized because they lack the clear disposition of the smaller models (1986, 50). In both *Reminiscing in Tempo* and the *Creole Rhapsody* stylistic peculiarities can be discerned that would appear later in *Black, Brown and Beige*: for example, sudden thematic contrasts and contrasts in tempo or key; interludes using a parallel saxophone arrangement or interludes with improvised piano parts; asymmetrical themes; written-out thematic variations and short, often written-out "improvisation" passages based on a singular chorus structure (that is, not prepared and not repeated) or on constantly changing so-called "running" harmonies.

In 1932 *Creole Rhapsody* was given a prize by the New York School of Music as the best new work by an American composer. Later extended compositions, including *Black, Brown and Beige* in 1943, received a much less positive reaction. The critics especially disparaged *Black, Brown and Beige* for its lack of inner coherence. Ellington felt that he was being grossly misunderstood. At a second Carnegie Hall concert, on 11 December 1943, he shortened the suite, playing only two excerpts, and explained his motivation for doing so by stating that the audience was not familiar enough with the programmatic subject of the whole composition. Ellington's announcement was:

We probably wouldn't play it in its entirety tonight, because it represents an awfully long and a very important story. I don't think too many people are familiar with the story. We thought it would be better to wait until the story was a little more familiar before we did the whole thing again.⁴

About 1943 there were rumors that Ellington intended to write a libretto for *Black, Brown and Beige*, thus changing the suite into an opera and thereby reviving his idea of the *Boola* opera project of the 1930s. Eventually, though, his only reaction to the negative reception of the critics to the complete composition was to shorten his overall concept of the work.⁵

It is well known that Duke Ellington wrote his compositions for individual members of his orchestra. He planned solo passages not for an alto saxophone but for Johnny Hodges, trumpet solos for Cootie Williams or Rex Stewart, tenor-saxophone solos for Ben Webster or, later on, for Paul Gonsalves. Again and again Ellington's discography points up the fact that certain compositions were deleted from the repertoire of the orchestra after the soloist featured in that arrangement left the band. Only in rare cases were solos transferred to a fellow sideman or to the bandsman who succeeded the original soloist. Many of Ellington's compositions from the late 1930s and early 1940s show a musical atmosphere, sound-color, harmonic attitude, and sometimes a rhythmic feeling that were clearly invented with the style of individual musicians in mind. The final improvisation, however, was left to the soloists. In the arrangement for *Black, Brown and Beige*, Ellington went one step further: he conceived solo passages in such a way that they sound

like genuinely improvised inventions.

There is a published score of *Black, Brown and Beige*, dating from 1946, which contains most of these composed solo parts.⁶ Comparisons of this score with the Boston concert recording of 28 January 1943, and as well with later recorded versions, show that the recorded solos deviate only slightly from the written scores (see Table 3 for a discography of *Black, Brown and Beige*).

ANALYSIS OF *BLACK**

In Table 2 of the Appendix is a list of the movements of the original composition with the titles of the sections and alternative titles used in later recordings and live concerts. Table 1 shows a form outline for the first movement, *Black*. This movement has three main sections: "Work Song," "Spiritual," and "Light." The last section fittingly was called "Montage" when used again in Ellington's show-production *My People* (1963). The lengths of the three parts are approximately the same, with a little over eight minutes for "Work Song," six minutes for "Spiritual," and six-and-a-half minutes for "Light."

"Work Song" is tripartite, each part consisting mostly of short, contrasting blocks, which differ in melodic and harmonic character, rhythm, and instrumentation. In a short 63-measure exposition, Ellington introduces the riff-like "Work Song" motif, which is distinctive primarily for its stressed rhythms. He uses a typical tension-and-release worksong phrase with marked quarter-note up-beats followed by a lightly syncopated figure (see Ex. 1). The continuing tympani accompaniment and the constant repetition of the initial motif offer further parallels to certain worksong types. An even clearer parallel is to be found in the trombone solo, where Tricky Sam Nanton uses his highly developed plunger-mute technique, producing a nearly human sound. At one point the solo seems to give special emphasis to the two-measure worksong phrases with its incantation-like melodic line, which is answered by heavy hammer rhythms in the tympani and full orchestra (see Ex. 2).

In the first part of the exposition Ellington introduces a counter-thematic statement, played by the saxophones in a parallel saxophone arrangement. The brevity of its phrases and the combination of marked up-beats and a flowing phrase-end make this theme seem like a variation of the initial motif. The saxophone arrangement must be seen, however, not as a composed development of the main "Work Song" motif, but as a variant on the subject "Work Song" *per se*. The same can be said for the trombone solo. "Work Song" at first seems to be nothing but a succession of short, incoherent melodic inventions, which achieve some kind of

*I have transcribed the musical examples used in this essay from the recording of the Boston concert at Symphony Hall on 28 January 1943 (Prestige P 34004).

EXAMPLE 1: "WORK SONG": Initial motif (ms. 3 f.) and saxophone ensemble (ms. 36 f.)

Thema (T.3 f.)



Saxophonsatz (T.36 f.)



EXAMPLE 2: "WORK SONG": Trombone solo (Tricky Sam Nanton), ms. 164-188

(T.164) (165) (b) (b) (b) (b)

2 Tbns.

Sax.

(170)

(175) (b) (b) (b) (b)

Tbns.

Sax+Tp.

Sax.

Tp.

EXAMPLE 2 cont.

The musical score is divided into four systems, each representing a different section of the piece. The first system (measures 180-185) features a Solo-Tbn. line with a melodic line, a Tymp. line with a rhythmic pattern, and a Bar. Sax. line. The second system (measures 190-195) features a Sax. line with a melodic line, a Bar. Sax. line, and a Sax. line. The third system (measures 200-205) features a Sax. line with a melodic line, a Bar. Sax. line, and a Sax. line. The fourth system (measures 205-210) features a Sax. line with a melodic line, a Bar. Sax. line, and a Sax. line. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

formal adhesion primarily because of contrasts in instrumentation, short breaks, and improvisation-like interludes. Closer analysis, however, reveals an inner coherence between the single parts.

Between the framing passages of "Work Song" (the exposition and the trombone solo) there is the more melodic middle part, the baritone saxophone solo, introduced with a solo break by Harry Carney. A comparison of the different recorded versions of the suite shows that this solo, too, is composed. It presents variations of the initial motif worked into a singable, nearly balladic melodic line. The solo does not follow a traditional chorus outline; instead, Ellington combines asymmetrical, motif-related short phrases. The harmonic progressions rely mostly on dominant and mediant relationships, giving the solo a quiet character in the middle of the "Work Song" section (see Ex. 3).

EXAMPLE 3: "WORK SONG": Baritone saxophone solo (Harry Carney),
ms. 64-107

The musical score is written for a baritone saxophone solo and an orchestra. The top staff is labeled "Orch. (T.64)" and contains a melodic line. Below it, the baritone saxophone solo is written on a single staff, marked with a "break" and a dotted line. The solo is characterized by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The orchestra accompaniment is written on multiple staves, featuring a variety of rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and dynamic markings.

Considering the "Work Song" as a whole, it appears that Ellington has deliberately omitted improvisational space for the orchestra members. He does not refer to a traditional chorus model, consisting of a succession of choruses and interrupted by interludes and modulations, but uses phrases that are defined in length and content by the main motif of one-and-a-half measures. In summary, Ellington deliberately tries to retain one motivic character for nearly eight-and-a-half minutes without establishing a relationship between the single parts through the usual chorus succession. His decision against allowing for improvisation in this section of *Black* is a conscious decision for a compositional shaping of the arrangement.

Ellington's use of the distinctive, individual sounds of his outstanding musicians, such as Harry Carney and Tricky Sam Nanton, is quite

obvious in this movement. Nanton's plunger-mute work offers an especially effective climax for "Work Song," and is without doubt one of the peaks of the entire suite. The extent to which composed parts are laid out for an individual soloist becomes clear by comparing Nanton's solo here with a recording of 1958, in which Quentin Jackson takes over the solo but does not nearly achieve the expressiveness of Nanton's moaning "yah yahs."⁸

The second section of *Black*, "Spiritual" (best known as "Come Sunday"), is a two-part form. The opening presents solo variations on the A-section of the melody "Come Sunday," played by valve-trombonist Juan Tizol and violinist Ray Nance. The violin solo especially has the character of a soloistic improvisation, even more so than do the solos of "Work Song." But in comparing the different recorded versions of the solos, once again one finds that these "improvisations" are really fixed conceptions that were written out by the composer, Ellington himself.

Nance's violin solo of 24 measures (three statements of the spiritual's A-section) originally began with a pizzicato, but is bowed in the documented concerts of Boston and New York's Carnegie Hall, due probably to difficulties with the halls' acoustics. During his solo, Nance is joined by trombonist Juan Tizol, who offers a further variant of the "Come Sunday" theme, and by trumpeter Rex Stewart, whose part consists solely of a long-held C-note (see Ex. 4). The combining of the four melodic levels (violin, trumpet, valve trombone and double bass) after measure 9 of Nance's solo produces something of a chamber-music complexity, which is barely discernible in the recorded concert versions, but can be heard in the studio recording of 1945.

Despite its use of certain typical violin figures, the violin solo clearly is reminiscent of the characteristic solo style of Ellington, the pianist. Arpeggios of fifths and fourths, typical rhythmic repetitions, harmonic clashes between solo voice and accompaniment (especially in the second eight measures), all stylistically identify Ellington, the pianist. Try to play the violin melody on the piano!

This solo obviously is different from the other written-out solo passages of the suite. In the third eight-measure passage of the concert recording of January 1943, Nance diverts from the compositional plan, possibly because of a sudden insecurity. The original version, though, can be reconstructed by comparing the several different recordings.

The second half of the spiritual section presents the melody of the complete "Come Sunday" theme played in a straight interpretation by alto-saxophonist Johnny Hodges. In the 32 measures of a traditional song form, he uses only a few typical embellishments: short glissandi and expressive legati over a chorale-like saxophone arrangement and guitar tremoli.

The two outstanding solo passages in "Light" are features for trumpeter Rex Stewart and bassist Junior Raglin. Raglin's solo is pre-composed and relates, even to including direct motivic quotations, to the

EXAMPLE 4: "COME SUNDAY": Violin solo (Ray Nance), ms. 266-289

(T.266)

Violin (Vln.) and Saxophone (Sax.) parts for measures 266-270. The bass line is in the bottom staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The violin part features a melodic line with slurs and ties. The saxophone part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note pattern.

Violin (Vln.) and Trombone (Tbn.) parts for measures 271-275. The bass line is in the bottom staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The violin part continues the melodic line. The trombone part enters in measure 274 with a sustained note. The bass line continues with the eighth-note pattern.

Violin (Vln.) and Trombone (Tbn.) parts for measures 276-280. The bass line is in the bottom staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The violin part continues the melodic line. The trombone part continues with sustained notes. The bass line continues with the eighth-note pattern.

Violin (Vln.) and Trombone (Tbn.) parts for measures 281-284. The bass line is in the bottom staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The violin part continues the melodic line with more complex phrasing. The trombone part continues with sustained notes. The bass line continues with the eighth-note pattern.

Violin (Vln.) and Trombone (Tbn.) parts for measures 285-289. The bass line is in the bottom staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The violin part concludes the melodic line. The trombone part continues with sustained notes. The bass line continues with the eighth-note pattern.

main motif and to melodic developments from the "Work Song" section. Such quotations, as well as the short asymmetrical phrases that are interrupted by single orchestra statements, show clear parallels to Harry Carney's baritone-saxophone solo in "Work Song." An important compositional element in this last section of *Black* should not go unmentioned: the combination ("Montage") of both the movement's main motives (beginning in measure 482), one upon the other, in the different instrumental sections of the orchestra.

The formal scheme of *Black* can be described loosely as parallel to the classic sonata form of European concert music. After an exposition and partly variant developmental section, in which the two contrasting main themes are introduced ("Work Song" and "Come Sunday"), there follows a development section that uses single motivic elements of these themes and also introduces new melodic material. A reprise of the "Come Sunday" melody is followed by another developmental section that mediates between the two original, contrasting themes, which are played simultaneously by different instrumental groups. Of course, such a parallel to the classic sonata form does not represent Ellington's real intentions; he did not plan *Black* with such a scheme in mind. Still, a comparison like this can clarify functional relationships in the composition and thus help to explain the structure of the movement.

The chief features of *Black* can be summarized as follows: The main themes are the 8-bar "Work Song" and the 32-bar "Come Sunday" melodies. The secondary themes in all three sections of the work generally comprise eight or twelve bars (blues form) and occasionally even the full song form of thirty-two bars. Interludes function mostly to provide space for harmonic modulations or to prepare for central thematic blocks. These occur as piano interludes, saxophone ensemble arrangements, solo or ensemble breaks, and cadential sections.

The solo passages generally are written out by the composer, with special attention given to the personal style of the featured soloists. Only in the violin solo can be found a chorus-like succession of measured passages. The trombone solo also comprises 8-bar units, but harmonic shifts and orchestral statements generally conceal the clarity of the harmonic foundation. Both Carney's baritone saxophone feature and Raglin's double bass solo incorporate motivic development of essential thematic elements, and both solos are based on running harmonic patterns that exclude repetition.

In his composition, Duke Ellington relies heavily on contrasts—in tempo, in rhythm (especially the alternation of swinging and non-swinging passages), in harmonic structure, and in instrumentation. This last named includes the interchange of solo and tutti passages, as well as that of composed passages and "simulated improvisation."

These contrasts are mediated through unifying procedures. In addition to the "Montage" (mentioned above), which draws on "Work Song" and "Come Sunday," other themes and motives are repeated from one section to the next, in both melodic and harmonic patterns. Also

repeated are the distinctive sounds, such as the muted trumpet, plunger-muted trombone, and parallel saxophone arrangements. Finally, there is the clear relation to the program of the suite, to the "black heritage," and thus to Afro-American music history. It should be observed that the use of written-out solo passages, that is, of so-called "simulated improvisation" must be counted among the unifying and mediating elements of the composition.

It is well known that some celebrated jazz improvisers have worked out plans in the back of their minds for a number of their improvisations, plans to which they refer in nearly every realization of certain compositions, without much change except for minor embellishments. In all such cases it is the soloist who decides to use a solo plan, which he has developed as a "perfect" interpretation. The idea of "pre-conceived improvisation" planned by a composer, however, seems not to have been practiced before Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige*.⁹

Ellington's decision to employ what André Hodeir would call "simulated improvisation" in referring to his own compositions, can be explained only if one assumes that Ellington had in mind special functions for the single parts of the composition, which functions relate these to the overall conception of *Black, Brown and Beige*. Motivic variants and motivic development, as in the trombone solo and especially as in the baritone saxophone and the double-bass solos, are re-interpretations of the thematic materials, re-interpretations which seem to parallel the *motivische Arbeit* in European concert music of the nineteenth century.

Through precise planning of all phases of the movement, Ellington is able to mediate external contrasts—between themes and between composition and improvisation—through the internal elements of arrangement and composition. He chooses not to rely on the individual styles of his musicians, which he knows well and thus might rather safely employ in his compositional plan, but rather invents melodies which are organized in detail as regards motive structure. This approach, in any case, throws some light on Duke Ellington's attitude towards the aesthetics of jazz composition.

In addition to Hodeir, several soloists after bebop developed the technique of motivic improvisation, of whom the most important are pianists Lennie Tristano and John Lewis and tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins (Schuller [1967] 1986; Knauer 1990). The assimilation of such compositional and improvisational techniques in their work is characteristic of Third Stream, and is of importance for the understanding of early Free Jazz. But Duke Ellington was a pioneer in employing "simulated improvisation"—a compositional concept that up to now has been mostly neglected in the study of his music.

APPENDIX

Table 1

FORM OUTLINE OF THE FIRST MOVEMENT: "BLACK" FROM "BLACK, BROWN & BEIGE" (RECORDING: BOSTON, JANUARY 28, 1943, PRESTIGE P 34004)

1		64	114	211
"WORK SONG"	Exposition and composed variations of the <i>Work Song</i> theme eight-bar theme complex	Baritone saxophone solo (Harry Carney), partly with orchestra arrangement; composed solo voice	Trumpet break; trombone solo (Tricky Sam Nanton), interrupted by single orchestra statements; composed solo voices	Out chorus: quote of the <i>Come Sunday</i> theme ("religioso")
	E ^b major	= / B ^b major	E ^b major / C major / D ^b major	E ^b major
226		266	290	298
"COME SUNDAY"	Exposition of the A-section from <i>Come Sunday</i> , arranged variants (orchestra, solo trombone). Contrasting interlude of the saxophone ensemble	Violin solo (Ray Nance); chorus-like structured "simulated improvisation" on the A-section of <i>Come Sunday</i> . At the end: layer-like addition of trombone, trumpet and double bass	Interlude	<i>Come Sunday</i> . Complete theme (AABA) played as alto saxophone solo by Johnny Hodges. Only slight embellishments of the original composition
	E ^b major / F major	=	Modulation	D ^b major

330	346	362	394	402
Trumpet cadenza and signal (Intro)	Orchestra riffs as preparation for the following theme	Trumpet solo (Rex Stewart) over an orchestra riff arrangement in 32-bar song form	Orchestra-"coda", riffs from King Porter Stomp	Bass solo (Junior Raglin) Asymmetrical phrase units; composed solo voice
^b D major	^b B major	=	=	=

423	435	456	472	482
Blues arrangement (12 bars) for the saxophone ensemble	Reprise of Come Sunday: bridge in the clarinet; different arrangement of the A-section	Blues arrangement composed trombone solo (Lawrence Brown)	Come Sunday A-section played straight as a trombone solo (Lawrence Brown)	"Montage": Work Song (trumpets) Come Sunday (trombones)
^b B major	=	=	=	=

496	512	546
Overlapping of the A- and B-sections from Come Sunday; reduction to 12 measures followed by a short interlude	Swing arrangement in 32-bar song form; "wa-wa" riffs comparable for instance to Ellington's Old Man Blues as well as other typical Ellington arrangements	Coda with split-off riffs and riff-segments; sudden end
^b B major / C major (G major)	^b A major	=

"LIGHT"

Table 2. *Black, Brown & Beige* Movements

Movement Titles	Alternative Titles
<i>Black</i>	
“Work Song”	
“Spiritual”	“Come Sunday” “David Danced” (1963, 1965)
“Light”	“Montage” (1963)
<i>Brown</i>	
“West Indian Dance”	“West Indian Influence”
“Emancipation Celebration” ..	“Proclamation of Emancipation” “The Lighter Attitude” “Old Folks” “Y.G.O.” “Youth” “Youthful Awkwardness” “Graceful Awkwardness”
“Blues”	“The Blues Ain’t” ”Mauve”
<i>Beige</i>	
“Sugar Hill Penthouse”	“Creamy Brown” “A View from Central Park” (1965) “Cy Run Rock Waltz” (1965) “Symphonette” (1971)

Table 3. *Black, Brown & Beige* Discography

This discography lists all known Ellington recordings of *Black, Brown and Beige* and, as well, some important performances that were not documented on record. Only the labels of the first issue are listed and no personnel is given except where important to conceptual changes of the music.

Rye High School, New York, 22 January 1943:	
<i>Black, Brown & Beige</i>	Not recorded
Carnegie Hall, New York, 23 January 1943:	
<i>Black</i>	(unissued)
<i>Brown & Beige</i>	Prestige P 34004
Symphony Hall, Boston, 28 January 1943:	
<i>Black</i>	Prestige P 34004
<i>Brown & Beige</i>	(unissued)
Concert, Chicago, 1943:	
<i>Black, Brown & Beige</i>	(not recorded?)

- Hurricane Club, New York, 31 August 1943:
 "West Indian Dance" (unissued)
 "Emancipation Celebration"
- Hurricane Club, New York, 7 September 1943:
 "West Indian Dance" (unissued)
- Hurricane Club, New York, September 1943:
 "West Indian Dance" (unissued)
 "Emancipation Celebration"
- Carnegie Hall, 11 December 1943:
 "West Indian Influence" Ember EMBD 2001
 (slightly shortened)
- New York, 11 December 1944:
 "Work Song" (slightly tightened) Victor 28-0400
 "Come Sunday" (2 takes) Victor 28-0401
- New York, 12 December 1944:
 "The Blues" (3 takes) shortened at beginning Victor 28-0401
 "Three Dances: (West Indian Dance/Emancipation Celebration/Sugar Hill Penthouse"; shortened arrangements) Victor 28-0400
- Carnegie Hall, New York, 19 December 1944:
 "Work Song" Prestige 24073
 "The Blues" -
 "Three Dances" (all as perf. on 12 December 1944) -
 "Come Sunday" (concluded by "Light") -
- New York, 4 January 1945:
 "Carnegie Blues" (3 takes; combination of the trombone arrangement from the interlude of "The Blues" and a short trumpet-arrangement from "Light") Victor 20-1644
- Civic Opera House, Chicago, 25 March 1945:
 "Work Song" (all as perf. on 19 December 1944) Joyce LP 1053 B
 "Come Sunday" -
 "The Blues" -
 "Three Dances" -
- New York, 14 April 1945:
 "Come Sunday" Ariston RI 12029
- 400 Club, New York, 21 April 1945:
 "Three Dances (as perf. on 19 December 1944) FDC 1011
 "The Blues" -
- Percy Jones Hospital, Battle Creek, Michigan, 2 June 1945:
 "Come Sunday" Fairmont FA 1003
- Apollo Theatre, New York, 30 August 1945:
 "Carnegie Blues" Fairmont FA 1003

- Radio City Music Hall, New York, 7 July 1945:
 "Carnegie Blues" (as interlude between
 "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue") Fairmont FA 1010
- New York, 8 September 1945:
 "Carnegie Blues" V-Disc 558
- Club Zanzibar, New York, 18 November 1945:
 "Emancipation Celebration" Joyce LP 1071
- Carnegie Hall, New York, 4 January 1946:
 Spiritual "Come Sunday" (incl. "Light") Prestige P 24074
 "Work Song" -
 "The Blues" -
- Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, 30 April 1947:
 "The Blues" Stardust 204
- Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles, 31 August 1947:
 "Come Sunday" Unique Jazz UJ 008
 "The Blues" -
 "Emancipation Celebration" -
- Los Angeles, 5 & 12 February 1958:
Black (complete) Columbia CL 1162
 "Come Sunday" (with lyrics, Mahalia Jackson) -
 "Come Sunday" (violin-piano improvisation) -
 "23rd Psalm" (with Mahalia Jackson) -
- Olympia Theatre, Paris, 23 February 1963:
 "The Blues Ain't" Reprise R 6234
- Paris, 1 March 1963:
 "Come Sunday" (with lyrics, Alice Babs) Reprise R5024
- McCormack Place, Chicago, 20, 21, 28 August 1963,
My People:
 "Come Sunday" (with lyrics) Contact CM (SS) 1
 "David Danced" (Bunny Briggs, tap dance) -
 "Montage" -
 "The Blues" -
- Toronto, Canada, 2, 3, 4, & 5 September 1964:
 "The Blues" Rarities RAR 29
 "David Danced" (Bunny Briggs, tap dance) -
- New York, 4 March 1965:
 "Black" (work song) LMR 255 926-2
 "Come Sunday" -
 "Light" -
- Chicago, 31 March 1965:
 "West Indian Dance" LMR 255 926-2
 "Emancipation Celebration" -
- Chicago, 18 May 1965:
 "Cy Runs Rock Waltz" LMR 255 926-2
Beige (shortened) -
 "Sugar Hill Penthouse" -

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York,
26 December 1965, *Concert of Sacred Music*:

"Come Sunday" (with lyrics)

Victor LPM 3582

"Come Sunday" (and "Light")

-

"David Danced" (Bunny Briggs, Tap dance)

-

New York, 6 May 1971:

"Symphonette"

Pablo 2310-787

"The Blues"

LMR 255 926-2

NOTES

1. Soundtrack recording on *Duke Ellington's Band Shorts (1929-35)*, Meteor MTLP 1.005.

2. Cohen and Priestley speculate whether "Ridin' On A Blue Note" (1938), which is used in portions of *Black*, might be another by-product of the opera project "Boola."

3. John Lewis, pianist and musical director of the Modern Jazz Quartet, in a recent talk at Celle, West Germany, on 13 July 1989, mentioned that he had heard portions of *Black, Brown & Beige* as early as 1939 or 1940 when he visited Ellington concerts while studying at the University of New Mexico. It might very well be that these were compositions like "Ridin' On A Blue Note," which later on served as a basis for sections of *Black, Brown & Beige*.¹ It might also be that Ellington tried out passages of his *Boola* or a similar project, which later were incorporated in the suite of 1943. In any case, Lewis's remark underlines the fact that it leads to a misunderstanding concerning the compositional process of *Black, Brown & Beige* if we assume a hectic and last-minute composition and arrangement for the whole suite, as has so often been suggested in the Ellington literature.

4. A recording of this concert was published on Ember EMBD 2001.

5. When Ellington recorded an album entitled *Black, Brown & Beige* for Columbia in 1958, he used only the complete arrangement of the first movement, eliminating *Brown* and *Beige*. One reason for this may be that Mahalia Jackson (who was scheduled to sing a version of "Come Sunday" as well as the "23rd Psalm"), might have refused to perform with Ellington if the record was to include the blues of the second movement or the dance music of the finale.

6. Jan Bruér of Spanga, Sweden, discussed the score of *Black, Brown & Beige* at a conference of the Duke Ellington Music Society at Stockholm in May 1985. In this report, as well as in a letter to the present author, dated 30 June 1989, Bruér states that Mercer Ellington copied the actual orchestra voices into a score in the 1940s to get some practice in the art of arranging.

When Ellington's own publishing house, Tempo Music, Inc., made an agreement in 1963 with Campbell, Connelly, Ltd., in London, this contract included the publication rights to *Black, Brown & Beige*. In the end, Tempo Music did not use Campbell, Connelly, as a European partner, but the publication of Mercer's score came about in that try-out period. *Black, Brown & Beige* was published in seven parts, these being *Black* (which is actually the

"Work Song" section only), "Come Sunday," "Light," "Emancipation Celebration," "West Indian Dance," "Blues" and "Last of Penthouse," which was the only part of *Beige* included in the publication.

7. Prestige P 34004. This recording was made in Boston, at Symphony Hall, on 28 January 1943.

8. Columbia CL 1162.

9. Jelly Roll Morton, who often was accused of having given fixed solo plans to his musicians, actually gave them all the freedom they wanted for their improvisations, but he was quite strict about the composed and arranged passages (see Omer Simeon, quoted in Shapiro and Hentoff 1955, 182; Williams [1959] 1975, 75).

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