

Eastman School of Music  
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An Analysis of Duke Ellington's  
"Amad"  
Pt. 8 of the *Far East Suite*

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To this day, there are a few composers that can claim such success and notability as Duke Ellington. Known for his sophistication, concrete legacy in the world of jazz, and indelible mark on American culture, Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington remains one of the preeminent American composers. Born April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1899, to his parents James Edward and Daisy Kennedy Ellington, he soon grew up in a house filled with family, which provided interests from all corners.<sup>1</sup> He took interest in baseball, movies, social studies, and eventually piano by the age of seven. Eventually, his love of music took him to New York, where he began performing professionally in 1922, accompanied by his friends Sonny Greer and Otto Hardwick.<sup>2</sup> This eventually led to his engagement at the Cotton Club starting in December of 1927, resulting to a meteoric rise in popularity on both a local and international scale.<sup>3</sup>

Ellington’s 1967 album *The Far East Suite* reflected the Ellington organization’s 1963-64 travels among the Middle East and Japan, sponsored by the State Department.<sup>4</sup> Initially, the suite was only composed of four pieces, “Amad,” “Depk,” “Agra,” and “Bluebird of Dehli,” and was premiered as the *Impressions of the Far East* in a 1964 concert in England. The completed version featured nine pieces and is what has taken the form of the suite as we know it today. The piece “Amad” is one of Ellington’s personal compositions on the album, along with “Depk.” The rest of the pieces were either composed by his writing partner Billy Strayhorn or were mutually composed by the two.

The topic of this analysis will be the piece “Amad.” As with many other of Ellington’s pieces, the title has a bit of a dual meaning. *Amad* being the Arabic word for “highly praised,” or “one who constantly thanks god.” Additionally, reversing the letters of “Amad” spells out the first four letters of the city Damascus, the place the piece is based on, which conveniently has Arabic as its native language.

The piece begins with a piano introduction by Ellington, accompanied by John Lamb on upright bass. The introduction appears to be largely improvised, as alternate takes of the piece contain different material. However, the harmonic material remains largely the same throughout the different takes. Beginning with a stacked 5<sup>th</sup> “C” and “G” below the bass clef, and another stacked “G” and “D” an octave above, it immediately starts with an open texture, which is

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<sup>1</sup> Ulanov, Barry. “Duke Ellington” New York Creative Age Press, Inc. 1946

<sup>2</sup> Ulanov, Barry. “Duke Ellington” New York Creative Age Press, Inc. 1946

<sup>3</sup> Piras, Marcello. "Ellington, Duke." Grove Music Online. 16 Oct. 2013; Accessed 12 Apr. 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Piras, Marcello. "Ellington, Duke." Grove Music Online. 16 Oct. 2013; Accessed 12 Apr. 2022.

juxtaposed by a stacked “Gb” and “F” in the treble clef, emphasizing a major 7<sup>th</sup> interval. This is already an interesting texture, as the “F,” “Gb,” and “G” chromatic neighbors, yet are voiced in major 7<sup>th</sup> intervals, creating an open feeling, rather than a dense chromatic cluster. This idea is developed further throughout the piece. As seen in the second bar, the major 7<sup>th</sup> between the “G” and the “Gb” are now compounded into a minor 2<sup>nd</sup> in the lower register of the treble clef, accompanied by a “Bb,” as well as the initial “C” and “G” pedal point. On beat four of the bar, an additional minor 2<sup>nd</sup> interval is added, with the introduction of a “D” and “Eb,” now fully suggesting that the piece is establishing itself in C-7.

Moving forward, the minor 2<sup>nd</sup> interval between the “D” and the “Eb” is augmented into a major 7<sup>th</sup> in the third bar, moving the “D” up an octave, before moving the structure up to a similar “Gb” and “F,” which had been seen previously in the first bar. However, after reaching this peak, the line falls back down to the minor 2<sup>nd</sup> between the “D” and the “Eb,” with a low “G” below. This is developed with movement in the inner voice from the “G” to a “Bb,” stepping down to an “Ab” and finally back to a “G” with a “C” above as a cadential point at the end of bar four. However, this is immediately juxtaposed again, as the “C” and “G” pedal is repeated in bar five and answered with a stacked “Gb” and “F” in the treble clef’s lower register, resulting in stacked major 7<sup>th</sup>s. While this is still an open interval, its occurrence in the lower register has a rougher texture and adds movement to the line. Ellington plays off this, and immediately follows it with the “Eb” and the “D” major 7<sup>th</sup> interval, followed by the “Gb” and the “F” major 7<sup>th</sup> as a pickup into the sixth bar. This are played in much quicker succession than previously heard, creating momentum to lead into the next section of the piece. After falling back down to the “D” and the “Eb” minor 2<sup>nd</sup> one last time, a short F minor chord is played on the last beat of the bar, before moving into the transition into the first theme of the piece.

The introduction sets up the harmonic and stylistic nature of the piece in a few different contexts. Typically, an introduction would establish the tonal center of the piece. Ellington accomplishes that here, but not only through the use of harmonic movements, but also through the use of evocative context, essentially painting the backdrop for which the piece will unfold upon. The use of the minor 2<sup>nd</sup> and major 7<sup>th</sup> augmentation can fall within the harmonic context of C-9#11, as used within the introduction. However, Ellington uses those intervals in a myriad of ways later in the piece, whether as chromatic embellishments to the melody, to evoke “gong” sounds as a part of the contextual nature of the piece, or to dip into extended harmonies that are

more indicative of the middle eastern nature of the piece. In many ways, the introduction is not just an opening of the door to the piece, but also a summation of the information the piece presents to the listener.

The piece continues to a short transition, where the piano sets up a “G” pedal in the lower register. Pulling from the jazz tradition, it sets up this pedal through the use of a repeated “Charleston” rhythm, with a downbeat on beat one, followed by a syncopated note on the and of two. This is followed by a syncopated figure beginning on the and of three, where the “G” at the bottom of the bass clef leaps down to the “D” below the staff on beat four, before repeating the “D” on the and of four, then leaping down to the “G” below the staff on the downbeat of the next bar. By doing this, Ellington connects the familiar “Charleston” rhythm with a new rhythm that adds momentum to the phrase and helps set up the new section of the piece.

“Amad” is less characterized as a piece that has a melody that is arranged with a standard form, such as the case of many other composers at the time. Ellington, being a more sophisticated composer, relies more on the development of central themes and motivic details to generate the material for “Amad,” as seen at the onset of the primary saxophone melody. The unison melody begins on a concert “F,” with a chromatic embellishment on 16<sup>th</sup> notes up to a “Gb.” From here, it descends stepwise to “Eb,” “D,” “C,” and lands on “B” natural, before embellishing in a similarly rhythmic fashion between the “B” and “C.” Continuing down, the “B” steps down to an “Ab” before finally arriving on a “G.” After stepping down further to an “F,” the line finally cadences back to a “G,” completing the phrase, which is then responded to by a restatement of the Charleston figure in the piano.

Harmonically, Ellington is beginning to explore further tonalities associated with the material, while still drawing from the content he’s previously worked with. At the onset, the minor 2<sup>nd</sup> between the “F” and “Gb” is seen in the piano intro, both expressed as a minor 2<sup>nd</sup>, and inverted into the major 7<sup>th</sup>. Here, one can surmise that Ellington has used both notes in the melody, embellishing the “F” with the use of the “Gb” as a chromatic upper neighbor. However, due to the contextual nature of the piece drawing from the “far east,” extended harmonies are also a possibility. In this case, one can also refer to the “Gb” as a flat 15<sup>th</sup> harmony, which Ellington ends up developing later in the piece. Further, the line itself holds tonal implications in relation to its chord-mode. In reference to the original C-7#11 tonality that was established in the

introduction, and the “G” dominant pedal that was introduced in the transition, the grouping of notes relates to a G7b9b13 scale, being the 5<sup>th</sup> mode of C harmonic minor.

The second entrance of the saxophone melody uses the same rhythmic structure from the previous entrance, now beginning on a “C.” This embellishes in a similar fashion, using a “Db” as a chromatic upper neighbor, creating a Phrygian feeling to the chord, before leaping up to an “F,” which then steps up to a “Gb.” This is an interesting section, because it uses the same “F” and “Gb” movement that we’ve seen before, utilizing the 7<sup>th</sup> and the b15<sup>th</sup>, but also mirrors the minor 2<sup>nd</sup> movement between the “Eb” and “D” seen in the same place in the previous phrase. From here, the phrase repeats itself in the second bar, eventually landing on a “C” at the end of the phrase, again answered by the Charleston figure in the rhythm section.

The saxophone melody at bar 19 is an exact repeat of bar 11. This is followed by a development of the melody from bar 15, which now ascends in the second bar of the phrase. Here, it begins to climb up the C minor arpeggio, first stepping up to “Eb” then delaying the movement to “G” with a chromatic move to “Gb” first. This happens in a similar fashion on beat two, where the “Eb” occurs on the and of two, and the “Gb” occurs on the final sixteenth note, leading into a high “G” on beat three of the bar, suspended over into bar 25. Here, instead of a response by the rhythmic section, instead the brass completes their underlying figure.

With the trombones entrance on the and of two in bar 23, the introduction of the brass introduces a fresh new color to the piece, and helps to bridge the section into the next thematic area. Beginning first on a C minor triad in first inversion, the syncopated trombone chords add momentum to the saxophone line, continuing with an F minor triad on the and of four, and a C minor triad in second inversion on the and of two in bar 24. Finally, as the saxophones reach their highest tessitura, the trumpets are introduced. Here, the brass play a syncopated figure beginning on the and of four in bar 24, beginning with a D-11b5, before eventually moving to a G7b9b5 on beat three of bar 25, and finally punctuating the phrase with a Cm6/9 on the and of four. This movement acts as a ii-V-i movement into the tonic C- chord, and also accommodates for a chromatic leading line, as seen in the highest voice in the trumpet. Here, the lead trumpet moves from a “Bb” over the D-11b5 to a “B” natural over the G7b9b5, and finally resolves on the tonic “C” over the C-6/9 chord. This brings the piece to its highest point dynamically and tonally so far and is quickly followed by a descending line in the bass to bring us into the next section.

At bar 27, a short transition happens before moving into the trombone melody. Here, the trombones begin on a cluster forming a Gsus4b9, which eventually steps outwards to an “F,” “Cb,” and “Db,” coupled with a unison “G” in the trumpets on top. This creates an immediate change in register that is rather striking sonically. To complement this, Ellington responds in the piano in bar 28 on the and on one with a stacked 9<sup>th</sup> figure, from “G,” Ab,” and “Bb.” Interestingly, this is representative to the initial stacked 7<sup>th</sup> figures heard previously. Should the intervals be inverted, they arrive at minor 2<sup>nds</sup>, and then are further augmented here with octaves to create the 9<sup>ths</sup>. In addition to this, Ellington is further evoking the middle eastern feel of the piece, creating a “gong” like sound through this figure, and the percussive nature of its entrance.

Following this in bars 29 and 30, the brass imitates the rhythm from the previous two bars. Here however, the trumpets begin on an AbΔ7 chord with a “G” in the lowest voice, before resolving inwards to a Db7b9 voicing on the and of four. This is followed by a “Db” in octaves by the trombones, creating a high to low movement, in juxtaposition to the low to high movement in the previous two bars. Additionally, this is responded to be the piano again, with the same stacked 9<sup>th</sup> voicing, but an octave lower, carrying the same harmonic shape. Following this, the bass and piano return to the original Charleston figure for four bars, with a new figure in the left hand of the piano that helps to create more momentum to move into the trombone melody.

At 35, the trombones enter with their melody. It begins very downbeat oriented, increasing in syncopation towards the middle, eventually ending on a strong beat three in the third bar of the phrase. The first part of the melody is mainly derived from three note figures, with variations upon them as it progresses. The first instance, in bar 35, enters on a “G,” the root of the chord, before stepping down to an “F,” and back to a “G” on beat three of the second bar, and finally an “Ab” on the and of four. From here, it enters with a syncopated “G” on the and of one of the third bar, followed by an “F” on the and of two before arriving on a “G” on beat three to close out the phrase. While the piece has previously established the G7 harmony for the piece, the initial line seen here by the trombones also firmly establishes the b9<sup>th</sup> harmony of the line, hinting towards the C harmonic minor tonal center of the piece.

The next trombone entrance in bar 39 contains the same rhythmic content as bar 35, but with a tonal variation. Here it begins on an “F” and steps up to the “G” on the second bar, before moving back down to the “F” on beat three and the “G” again on the and of four. To close out

this phrase, the range of the melody extends down further. After an entrance on the and of one with an “F,” the trombones leap down to a “D” on the and of two, before finally leaping back up to the “F” on beat three. This creates congruency between the two phrases, and fills out more of the harmonic details. The same pattern is continued in bar 43, extending the range higher. Again using the same rhythmic pattern, the trombones enter with an “Ab,” continue to a “G” and “F,” before leaping up to a “Bb” on the and of four in the second bar. This creates a space that is filled in during the third bar. Here it begins on the “G” before proceeding the “F” before ending on the “Ab” on beat three.

To close off this section of the melody, the trombones enter on beat four of the fourth bar, which has previously been left absent. Here, the step up from a “G” to a “B” natural, which is held over for a bar and three beats, before stepping down to an “Ab” on beat four of bar 48, and finally a “G” on the and of four to close out the phrase. What’s interesting about this segment is that the previous “Bb” functions as a #9 of the G7 harmony, which in turn allows the following “B” natural to sound fresher as the phrase begins to close. Additionally, it follows the same scheme as the preceding phrases, where it begins and ends on the same note.

Going further, the melody begins to develop upon itself starting in bar 51. The initial “G” to “B” movement seen in bar 46 is continued upwards diatonically to “C” and “D,” which is then sustained over to bar 52. Extending further, it steps up to an “Eb” on the and of three before stepping down diatonically to a “B” natural on the and of four. This is an interesting development from the previous phrase as well. The initial “G” and “B” now begin as a syncopated figure, and it’s clear that Ellington is intentionally increasing the range of the melody, similar to what was seen in the previous phrases. Additionally, the “C” to “B” minor 2<sup>nd</sup> resolution is similar to the “Ab” to “G” resolution seen in the previous phrase, and is a harmonic detail that’ll be carried through in the following segments.

In bar 54 the melody continues further, developing upon the last few notes of the previous phrase. After an embellishment on the “Eb” and “D” on the downbeat of bar 55 and a minor 2<sup>nd</sup> resolution to “B,” the line steps back up to “C” on the and of one in bar 56 before leaping down to “G” on the and of two. This creates a gap that is filled in on beat three by a “B” natural, that steps down to an “Ab,” and finally to a “G,” creating the same minor 2<sup>nd</sup> resolution as the previous phrases. What’s interesting about this section is the use of the rhythmic content in bar 56. Here, Ellington reuses the rhythmic material from the third bar of the initial trombone

melody, with the syncopated figure beginning on the and of one, and pairs it with the minor 2<sup>nd</sup> resolution at the end of the bar seen in the later parts of the melody.

The development of the melody continues further in bar 58. Similar to bar 51, Ellington uses the same syncopated material, but now as an anticipation into the next phrase, where the melody arrives on a “D” on the downbeat of 59, before leaping up to an “F” on the and of one, reaching the highest note seen in the melody so far. The “F” is rearticulated on beat three and held over into the next bar, before stepping down diatonically to an “Eb” and finally a “D” after a small embellishment between the “F” and “Eb” on the and of four.

The last statement of the trombone melody enters in bar 62, with a strong entrance on beat two, breaking up the syncopated pattern heard from the previous phrases. After an ascent from a “G” in the staff, the line arrives on an “Ab” above the staff, the highest note so far, before stepping down to a “G” on the and of four, again resolving by a minor 2<sup>nd</sup> into the root of the chord. This “G” is sustained over for a bar and one beat, before descending diatonically down the parent scale of G7b9b13, again arriving on an “Ab” and finally a “G” on the down beat of bar 65, completing the phrase with another minor second. However, Ellington adds a chromatic interruption into the phrase before this diatonic descent. The “Gb” on beat two of bar 64 can be interpreted as a b15<sup>th</sup>, resolving down to the b7<sup>th</sup> of the scale to continue the diatonic descent. However, the “Db” on the and of two adds to the chromatic nature of the line. As the b5<sup>th</sup> of the scale, it has a blues like quality to it, which is later resolved to the “D” natural in the diatonic line.

There are a few other interesting details throughout the trombone melody section as well. The use of the trumpets throughout this section speaks to Ellington’s economy in writing. As this section is all over a G7b9 vamp, the trumpets are voiced as a Bdim stacked as an “Ab,” “B,” “D,” and “G,” and retain this voicing throughout the whole section. Additionally, Ellington uses only two rhythmic schemes as well. During the downbeat oriented section, the trumpets play on the and of two in the first bar of the melody, and respond to the melody in the fourth bar on the and of one, and beat three. This repeats two more times in exact repetition. However, the pattern changes at bar 47 in relation to the change in the trombone melody. Here the trumpets enter with staccato eighth notes on beats three and four, and again in bar 49.

In relation to the new trombone melody in bar 51, the trumpets rhythm changes as well, while still maintaining their original voicing. Here they enter in the third bar of the phrase on the



and of one and beat three, and the fourth bar on the and of two. What's interesting about this is that it's essentially the material from the first section but moved forward by a bar. Like the previous section, this repeats in exact repetition two more times, before changing for the last phrase. Their final entrance is in bar 63 on the and of two, during the sustained "G" in the trombones, followed by the ending of the melody.

The other interesting aspect of this section is the development of the piano figures. Initially beginning with the Charleston figure from earlier in the piece, Ellington eventually drops this figure to use a more accompanimental approach in response to the melody. In bar 42 the right hand of the piano plays a short figure that begins on a "G" below the treble clef, and leaps up to a "C#," the #4 of the chord that resolves up by step to "D," both paired with a "G" in the treble clef. Even though it's a short figure, Ellington develops it in a variety of ways throughout the remainder of the piece to complement the various sections. Initially, he simply displaces where in the bar it occurs, as seen in bar 45 now entering on the and of three, and bar 49, entering on the and of two.

However, Ellington develops the intervallic material as well, further incorporating the stacked 9<sup>th</sup> content from earlier in the piece. As seen in bar 53, he begins on a "C#" on the and of one and leaps up to the "G," reversing the order of pitches. However, the "G" then steps up a minor 2<sup>nd</sup> to an "Ab," in a similar way that the "C#" would step up to the "D" in the previous figure. It continues from there, stepping up to another "C#" and "D," before finally leaping up to a "G," with a minor 9<sup>th</sup> stacked above it with the "Ab." This emulates the "gong" like affect from earlier, while still using the same content from this area of the piece. Further developments of the figure include compounds of the notes into one chord, as seen on the and of four in bar 56. This is repeated later in bar 60 and 66 in different spots, which adds rhythmic variety.

The next section introduces the saxophone melody, consisting primarily of two bar long harmonized lines responded to by trombone pedal notes. The initial line enters at bar 67, beginning with a G7#9#11 voicing in the saxophones, that moves to a Db-7 voicing on beat three. This is moved back and forth in eighth notes between the two voicings, before being held over on the and of four into the second bar with the G7 voicing, and finally repeated one more time on beats four and the and of four with the Db-7 and the G7 chord. What's interesting about the voicings is the clear contrary motion between the outer parts, as the lead alto moves back and forth between a "Db" and a "B," while the baritone saxophone moves back and forth between a

“B” and a “Db” on the same rhythmic partials. This creates a compression effect in the voicings, forcing the G7#9#11 to feel more open, while the Db-7 feels more compact.

The second entrance of the melody at bar 71 use a similar rhythmic scheme, still constating of two bars, but with the eighth notes place at the front of the bar instead now. Entering on an E9 chord, the voicing creates a fair amount of tension again the underlying G7 walking figure in the bass. Stacked “B, E, F#, Ab, D,” the “B, E, and D” belong within the G7 chord. However, the “F#, and Ab” confuse the issue. The “Ab” functions as a b9<sup>th</sup> in the G7, but the “F#” is a major 7<sup>th</sup>, so both notes surround the root in half steps. This creates a fair amount of tension, and is a really colorful use of harmony in this section. Eventually this is resolved to a Db-7 voicing, the same on as the previous phrase, which eventually resolves to the same G7#9#11 voicing on the and of four in the second bar. What’s interesting about this is that Ellington chose to end both phrases so far in the same manner, with the last two eighth notes of the phrase moving from Db-7 to G7#9#11 with the exact same voicings, creating congruency between the phrases.

The next entrance at 75 breaks up the downbeat oriented figures with a syncopated entrance on the and of one with a G13b9 voicing with an “Fb” in the highest voice. This steps down to a G7#11 with a “Db” in the highest voice on beat four. This figure repeats on beat one and the and of one on the second bar, before performing a similar movement between the Db-7 and G7#9#11 on beat four and the and of four, creating further congruency between the phrases. Following this, there is a short gap, and then an articulation of a G13#11 chord on the and of four of the third bar of the phrase, moved into the lower register of the range. This creates more syncopation and helps to create further momentum to the phrase.

The entrance in bar 79 again begins on the and of one, starting with a G7#9 chord, with the #9<sup>th</sup> in the upper voice. This holds over into the next bar and steps down into an AdimΔ7 chord on the and of one, which planes down to a GdimΔ7 on beat two, retaining the same voicing, just a whole step lower. Finally, it reaches the lowest point of the line on the and of two with an F-9 chord, which begins to step back up to an Ehalfdim7 chord on the and of three, followed by a F-6/9, and then finally an F7#9 on the and of four that’s sustained over into the third bar, before finally resolving on a final G7#9 on the and of one, the same voicing seen on the and of one in the first bar of the phrase. While this is the first phrase that breaks away from

the ending Db-7 to G7#9#11 on beat four, the repetition of the G7#9 on both ends of the phrase creates congruency within the phrase itself.

The entrances at bars 83 and 87 are identical to one another. Interestingly, they also use the exact same rhythmic and harmonic schemes as the entrance at bar 67, the initial saxophone entrance. Here, they move back and forth between an initial G7#9b13 and F-6/9 chord. While the outer voices were in exact opposition to each other in the previous phrase, here the upper voice moves between a “G” and an “F,” while the lower voice moves between an “F” and an “Ab.” This creates the same compression affect as bar 67, but from a different harmonic standpoint.

A few other interesting details of the saxophone melody section are the interspersing of the trombones, as well as the development of the piano comping throughout the section. The trombones act as a response to the initial saxophone lines, entering first on the and of four in bar 68 on a “Db” in octaves, a tritone relationship to the key center, and the G7#9#11 chord in the saxophones. The “Db” is held over into the next bar, before being rearticulated on the and of four to close out their interjection. The same response is heard in bar 72, again entering on the and of four and rearticulating on the and of four in the next bar, creating congruency between the phrases. However, their last entrance in bar 75 augments their statement, entering on the and of four of the first bar of the phrase, and repeating the statement on the and of four of bar 76, before the final rearticulation of the “Db” on the and of four of bar 77, which is accompanied by the G13#11 voicing in the saxophones.

The continued development of the piano comping shows further efficiency in Ellington’s piano playing. In the previous section with the trombone melody, he used the #4 to 5 figure extensively. Here, he continues to develop it, with the addition of other tones. After an initial entrance in bar 70 with another stacked 9<sup>th</sup> “gong” figure, bar 73 contains a similar #4 to 5 figure, preceded by a “B” natural, further filling out the tonal scope of the harmony. Another interesting figure from this is his use of syncopation in the figures as well, as seen in bar 80. Here, there is a consistent pattern every dotted quarter note, beginning on the and of four, with a cluster in the low register of the bass clef with a “G” and “F#.” This creates a percussive sound in the piano, but also adds a lot of syncopation to the phrase to help move it along.

At bar 89, the trombone solo performed by Lawrence Brown begins. Underscored by a vamp in the bass and piano, the trombone begins on a “G” in the bass clef and slowly ascends the G7b9b13 scale towards the “F.” This is still dipping into that 5<sup>th</sup> mode of harmonic minor, or the

Phrygian Dominant scale that has been seen throughout the piece. After ascending to the “F,” a descent occurs, with an embellishment down to the “Eb” and “D,” and similarly to the “C” and “B,” before finally stepping down to an “Ab” and “B” on beats three and four of bar 94, before embellishing the final cadence into “G” in bar 95. This creates a long eight bar phrase that only uses notes from the scale, in order, while intimately outlining the harmonic and contextual nature of the piece.

The trombone’s next entrance in bar 97 outlines the harmony in a similar fashion but takes advantage of some of the more extended tonalities of the piece. Here, he enters on a “D” on beat four of bar 97, before stepping up to an “Eb” on beat two of 98, and finally an “F#” on beat three, alternating between the “Eb” in quarter note triplets before stepping down to the “D” again on beat three of bar 99. This short movement in turn emphasizes the b15<sup>th</sup> tonality that has been heard throughout the piece, before resolving it down to the 5<sup>th</sup> of the chord, “D.”

The vamp underneath is interesting as well. Previously, the Charleston rhythm was used as the driving force of the figure, but it isn’t present in this background. Instead, Ellington uses a compound of the #4 to 5 figure by playing the two notes simultaneously before leaping up to the “G,” pairing it with the left hand figure from the original Charleston figure. Additionally, the bass line seen here is a new, and adds a lot more syncopation than previous figures, helping to add to the overall momentum of the section.

The bass line carries forward into the next section beginning at bar 104, while the piano drops out and the trombone solo continues. Here, the trombone begins to use even more adventurous tones, entering directly on an “Ab” on the downbeat of bar 104, before moving between a “G” and “Ab” in eighth note triplets on beat two, and finally arriving on an “F#” and “Eb” on beats three and four. This is interesting because the line has surrounded the root of the chord, “G,” and escaped down to a very colorful b13<sup>th</sup>. Bar 105 simply steps back up the notes from “F#” to “Ab” and back down to a “G” on beat four, before repeating the material from the first bar in bar 106, and landing on an “F#” for three beats on the downbeat of bar 107, leaving the line feeling unresolved.

At bar 108, the material from 104 is recycled, with a slight variation in the third bar. Here, the incipient “Ab” steps up to a quarter note “Bb” on beat two, with eighth note triplets between the “Ab” and “Bb” on beat three, stepping down to a “G,” and again landing on an unresolved “F#” at the end of the phrase. To continue this forward however, the line begins to

descend using embellishments of the G7b9b13 arpeggio. Beginning on the “Eb” in bar 112, it steps up to an “F” before leaping down to a “D,” the 5<sup>th</sup> of the chord, on the and of two. From here it steps back up to the “Eb” on the downbeat of 113 before leaping down to a “C,” back up to a “D,” and down to a “B,” the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the chord. Finally, the line continues this pattern starting on “C” on the and of two in bar 114, stepping down to an “Ab,” up to a “B” in bar 115, and finally resolving the “G” tonic of the chord on beat two. This is responded to by the reintroduction of the Charleston rhythm, as the piece moves into the next section.

The piece moves back to saxophone melody for a short section before moving into the tutti band figure. At the onset in bar 122, the saxophones are in exact repetition of their figures from bar 83. This is performed twice, both as two bar segments responded to by two bar Charleston figures in the rhythm section. However, at bar 130, it begins to break this pattern, with an introduction of an eighth note figure similar to that of bar 71, but now with an F-6/9 chord on the down beat. This leads to an added beat four where the saxophones articulate a D7b9b13 in a very closed voicing, before a quarter note G7b9 on the downbeat of the next bar. This figure is then repeated, now beginning on beat three of the second bar of the same phrase, showing even more economy in Ellington’s writing, and creating a sense of movement in the piece by displacing the perceived downbeat.

After a repetition of bar 83 in bar 134, the saxophones have their first anticipation into a phrase beginning on the and of three of bar 137. This is interesting, because the rhythmic movement itself is an allusion to the anticipation the trombone melody had in bar 46, and functions in a similar manner. To do this, the melody steps up beginning on the and of three on a G7 chord, followed by an AbΔ7 chord on beat four, and finally a G7b9 chord on the and of four that’s held over into the next bar. This material is developed on the and of three of 138, switching the places of the AbΔ7 and the G7b9 chord for variety, before eventually arriving on an Fm6 chord on beat four of bar 139. From here, the phrase closes by moving down to a G7b9 chord on the and of four, and then two eighth notes on beat one of bar 140 between a Dhalfdim7 chord and a final G7b9. What’s interesting about this phrase is that all the chords are completely diatonic to the G7b9b13 scale, and don’t borrow any notes from modal mixture, thus keeping the same color throughout the section.

The saxophone entrance at bar 142 holds a similar rhythmic scheme to that at bar 79, with a diminution on the end of the phrase. Stepping further away from the diatonic scheme seen

in similar phrases, this phrase begins with a G7#9, with the #9 in the lead voice, and steps down to an AdimΔ7 on the and of one in the second bar before planning down chromatically to an AbdimΔ7 on beat two, finally reaching its lowest point on the and of two with an Ebhalfdim11 chord. After a revoicing of this chord on the and of three, it steps up to an Edim chord on beat four that moves smoothly into an F-6 chord on the and of four to complete the phrase. A colorful use of notes, it's interesting to notice that the only non-harmonic notes in the top voice are the "Bb," the #9 of the chord seen on the first note, and the "F#" seen in the and of three. However, here the "Bb" functions as a blue note on the G7 chord, giving it a darker feel, while the "F#," earlier consider the b15<sup>th</sup>, acts as a chromatic lower neighbor to the subsequent "G" on beat four. The harmonization of the line itself accentuates these colors and adds depth to the harmonic characteristics of the piece.

The last saxophone statement before the band tutti enters on the and of four of bar 145. After the previous chromatic exploration in bars 142 and 143, the figures in the new section continue a chromatic approach to harmonization that help lead into the next section with a variety of interest. At the onset, the Bbdim. on the and of four resolves to a G7b9 on the and of one in bar 146, followed by two quarter notes on beats three and four harmonized by GbΔ7#11 and F-9b5. This is interesting, because this is an entirely new rhythm that hasn't been seen before in the piece. Moving forward, the lines moves to eighth notes on a G7b9 and Bbhalfdim9 on beat one of bar 15, followed by an AbΔ7#9. This is a really colorful landing point it arrives at due to the counter point of the inner voices. The top two voices begin on a "G" and "B," and move chromatically up to an "Ab" and "C" before move back down a semitone. However, the lower three voices begin as "B, D, F," and simply move down a half step with each note, apart from the lowest voice. This generates the chord on beat two as "Ab, C, Eb, G, B," which has an interesting color. Stepping down to beat three, the chord moves to a D7alt, and finally a Dhalfdim7 and G7b9 on the last two eighth notes of the bar. The G7 is then rearticulated as a G7sus4b9 chord on the and of four in the next bar, followed by the band tutti "shout" section.

The shout section has an interesting shape, using an ascending and descending scalular shape with chromatic tones in between diatonic notes. In most instances, notes from the G7 arpeggio are harmonized with a different color or inversion of the G7b9 chord or one of its modes, whereas other diatonic notes are harmonized with an F#dim chord, or a diminished chord that leads into a subsequent mode of the G7 chord. In this case, the initial melody note of "G" is

harmonized with a G7sus4b9, and then in order: “B” with a G7b9, “C” with an F#dim, “C#” with a Gdim7, and finally “D” with a G7b9 again. On the descent, the “C” is harmonized again with an F#dim, and lands on a G7b9 on the “B.” This scheme continues in the next bar, where it arrives at the “D” harmonized by the G7b9, except it rearticulates the note with an Edim moving into an “Eb” harmonized by an Fm7, a chord derived from the G7b9 scale.

The descent in bar 153 begins to stray away from the G7 key center slightly. Descending chromatically from “Eb” to “B,” the first two notes follow the F#o, G7b9 harmonizations found previously. However, beat two sees a GbΔ7 and Dhalfdim7 harmonizing “Db” and “C,” changing the color slightly. Beat three sees a CoΔ7 finally a G7 harmonizing the “B” and “G,” before a final G7b9 and F#dim harmonize the last two notes of the bar, “B” and “C,” beginning the ascent. The final three notes of the phrase occur on the first two eighth notes of bar 154, and the end of four of bar 155. Here, the melody note moves up from the previous “C” to a “D” harmonized by a G7 chord, and finally an “F” harmonized by a G7sus4b9 chord, similar to what was heard during the first note of the section. Finally, this steps back down to a “D” in the melody harmonized with the same G7 chord heard on the previous “D.”

Similar to bar 58, the band re-enters on the end of three and steps up from an “F” to a “B” then “C,” harmonized with G7, G7b9, and finally an F#dim chord on the end of four. This F#dim moves into the G7 that harmonizes the “D” on beat one of bar 158, that steps up further to an “F,” harmonized by a G7b9. “F” being the highest note of the melody so far, the line breaks its roof in the next statement, stepping up further to a “Gb,” and descending diatonically to an “Ab” as seen in bar 161. The “Gb” being the b15<sup>th</sup> of the scale, this is a very colorful way of implementing it into the melody, as it’s harmonized with an Adim7 chord before stepping back down to the “F,” harmonized by a G7b9. The succeeding notes follow the rule of diminished chords leading to dominant chords until bar 161.

In bar 161, the “Ab” leaps down to a “D” before resolving to the “G,” harmonized by F-6 and G7b9 chords, respectively. This is followed by a leap up to an “Eb” and a resolution down to a “D” with a familiar F#dim and G7b9 harmonic scheme. Sequencing the material, bar 162 presents a movement from an “Ab” to a “B” with an additional F# to G7 cadence, before leaping up to a “Gb” that resolves down to an “F” on the end of three. Here, the “Gb” is harmonized with Chalfdim7 chord, which breaks up the previous harmonic scheme, and adds additional color to

the  $b15^{\text{th}}$  to make it stick out more. The following “F” is harmonized with a  $G7b9$  chord, following the original harmonic scheme.

Continuing forward, the “C” on the and of four is harmonized by an  $Eb-6$  chord, which steps up to an “Eb” harmonized by a  $G7b9b13$  chord. This is held for three and a half beats, and rearticulated on the and of four for dramatic effect. This figure is increased in range in bar 165, where the highest note is now a “G” above the treble clef, held over for three and a half beats, and steps up to an “Ab” on the and of four. The two notes are harmonized with different sonorities of  $G7$ , with the “G” being harmonized by  $Gsus4b9$ , and the “Ab” harmonized with a  $G7b9b13$ . This figure is repeated down an octave at a softer dynamic, changing the timbre of the section and helping to move the piece into the next section.

One interesting detail about this brass tutti section is the interplay with the between the piano and the written figures. This is most noticeable beginning in bar 159, where the and of four articulation is responded to by a articulated low “G” in the piano on the and of one of bar 159, and then four more “G’s each two and a half beats apart, fitting into different polyrhythmic schemes with the written melody, which is already heavily syncopated itself. The next interesting interjection from the piano would be the stacked 9<sup>ths</sup> heard in bar 164, in response to the sustained notes in the band. This creates tension with the minor 2<sup>nd</sup> heard between the “G” and “Ab” in the treble clef, and further imitates the gong sound heard throughout the piece. This is repeated two bars later after the repetition of the sustained notes in the brass, displaced down an octave in the lower register of the piano. Interestingly, this octave displacement is mirrored in the band in bar 167, where they also move down by a whole octave, lowering the range of the whole piece, helping it to move smoothly into the last section.

The closing section of the piece begins in bar 169 and consists primarily of a trombone solo by Lawrence Brown, with accompaniment by the rhythm section. Similar to the previous trombone solo, this solo uses primarily diatonic notes. However, this time there are a few blue notes introduced in the form of a  $\#9$  used for chromatic movement to the natural 3<sup>rd</sup>, as well as a recurrence of the  $b15^{\text{th}}$  “F#,” as it has appeared previously in the piece. At the onset, the trombone holds a long “G” in the upper register, before finally stepping up to an “Ab” and “B,” leading into the “C” at the end of the fourth bar. This steps back down, and steps back up to the “Bb” with the insertion of the blue “Bb” note, that adds a bit of harmonic interest. After a short eighth note triplet figure, the “Ab” finally resolves down to the “G,” seemingly completing the



phrase. However, this steps down even further to an “F#,” creating a minor 2<sup>nd</sup> tension against the root of the chord, utilizing the b15th once again. After articulating it a few times, it steps back up into the “G” to resolve.

The line continues to play with this “F#” figure until the end of the piece. After a short descending figure from “Gb, F, and D,” the line returns to a “G” in the staff and glissandos up to the high “G,” and quickly slides back down to the “F#,” creating more tension. Interestingly, this is responded to by the piano with stacked 9<sup>ths</sup> and octaves, creating a similar gong like sound from earlier in the piece. The trombone repeats the glissando figure in bar 185, and again in bar 189, sustaining the “F#” out for two bars, before finally performing a long glissando back into the final “G” of the piece. Additionally, the piano accompanies these figures as well, with further variations of the 9<sup>th</sup> figures. The first occurring on beat four of bar 186, with an accented articulation in the upper voices, and a sustained “G” in the lower voice. The second occurs after the last statement of the “F#” in the trombone, with a stacked octave “G” in the bass clef, with an additional “Ab” in the lower voice, only articulated at the onset. This creates a bit of a glissando sound, and nicely complements the section.

The piece ultimately closes with a G7#9b5 chord voiced in the lower register of the saxophones, accompanied by an additional trombone and bass on the root “G.” A subtle way to end the piece, Ellington has efficiently brought the section to a close by using previous contextual elements in their most simple forms as a summarization, while still holding the character of the piece. This is incredibly similar to the way introduction function, and creates an effective closure to this movement of the suite.

# Amad

Somewhat Freely ♩ = 50

Δ7ths expanded uses the 9, b3 #11, 5

stacked Δ7ths

Duke Ellington

Piano Δ7th Cm9(#11) Cm9(#11) stacked Δ7ths (F, Gb, G) diminution of bar 3

Stacked 5ths

bass

*sfz sfz sfz f mf mf*

7 **7** Med. Fast Swing ♩ = 100 beginning to set up a G pedal

*sfz mf*

11 **11** -2 compound of Δ7 interval in bar 1 G7(b9) fifth mode of C harmonic minor

*mf*

15 development of bar 11 Db acts as chromatic upper neighbor to C

*mf*

19 **19** Repeat of bar 11

*mf*

development of bar 15 leading into climax of the phrase

23

*mf* *f* *sfz*

Cm Fm Cm  $Dm^{11}(b5)/G$   $Cm^6$   $G7(b9)$   $Cm^6/9$

27 **27**

*mf* *mf* *fmp* *f*

$G(sus4b9)$  [trombones]  $G7(b^{13})$   $A_b^{maj7}$   $D_b7(b9)$

Stacked gths  
7ths to 2nds + octave = gths

*sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

repeat of 28, with added -2 tension

31

increased syncopation here adds momentum to the piece, helps to move into the next section.

35 35

trombone melody begins very downbeat oriented, increasing in syncopation towards the middle, eventually ending on a strong beat 3.

39

trumpets in exact repetition of 35

trombones contain same rhythmic content, with tonal variation

this piano figure begins to develop further throughout the remainder of the piece

43 **43** trumpets in exact repetition of 35

trombones contain same rhythmic content, with tonal variation

anticipation into the next phrase

*b9th*

G7(b9)

47 same voicing in trumpet, now on staccato eights

-2 resolution into the root

51 **51** new rhythmic pattern in trumpets

development of previous phrase additionally, phrase now begins as a syncopated figure

development of last phrase augments descending Eb, D, C, B line

*sfz*

#4 figure, expanded, with added b9

*f*

55

repetition again

beats 1 - 3 similar to opening phrases

similar half step resolution

similar to 51, anticipated

*sfz*

compound

59

further development to highest not in the melody so far

-2 step into root

63

like first melody phrases

half step side stepping, then diatonic descent into root

67 67 G7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>#9</sub>) D<sup>b</sup>m7/G

contrary motion in outer parts

*f*

*f*

D<sup>b</sup> pedal - tritone relationship

*fp* *f*

stacked 9ths

*sfz*

71 E<sup>9</sup>/G D<sup>b</sup>m7 G7(<sup>#11</sup><sub>#9</sub>)

same voicings and rhythm as previous phrase ending

notice the resolution of the inner voices here

*fp* *f*

further development

75 **75** G13(b9) G7(#11) sim. G13(#11)

G7 *fp* *f*

79 G7(#9) planning A°maj7 G°maj7 Fm9 E°7 Fm9/9 F7(#9) G7(#9) planning

*fp* *f*

83 **83** G7(b13) Fm6/9 similar structure to 67

*f* *f* V.S.



86 exact repeat of 83

Musical score for measures 86-88. Measure 86 is a whole rest in both staves. Measures 87-88 are an exact repeat of measures 83-84. The right hand has a complex chordal texture with many notes, while the left hand has a simple bass line. An accent (^) is placed over the final note of the right hand in measure 88.

89 **89** solo  $G7(\flat 13)$  1. diatonic ascent *mf*

diminution of original phrase

Musical score for measures 89-92. Measure 89 is a solo section starting with a  $G7(\flat 13)$  chord. The right hand features a diatonic ascent with triplets. The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. The phrase is described as a "diminution of original phrase". The dynamic is marked *mf*.

93

Musical score for measures 93-96. Measure 93 continues the diatonic ascent from the previous section. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The left hand continues with the same rhythmic accompaniment.

97 **97** b15th

Musical score for measures 97-99. Measure 97 features a bass line with a trill and a treble line with a triplet of eighth notes. Measures 98-99 continue the bass line with a trill and the treble line with a triplet of eighth notes. A slur covers the triplet in measure 97.

100

Musical score for measures 100-103. Measure 100 features a bass line with a trill and a treble line with a triplet of eighth notes. Measures 101-103 continue the bass line with a trill and the treble line with a triplet of eighth notes. A slur covers the triplet in measure 100.

**104** [D, Eb, F#, G, Ab] similar to the piano intro - Ab, G, F# creating minor 2nd and major 7th tensions.

104 *f*

Musical score for measures 104-107. Measure 104 features a bass line with a trill and a treble line with a triplet of eighth notes. Measures 105-107 continue the bass line with a trill and the treble line with a triplet of eighth notes. A slur covers the triplet in measure 104.

development of material

108

Musical score for measures 108-111. Measure 108 features a bass line with a trill and a treble line with a triplet of eighth notes. Measures 109-111 continue the bass line with a trill and the treble line with a triplet of eighth notes. A slur covers the triplet in measure 108.

**112** begins to step down the chord

Musical score for measures 112-116. The piece is in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. Measure 112 features a complex chord with a 5-fingered fingering. The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measures 113-116 show a descending melodic line in the bass with fingerings 3 and 1.

117

Musical score for measures 117-121. Measure 117 has a long note in the bass. Measures 118-121 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the bass, with a melodic line in the treble consisting of quarter notes.

**122** exact repetition of 83

Musical score for measures 122-125. Measure 122 is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a G7(b9) chord. The score shows a complex chordal texture in the treble and a melodic line in the bass.

exact repetition of 83

Musical score for measures 126-130. Measure 126 is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a G7(b9) chord. The score shows a complex chordal texture in the treble and a melodic line in the bass.

130 **130** Fm<sup>6/9</sup> D7(<sup>b</sup>13<sub>5</sub>) G7(<sup>b</sup>9) repetition

sfz f

134 exact repetition of 83 G7 A<sup>b</sup>maj7 G7(<sup>b</sup>9)

phrase is reference to trombone melody in bar 46

138 **138** diminution A<sup>b</sup>maj7 G7(<sup>b</sup>9) / Fm<sup>6</sup> G7(<sup>b</sup>9) D<sup>ø</sup>7 G7(<sup>b</sup>9)

142 G7(#9) A°maj7 A°maj7 Eb°11 E° Fm6 Bb°

146 inner voice movement G7(b9) Gbmaj7(#11) Fm9(b5) G7(b9) Bb°9 Abmaj7(#9) D7alt. D°7 G7(b9) G7(b9sus4)

150 150 G(sus4b9) G7(b9)F#° G°7 G7(b9) F#°G7(b9) G(sus4b9) G7(b9)F#° G°7 G7(b9) E°Fm7

153

F#° G7(b9) Gbmaj7 Dø7 C°maj7 G7 D° G7(b9) F#° G7 G7(b9sus4)

155

G7

similar to bar 58  
Bo  
G7 G7(b9) F#°

highest point so far

158 158 G7 G7(b9) A<sup>o</sup>7 G7(b9) F#<sup>o</sup> G7(b9) F#<sup>o</sup> G7(b9)

diatonic descent including the Δ7 and -7, similar to main melody

161 G7(b9sus4) Fm<sup>6</sup> G7 F#<sup>o</sup> G7(b9) F#<sup>o</sup> G7 C<sup>o</sup>7 G7(b9) Ebm<sup>6</sup> G7(b<sup>13</sup>)

*sfz* *f*

*sfz* *f*

164

G(SUS4b9) G7(<sup>b13</sup><sub>b9</sub>) G(SUS4b9) G7(<sup>b13</sup><sub>b9</sub>)

*ff* *mf* *ff* *mf* *mf*

stacked gths with added minor 2nd tension

repeat 8vb

169

blue note to accent movement into the 3rd

minor 2nd tension

*f* *mf*

*dim*



half step resolution into root

176

mf

beings playing with the  $\flat 15$ th

182

185 rit.

f

p

190  $\text{♩} = 60$

$G7(\sharp 9)_{\flat 5}$

gliss.

8vb

p

p

p