

Rediscovering William Grant Still: A Survey of Original Wind Band Music,
Posthumous Transcriptions, and a Companion Programming Guide

by

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ABSTRACT

Recognized as the “Dean of African-American Composers” by many scholars, William Grant Still Jr.’s compositional output was objectively robust and eclectic. With an output totaling nearly two-hundred works, Still is widely recognized as a symphonic and operatic composer with a keen ability to write for orchestra, voice, and piano. In such praises, however, many who consume Still’s symphonic works do not engage with his masterful writing for winds, and further, neglect his contributions to the wind band medium. Combined with living in an era where legitimacy was not easily obtained as a Black composer, Still’s wind band music is often reduced to a footnote.

Recently, Still’s original works for wind band, as well as transcriptions of his popular chamber and symphonic works are receiving ample performance considerations within the wind band repertory. As a result of the evolving musical legacy of Still, analysis and scholarship on his works is as important as its ever been. This document surveys the original compositions and transcriptions for wind band currently in circulation and/or receiving performance consideration by modern wind ensembles. In addition to an analysis of these works, this document will also consider topics of identity, reception, and ethical programming with regard to Still and his place in the wind band repertory.

DEDICATION

To my mom, dad, and sister.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a student at Arizona State University, I acknowledge that the Tempe campus sits on the ancestral homelands of those American Indian tribes that have inhabited this place for centuries, including the Akimel O’odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) peoples. We owe indigenous populations a great debt, and let us remember the words of Fannie Lou Hamer: “nobody’s free until everybody’s free.”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Biography

William Grant Still Jr. was born on May 11, 1895 in Woodville, Mississippi. As the son of two college graduates and teachers, Still embodied a keen sense of cultural and artistic aptitude from a young age. William Grant Still Sr. (1871-1895) was a scholar of music and mathematics, holding a brief appointment as instructor of bookkeeping, instrumental music, and vocal music at Alabama Agricultural Industrial College (now known as Alabama A&M University).¹ In an interview with musicologist Eileen Southern, Still spoke about his father's role as the "village bandleader":

In Woodville [Mississippi], he taught math and was at the same time the village bandleader. He also had half-interest in a store. He had learned to play the cornet the hard way. He had to make a seventy-five mile round trip to Baton Rouge [Louisiana] each time he took a lesson because there were no good teachers any closer. And after he learned, he organized the village band. The townspeople were very proud of that band, especially when it paraded.²

Still Sr. met Carrie Lena Fambro Still (1872-1927) who was also teaching at the college. Still Jr. spoke on record about his mother's talents as an artist and educator stating "she had many talents. She painted, played piano, embroidered, even wrote a piece of fiction."³ His father tragically passed four months after his birth, which led to his mother relocating the family to Little Rock, Arkansas to be closer to her family.⁴

¹ Judith Anne Still, Michael J. Dabrishus, and Carolyn L. Quin, *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 15.

² Eileen Southern, "William Grant Still," *The Black Composer Speaks* 3, no. 2 (1975): 165-166.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Still et al., *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*, 16.

William Grant Still's adolescent years in Little Rock proved to be quite formative for his musical and social development. The neighborhood he lived in was integrated, and his family home was representative of a middle-class upbringing. As Verna Arvey denotes in her biography of Still, *In One Lifetime*, "the boy grew up as a young *American* boy in an *American* community...far from the usual stereotyped concept of a colored boy in colored surroundings."⁵ At age 13, Still picked up the violin and took up private lessons while also participating in the Episcopal church choir for a small period of time.⁶ As he grew into his own in secondary school, Still's talents manifested themselves in other domains such as mathematics, history, and even a brief stint playing football.⁷ He would go on to graduate from M.W. Gibbs High School in Little Rock in 1911, and enroll at Wilberforce College that fall, in large part due to the school's affiliation with the African Methodist Episcopalian (A.M.E) church.⁸

Still cites his time as an undergraduate student at Wilberforce College in Ohio as a catalytic time of musical interest. During his time at Wilberforce, he dabbled with arranging and orchestrating for an unofficial, student-run music ensemble, learned how to play the oboe, and found inspiration in the music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912), Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904), and Harry T. Burleigh (1866-1944).⁹ In addition to these musical inspirations, he also found poetic and rhetorical/oratorical inspiration in the literature of Paul Laurence Dunbar, W.E.B. DuBois, Frederick Douglass, Booker T.

⁵ Verna Arvey, *In One Lifetime* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1984), 16.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

⁸ Still et al., *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*, 16.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

Washington, and others.¹⁰ Still ultimately left Wilberforce in 1914 without graduating to pursue a career performing in dance bands and orchestras around Ohio. He returned intermittently until 1919, but never finished, due to a number of performance opportunities and an enlistment in the Navy (1918).¹¹

In addition to the exploratory years at Wilberforce, many scholars attribute the development of Still's stylistic identity and technical mastery to his collaborations with jazz composer and bandleader William Christopher (W.C.) Handy and his studies with French modernist composer Edgard Varèse. While the extent to which Varèse's compositional style found overt expression/influence in Still's music, it is clear that Still's first experience with Handy in the summer of 1916 paved the way for his masterful ability to fuse blues/jazz idioms with symphonic works. In a 1969 interview with prominent musicologist on African-American music, Eileen Southern, he referenced his role as an arranger in W.C. Handy and Harry Pace's publishing company in Memphis, Tennessee.¹² He continued, stating "Oh, I made arrangements for Handy. I made the first band arrangement of the "Beale Street Blues," for instance. And I probably was the first one to make a band arrangement of the "St. Louis Blues." I learned a great deal about blues that summer."¹³ Moreover, the inception of Still's band arrangement of "St. Louis Blues" was conferred by Handy, and noted as the first known recording of an

¹⁰ Still et al., *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*, 17.

¹¹ Southern, "William Grant Still," 168.

¹² *Ibid.*, 169.

¹³ *Ibid.*

arrangement by Still.¹⁴ It was here that Still “began to perceive the beauty in a different sort of Negro folk music—the blues.”¹⁵

Still moved to Los Angeles in 1934 where he remained until his death in 1978. This move marked the longest and most significant chapter in his compositional life, resulting in the composition of the majority of his works. Soon after the move, he married Verna Arvey in 1939. Arvey was an accomplished writer and pianist who, in addition to being his wife, performed many of Still’s premieres and wrote numerous texts that would be set to his music. Still’s move to Los Angeles also epitomized a sense of empowered individualism in his music. After working alongside W.C. Handy and studying with Edgard Varèse and George Whitfield Chadwick, Still had obtained all of the tools needed to forge his own compositional identity. Grappling with the stereotype that Black musicians and composers could only find success performing their vernacular music (i.e.: jazz, blues, spirituals, etc.), he was determined to compose in the classical tradition. Early on in his California era, Still was enamored with the social vibrancy and multiculturalism of Los Angeles, being bullish on the “opportunities in film music and having intimate access to the music of different ethnic groups”¹⁶ However, as it pertains to this study, William Grant Still’s genre interests remained as eclectic as the thematic material and compositional influences he acquired throughout his adult life. Although he received the occasional commission from military bands, he was never deemed a “wind band composer.” Like many of his contemporaries, Still’s output for the wind band is not only

¹⁴ Still et al., *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*, 19.

¹⁵ Verna Arvey, *In One Lifetime* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1984), 48.

¹⁶ Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, “Context and Creativity: William Grant Still in Los Angeles,” *Black Music Research Journal* 31, no. 1 (2011): 10.

undervalued, but continues to grow in its posthumous legacy as a result of an increasing number of transcriptions published in recent years. For this reason, it remains the work of wind band practitioners and musicologists to continue to explore the role that wind band composition had in the overall identity of William Grant Still and his contemporaries alike.

Intent and Scope of Study

An evaluation of American classical music in the twentieth century is incomplete without mention of William Grant Still. Still, whose output breached over two hundred compositions, arrangements, and transcriptions, wrote proficiently and abundantly for a variety of genres. Scholars praise Still for his innate ability to fuse elements of Black musical idioms—including but not limited to the blues and spirituals—with traditional classical forms. Like many of his classical contemporaries, the mark of his compositional prowess is signified by the legitimacy of his symphonies and operas. These works stand alongside his contemporaries, including, but not limited to Leonard Bernstein, Amy Beach, Samuel Barber, Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg, and Florence Price. Like these composers, their compositions for other genres such as the wind band are often relegated to footnotes in the fabric of their compositional identity. As a result of such genre stratification, the marginalization of Still's music has been further exacerbated beyond being a Black American in a racially-charged, twentieth century United States.

This document revisits the role of wind band composition in William Grant Still's compositional identity as the result of an ongoing survey of the original music and transcriptions attributed to Still. A modern survey of William Grant Still's band music

reveals an expansive registry of original music and posthumous transcriptions. Such an inquiry offers wind band historians and conductors a unique opportunity to deposit meritorious and playable works into the repertory, and move towards a more culturally inclusive and historically robust repertory. In addition to surveying the original works done by Still, this document will also track the growing number of transcriptions that are being done on Still's works, and position them alongside the neglected and/or lost compositions for wind band, in order to arrive at a more accurate catalog of Still's wind band contributions. Finally, in acknowledging the accomplishments of William Grant Still, and the legacy he has left, it is fair to objectively place him as one of America's most prolific and culturally-relevant composers of the twentieth-century. As a result of his significance, this document aims to amplify Still's compositions, and posit them as quality additions to the wind band repertory in the pursuit of a more culturally diverse and historically-inclusive repertory.

By reimagining the narrative around William Grant Still's compositional identity to more prominently include wind band composition, scholars and musicians gain a new theoretical and practical perspective of the landscape of twentieth century wind band music. Additionally, in the effort to move beyond tokenization and to receive the music of Black composers, in this case, Still, as meritorious and worthy of being performed, scholars and musicians must operate with a complete understanding of a composer's compositional identity (i.e.: stylistic/aesthetic influences, chosen genres to write for, artistic collaborations and partnerships, etc.). The predominant narrative around wind band composition during the early-twentieth century is that repertoire was exclusively

composed for the military band, with little-to-no contributions by Black composers, and few works contributed by symphonic composers as less serious works within their own catalog.¹⁷ Save for Alton Adams, Nathaniel Cleophas “N.C.” Davis, and other figures lost to history, if Black Americans composed music during the late-nineteenth, early-twentieth century, it was in the jazz, choral, or orchestral space. Moreover, as alluded to before, symphonic composers in the early-twentieth century did not receive acclaim (or lucrative commissions) from the military band. While notable symphonic/choral composers such as Gustav Holst, Igor Stravinsky, Samuel Barber, and countless others wrote for winds, their compositions for the wind band were not listed as the main staple of their compositional efforts.

Since the 2010s, there has been a surging interest in performing the original wind band music of William Grant Still. There has also been a parallel interest in artists transcribing Still’s music for the wind band. Not including the compositions and arrangements Still produced for W.C. Handy’s big band, Still composed only four original works for wind band. This was the official number, recognized by Verna Arvey in her cataloging of Still’s works in *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music*¹⁸ and *In One Lifetime*.¹⁹ Three additional compositions, *Victory Tide (Song of a City)*,²⁰ *Old California*, and *The American Scene* were originally composed for

¹⁷ Most scholars recognized Still’s *Afro-American Symphony* (1930) as his arrival to mature and proficient symphonic composition. As a result of this conclusion, the period that is loosely referred to as the “early-twentieth century” is circa 1900-1940.

¹⁸ Robert Bartlett Haas, *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music* (Boston: Black Sparrow Press, 1972), 239.

¹⁹ Verna Arvey, *In One Lifetime*, 250.

²⁰ Also listed by the title of *Rising Tide* and *Song of a City* in various catalogs (due to the repurposing of the work after the 1939-1940 New York World’s Fair. It also should be noted that the version for band appears

symphony orchestra. *Victory Tide (Song of a City)* was originally written for mixed chorus with orchestra in 1939, and later arranged for wind band by Still in 1945.²¹ *Old California* and *The American Scene* were originally written for symphony orchestra in 1941 and 1957 respectively. It is said that Still arranged *Old California* for wind band within a year of the premiere of the orchestral version, and selections from *The American Scene* were arranged for band around 1964.²² For the purposes of this study, and codifying Still's identity as a wind band composer, these works will be considered "original works" as they were fully arranged by Still himself. In addition to the seven total wind band works, this study will recognize nine transcriptions of Still's music for wind band. Of these nine, eight were arranged/transcribed after 2012, further speaking to the surge of interest over the last decade.

With updates to modern technology and a growing interest in diversifying/decolonizing the wind band repertory, it has become easier for scholars and practitioners to be exposed to the wind band music of William Grant Still. The preservation efforts of Still's daughter, Judith Anne Still have gone a long way in making her father's music more accessible. Additionally, as performances of Still's band music are becoming more abundant, The Wind Repertory Project, an online, open-access database founded in 2008 has assisted in the effort to provide info about composers and music that are historically lesser known. The database, helps performers see recent performances, program notes, and biographical info for corresponding composers on a

in Still's *Bio-Bibliography* but is not present in the "band music" section of the William Grant Still Music website.

²¹ Still et al., *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*, 174.

²² Myron D. Moss, "Concert Band Music by African-American Composers: 1927-1988" (PhD Diss., University of Michigan, 2000), 75, 188.

given work. As it pertains to Still, an abundance of his wind band repertoire is listed under his page, however, due to its open-source nature, there is no delineation between formal/performable wind band works for the modern wind band, and compositions/sketches that may be lost, not in circulation, or otherwise inaccessible.²³ Further, many of Still's works that are listed on the Wind Repertory Project do not have an informational page, or any direction towards other resources that may speak to the work's context.

In addition to surveying the wind band works by William Grant Still, this document will also serve as a programming guide for conductors and performers to reference when programming Still's band music. While the wind band repertory has expanded to include new and undiscovered/rediscovered voices, the question of ethical artistic programming continues to resonate throughout the profession. Specifically, many conductors and artistic directors regularly seek ways to amplify underrepresented voices without succumbing to tokenism or other performative tactics. Using primary source materials from the William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers in Fayetteville, Arkansas, as well as other secondary source materials, the companion programming guide will offer program notes and thematic concert ideas, in addition to the general analysis contained in the earlier chapters of the document. Further, this programming guide will consider historical performances of Still's music, and the wind band transcriptions in their original

²³ The Wind Band Repertory database lists a total of 23 non-duplicative works, but many of these works are arrangements Still completed for W.C. Handy or otherwise not conducive to performance by the modern wind ensemble.

context, as well as modern performances that have taken place since 2012 to provide readers with a plethora of unique and ethical programming ideas.

Review of the Scholarly Literature

In comparison to other twentieth-century composers from underrepresented backgrounds, there is a robust amount of literature pertaining to William Grant Still and his compositional legacy. Arguably due to his resounding accolades, collecting many “firsts” as a Black American classical composer, many scholars and performers have taken an interest in studying Still and his music. In addition to his individual achievements, the life and legacy of William Grant Still often serves as a catalyst for scholars and musicians interested in a post-racial United States, as the soundscapes Still creates in many of his compositions serve as a metaphor for such integration. William Grant Still himself, who lived during the pivotal eras of Reconstruction in the late nineteenth-century and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, constantly spoke about the desire to live in a United States that maintained racial harmony. Such rhetoric enabled Still to have the platform to educate listeners on the nuances of Black music in that there was “more to it than Jazz” and that it is a “fusion of several different racial groups.”²⁴ His attribution to the Harlem Renaissance as one of the foremost ambassadors of high art music in Black American culture has led to a keen sustainability within the rapidly growing and evolving Black music historical scope. This in large part due to known collaborations with other prominent Black figures such as W.C. Handy, Paul Laurence

²⁴ “Music, A Vital Force in American Race Relations,” 1978, box 69, folder 7, MC 1125, William Grant Still and Verna Arvey papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

Dunbar, and Langston Hughes. Regardless of the mode in which Still became a popular subject for musicological inquiry, his impact resonates throughout discourses of American music and Black cultural history.

A synthesis of the scholarly literature on the life and music of William Grant Still reveals two overarching themes. Performance practitioners (openly encompassing conductors, instrumentalists, and vocalists) have explored analytical elements of specific musical works ranging across a variety of genre and ensemble size in thorough performance analyses. These inquiries have helped breed further interest in Still's music, in addition to aiding in the pursuit of a codified performance practice. Still's seminal work, *Symphony No. 1: Afro-American* has justifiably received the most analytical consideration, and remains the inflection point for many biographical notes on Still's compositional style. Robert Bartlett Haas's 1972 text *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music* compiles writings from Still, his wife and renowned pianist Verna Arvey, among other scholars to survey Still's life, his musical works, and ancillary topics surrounding his music. More importantly, this text offers a comprehensive study of Still's most popular works, a snapshot of Still's own opinions about his compositions, program notes, and a thematic catalog of his compositions for each genre.

The first chapter, which looks at Still's symphonic works provides a thorough analysis of the *First Symphony* as well as a comparison to [arguably] his second most popular symphony, *Symphony No. 4: Autochthonous*. While the chapter neglects to explore his second, third, and fifth symphonies, the chapter's author denotes that the selection of the Fourth Symphony was a result of representing "examples of Mr. Still's

highest level of achievement in the field of musical composition”²⁵ and currently stands as the only technical analysis of a Still symphony, besides the *Afro-American Symphony*. Subsequent chapters look similarly at Still’s vocal works (chapter 2), violin works (chapter 3), and concludes with a less descriptive catalog of all genres he wrote for (chapter 5). This text presumably lead to the subsequent scholarly analysis of other works by Still. A few years later, Emery Jerome Lewis completed a study that focused exclusively on the melodic structure of *Symphony No. 1* that resembles much of the layout/structure of this particular chapter.

While it would seem that an analysis of Still’s *Symphony No. 1* is inundated with redundancies, scholars have found areas for further elaboration on the complexities of the work. Paul-Elliott Cobbs’s 1990 doctoral document titled “William Grant Still’s ‘The Afro-American Symphony’, A Culturally Inclusive Perspective” takes a thorough look at the musical idioms present in the work, through the lens of cultural inclusivity and responsiveness intended to serve the performer (mainly the conductor). Cobbs’s study goes beyond the simplistic attribute many scholars place on Still’s symphony tying it to elements of Blues by looking at elements of rhythm, form, style, and meter and how they pertain to expressions of multiculturalism and “non-exclusivity to Black music”²⁶ An additional study by Charles Lathshaw in 2014 compared multiple editions of Still’s *Afro-American Symphony* and arrived at a new critical edition to resolve some of the errata and stylistic inconsistencies. The document, titled “William Grant Still’s *Afro-American*

²⁵ Haas, *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, 19-20.

²⁶ Paul-Elliott Cobbs, “William Grant Still’s “The Afro-American Symphony,” A Culturally Inclusive Perspective”(DMA Diss., University of Washington, 1990), 3.

Symphony: A Critical Edition” looks at editions produced in 1935 (original Fischer publication), 1955, 1969, and 1970, and with the help of Still’s daughter, Judith works to reconcile inconsistencies and codify implied performance practice of the time. As a result of both of these studies, a thorough understanding of the technical elements and performance considerations of the First Symphony can easily be achieved without much further inquiry.

Additional compositions that have received extensive analysis include Still’s song cycle *Songs of Separation* and *Three Rhythmic Spirituals* for mixed chorus.²⁷ Each of these pieces of literature aim to draw analytical attention to the genre of Black classical music, distinguishing it from more popularly studied genres of the Diaspora such as “spirituals, blues, and jazz.”²⁸ Further, each of these scholarly works position Still’s vocal/choral within the larger scope of Still’s compositional repertory, which is necessary work given that Still’s symphonic works were his most widely-recognized and arguably contributed most to his rise to legitimacy. With this present study, I offer a similar contextualization, asserting that Still’s identity as a wind band composer (in retrospect) is just as substantial as his other genre identities. Moreover, given that Still’s *Songs of Separation* has recently been arranged for wind band, the scholarship of Orin Moe and Michael Preacely will offer a foundation for both analysis and context throughout this survey. In addition to amplifying Still beyond his symphonic works, scholars looking at *Songs of Separation* and *Three Rhythmic Spirituals* extracted similar stylistic trends that

²⁷ Due to the somewhat narrow scope of this study in that it solely focuses on works for the wind band, “other” and “additional” will frequently be used to refer to Still’s expansive body of repertoire beyond his symphonic and wind band works.

²⁸ Orin Moe, “William Grant Still: Songs of Separation,” *Black Music Research Journal* 1 (1980), 18.

resemble Still's *Afro-American Symphony*, including but not limited to the relationship with and inspiration from text/poetry, thematic concepts surrounding race/religion, melodic construction/motivic transformation, and general orchestration. While Still's compositional style is far from monolithic, these similarities substantiate the aforementioned claim that studying Still's *Afro-American Symphony* leads to a somewhat comprehensive view of Still's compositional prowess.

With regard to Still's band music, there's a surprising amount of analysis on his works. This comes as a unexpected wealth, given that Still's wind band contributions are not the focal point of his compositional legacy. However, as this study will survey, the growth in transcriptions (completed posthumously) has contributed greatly to the heightened exposure to all of Still's music. Myron Moss's survey of wind band repertoire by Black composers is the closest scholarship to this study, and continues to serve as the most comprehensive survey of Black concert band music available. As such, it will be a core foundation to the this particular study. Published in 2000, Moss's dissertation looked at the concert band music of Still as it was presently available. While the study as a whole had an expansive scope of 1927-1988, the works covered by Moss included Still's *From the Delta* (1945), *To You, America!* (1951), *The American Scene* (ca. 1963), *Folk Suite for Band* (1963), and *The Little Red Schoolhouse* (1967). My study will resemble Moss's in the general survey of a larger repertory, with a specific and modern focus on Still's music. Moreover, the modern interest in transcribing Still's works, primarily throughout the 2010s lends to continuing the work of Moss by adding these recent contributions to the discourse. Additional analyses of Still's band music include a recent, yet extensive study on Still's *Folk Suite for Band* (1963) by Matthew Winarski, and an analysis of the

2013 transcription of Still's "Summerland" from *Three Visions* by William Carson. As suggested before, the scope of my study is not to present a detailed and exhaustive analysis of Still's wind band works and transcriptions. Much of this necessary work has been done by other scholars and practitioners, and will be continued by future investors. However, as Still's music for band continues to grow in popularity and presentation, I posit that an updated survey is most vital to sustaining this growth.

The second essential theme in the scholarship on William Grant Still is a larger historical contextualization. This has been achieved through a diverse spread of biographical and autobiographical writings, as well as musicological writings which position Still at the center of- and tangentially related to a variety of narrative topics. Much of this scholarship and what we know of Still as the person originates from his own writings, in addition to writings of Still's wife, Verna Arvey, his daughter Judith Anne Still, and musicologist, Eileen Southern. An expansive record of Still's speeches and articles have been preserved and are accessible by way of the Special Collections at the University of Arkansas Library in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Still spoke on topics of his identity as a composer, as a Black man in America, the race problem in America, and other tangentially-related topics. Southern's transformative book, *The Music of Black Americans: A History* is the first text to survey Black music across the diaspora since the founding of the United States, and helped contextualize Still's musical contributions within that larger scope.

Still's second wife, Verna Arvey (1910-1987) dedicated much of her professional life to helping the broader public understand Still as a man, and amplifying his works. Arvey, who carried her own success as a writer, librettist, and pianist shared a similar

passion in writing about racial reconciliation and musical equality in America that Still did. As a performer, she participated in multiple performances of Still's music, most notably the premiere of Still's solo piano work *Three Visions* in 1936. Her writings, alongside Eileen Southern's also serve as a cornerstone of the body of literature surrounding William Grant Still and his music. In 1984, Arvey published a book *In One Lifetime* set out to depict a "warm and frank portrait of his aestheticism correlated with his personal character and high spirituality."²⁹ The book, alongside her chapters contributed in Robert Bartlett Haas's *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music* offer key narrative backgrounds of Still's life, informing the way this study will speak Still's significance to the wind band repertory.

Similar to the posthumous revitalization of Still's works, a significant portion of the literature of Still has been done after his death in 1978. The access and ability scholars have had to research Still is due in large part to the preservation work done by Still's daughter, Judith. In an interview with a newspaper from her alma mater, the University of Southern California, Judith Still talked about grieving the death of musical legacy with his passing. She spoke to the monumental task of sorting through the forgotten "hundreds of bundles of music" in an effort to "...rescue her father's memory from obscurity" by indicating "I had to do it...there was no one else."³⁰ Judith Still's work preserving the music and documentation of William Grant Still has resulted in a number of books, articles, and interviews where historical accounts of his life are

²⁹ Arvey, *In One Lifetime*, vii.

³⁰ Susan Bell, "Still Life," *USC Dornslife Magazine*, January 4, 2013. <https://dornsife.usc.edu/news/stories/still-life/>.

presented. Further, the collective reminiscence of Judith Still, as well as the synthesis of primary source materials by contributing authors Michal J. Dabrishus and Carolyn L. Quin resulted in the seminal book *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*. The first edition of this text, published in 1996 came after a significant amount of scholarship on Still, but has since aided scholars in an accurate depiction of features about Still's life and music. The text presents a comprehensive biographical sketch of Still's life, with an added personal reminiscence by Judith Still. The book also presents all of Still's known works in bibliography format, presenting composition dates/location, premiere dates/location, and notable performances up to the point of the book's publication in 1996. This work is foundational, as it affords future scholars the ability and security to explore more niche topics surrounding the musical legacy of Still.

Also posthumously, scholar Catherine Parsons Smith has contributed two formative texts which have extensively looked at the life of William Grant Still. Her biography *William Grant Still* was published in 2008, and synthesizes many of the primary source materials found in the archives at the University of Arkansas and Duke University. Similar to Arvey's *In One Lifetime*, she spends a good portion of the book on Still's childhood in Arkansas and his school years at Wilberforce College, but differs in that she presents a these experiences (including Still's time arranging for W.C. Handy) as the bedrock of Still's musical drive, rather than the narrative recollection that Arvey presents. Further, Smith's biography serves as the only comprehensive biography done on William Grant Still by someone without familial ties. Smith also published the text *William Grant Still: A Study in Contradictions* in 2000 which took a more critical look at Still's compositional identity, working collaborations during his life, and other aspects of

his personal life. Each of these texts were met with great pushback from Judith Still, who published her own criticism of Catherine Parsons Smith. Still's criticism goes as far as to denounce Smith's scholarship as "falsehood," "conjecture," and "character assassination."³¹ While the purpose of this study is not to litigate this dispute, it does provide a precondition for evaluating the scholarship of Smith, and an explanation of the highly protective nature of Judith Still with her father's legacy. Furthermore, evaluating this facet of the literature has established the need of new analysis, contributed through a synthesis of the primary source materials.

Following the essential biographical work done by Verna Arvey, Eileen Southern, Judith Anne Still, and Catherine Parsons Smith, other scholars have contributed literature that studies William Grant Still's music as it pertains to a variety of historical narratives. This literature has shaped an incredibly important perspective on Still's music that moves beyond tokenism, and towards thorough and legitimate scholarship in Black classical music. Such literature will be drawn upon, not only in the analysis of works that are referenced in this scholarship, but also in the companion programming guide of this study. Musicologists Gayle Murchison and Carol Oja drew upon the scholarship of Eileen Southern and Rae Linda Brown to open up a discourse on Still's *Afro-American Symphony* that "deserves consideration in terms of the broad artistic movements of the day."³² In Murchison's scholarship, the pioneering musical contributions of Still are explored in an effort to "move Still studies beyond viewing him as the Jackie Robinson

³¹ Judith Anne Still, "Commentary on Catherine Parsons Smith's 'William Grant Still' Published by the University of Illinois Press," *William Grant Still Music* (April 17, 2012): 3.

³² Carol Oja, "'New Music' and the 'New Negro': The Background of William Grant Still's 'Afro American' Symphony," *Black Music Research Journal* 22 (2002): 107.

of American art music.”³³ In addition to commentary on specific works in Still’s catalog such as his opera, *Blue Steel*, her 1994 article, “Dean of Afro-American Composers” or “Harlem Renaissance Man”: “The New Negro” and the Musical Poetics of William Grant Still” also appears as a chapter in Catherine Parsons Smith’s *William Grant Still: A Study in Contradictions*. This particular piece of scholarship is vital to this study on Still’s wind band works, as the undertaking of reshaping a narrative of compositional identity is not insignificant. Furthermore, she acknowledges the impact of symphonies, operas, ballets, and choral works on his compositional catalog, but like many other scholarly texts, neglects to recognize his wind band compositions. In this text, Murchison positions Still’s role in the Harlem Renaissance movement as a manifestation of the aesthetic diversity of Black Americans, first expressed in the “cultural manifesto” that was Alain Locke’s *The New Negro*, particularly within the larger scope of American musical modernism.³⁴ With regard to Still’s interconnection to the writings of Locke, Murchison writes:

Still and his musical compositions fully realized the ideals of Locke in two respects. First, Still created a substantial body of music, composing primarily large forms such as symphonies, ballets, operas, and choral works. Second, endeavoring to create both an *African-American* art music and an *American* art music, Still drew upon black [*sic*] vernacular musical traditions for his art music compositions. Still’s mature musical output can be grouped into three broad stylistic periods. The first spans the early to mid-twenties prior to his studies with Varèse and his Varèse period during which he explored modernistic techniques; this period ends in 1925. During the second, 1925-1932, Still adopted what he described as the “racial idiom.” These dates correspond to the appearance of Locke’s book and the accepted end of the Harlem Renaissance. The third began in 1932, when he turned from specifically the racial idiom toward the “universal idiom”³⁵

³³ Gayle Murchison, “Current Research Twelve Years After the William Grant Still Centennial,” *Black Music Research Journal* 25 (2005): 125.

³⁴ Gayle Murchison, ““Dean of Afro-American Composers” or “Harlem Renaissance Man”: “The New Negro” and the Musical Poetics of William Grant Still,” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 53, No. 1 (Spring 1994): 50.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

Murchison's assertion that Still's music follows the ideology of Locke in two facets, as well as the assertion that Still composed in three unique stylistic periods continues to be one of the cornerstone opinions of Still's compositional identity.

Musicologist Carol Oja follows a similar inquiry into the aesthetic reception of Still by positioning Still's *Afro-American Symphony* firmly within the Modernist movement and its leaders "Varèse, later Copland, and Cowell."³⁶ Not only is the marriage of Still to the larger Modernist movement a bold step towards true inclusion, but also, Oja supports this thesis by assessing Still's *From the Land of Dreams Levee Land* to trace the evolution of integrating "African-American gestures with modernist chromaticism" that ultimately resulted in Still meeting a "practical necessity and an aesthetic ideal."³⁷ A similar nuanced and insightful perspective is presented in musicologist Jacqueline C. DjeDje's "Context and Creativity: William Grant Still in Los Angeles." This article, also published in the *Black Music Research Journal* looks at Still's pivotal move to Los Angeles in 1934, where he remained for the rest of his life. Given that all of the works concerned in this study were written and arranged after Still's moved to Los Angeles, this article serves as an essential deposit in the body of literature relating to Still's aesthetic disposition. Beyond simply the biographical detail of Still's move, DjeDje contextualizes the vibrant multiculturalism of Los Angeles with Still's concept of the "universal idiom."³⁸ This was the idea that "all ethnic groups had something important to contribute

³⁶ Carol Oja, "'New Music' and the 'New Negro,'" 110.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

³⁸ Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, "Context and Creativity: William Grant Still in Los Angeles," *Black Music Research Journal*, (2011): 2-3.

musically and culturally to his music.”³⁹ This idea is not only central to understanding Still’s compositional identity, but offers an opportunity for practitioners to receive Still’s music beyond just his identity as a Black man.

The aforementioned scholarship offers several unanswered questions, including but not limited to the role of arrangements and transcriptions in the cataloging of Still’s music, and his overall legacy. Additionally, the companion programming guide will offer an opportunity to elaborate on the established scholarly literature, in an effort to move beyond arbitrary labels such as genre stratification and racial tokenism, and towards an equitable and merit-based representation in the wind band repertory. This study is specifically interested in the marriage of Still’s original compositions and transcriptions done by others with regard to the modern wind band. While this methodology could be expanded to include original and reimagined chamber music for wind instruments, it is my hope that the narrow scope of the wind band as large ensemble will enable a larger number of scholars and performers to be exposed to his music, in a genre that did not see much repertoire from Black composers throughout the majority of the twentieth century. I also maintain the hope that future scholarship will follow a similar methodology in doing this work for a variety of genres Still composed for and others transcribed.

Methodology

³⁹ Ibid.

Due to the preservation and restoration of William Grant Still's music, diaries, and other personal correspondence, there is a wealth of potential scholarship that can be done. It should also be noted that the knowledge about William Grant Still grows with each scholarly inquiry, musical transcription, and performance. As mentioned in the literature review, credit for the preservation and distribution of these documents can be solely attributed to Still's daughter, Judith Anne Still. In addition to her ownership of William Grant Still Music, the largest distributor of Still's music, she has worked diligently to make his personal documents more accessible to scholars. Currently, the majority of the preserved documents can be found at the William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers, located in the Special Collections at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville Library. This collection contains the majority of primary source materials collected for this study, as well as a shared collection of the historical documents kept by Still's wife, Verna Arvey. In addition to the archive at the University of Arkansas, other correspondence, diaries, and writings can be found at The William Grant Still Papers (1877-1992) in the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University.⁴⁰

In November of 2023, I visited the William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers to look into the original music of Still written for wind band, as well as the musical works that have recently been transcribed for wind band. Further, I was able to collect documents pertaining to Still's compositional identity, including speeches he gave on being a Black composer in the United States, his views on religion and the role it played

⁴⁰ William Grant Still Papers, 1877-1992, RL.01255. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

in his artistic disposition, and his evaluation of his own music. Due to the comprehensive collection at the University of Arkansas, my findings were sufficient enough to not warrant a trip to the archive at Duke University. Each of the documents and original musical manuscripts at the William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers have been vital in the development of this project, and will offer long term support in the reimagining of Still as a wind band composer. Given the gap in scholarship with regard to Still's composition for wind band, there will be potential for further study beyond this project. It is my hope that as transcriptions continue to be produced, this project will enable arrangers, performers, and other scholars to understand Still's compositional intent with greater accuracy.

Much of the neglect for Still's music during his life, and after his death can be attributed to a lack of access. Prior to the discovery of Still's documents shortly after his death in 1978, there had been little to no knowledge of Still's compositional success. In addition to the lack of opportunities due to racism and Jim Crow laws, it was even harder for a Black composer to build a legacy beyond death through the preservation and the honoring of their life's work. As Judith Anne Still has built William Grant Still Music with her power of attorney over his estate, more consumers have been able to engage with Still's music. In my development of this project, I have worked closely with Judith Anne Still to gain permission for photocopying materials at the William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers at the University of Arkansas, as well as purchasing musical scores for analysis through William Grant Still Music. It should be noted however, due to the nature of handling such a large volume of orders and inquires, there were multiple instances where access was either limited or slow to be granted. As a result of this

communication with Still's daughter, it is my hope that such materials which will be synthesized in this document will mitigate the need for consumers to rely on direct communication with Judith Anne Still when inquiring about William Grant Still's wind band music (outside of music purchases themselves).

With regard to access and amplification, another theme that will be explored in this study is the permission and ethics behind arranging, transcribing, and adapting Still's music for wind band. As the owner of his estate and his music, Judith Anne Still has embraced the role of protecting her father's music (which is still under copyright) as much as she has worked to amplify his music. In a 2023 interview with Judith Still and musicologist Guthrie Ramsey, Still was asked about the resurgent interest in adapting her father's music for modern performance/other ensembles. She indicated that her mission was to "popularize and protect"⁴¹ her father's music. However, she continued with trepidation, stating, "So many people call and write...and they want to arrange the music and they want to use the music in this form and that form...but I don't let them mess with the music. It should stand as it was written."⁴² As part of this study, I have worked to determine why certain arrangers have been granted access, and why other records show that Judith Still is against the arranging of her father's music. While the answer is inconclusive, the question will remain a concurrent issue as interest in Still's music grows. Fortunately with the help of select arrangers and composers, and under the

⁴¹ Khadijah Mbowe, "'People Weren't Prepared' — Judith Still and Dr. Guthrie Ramsey on William Grant Still," *HearTOGETHER Podcast*, podcast audio, October 19, 2023, <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1364857/13812015>.

⁴² *Ibid.*

permission of Judith Still, approved adaptations and arrangements have been completed to extend the life of many of Still’s works and offer other opportunities for scholarship.

In terms of the analysis and programming aspect of this study, many of the works discussed have not been attributed grade levels to correspond with the performance demands of the piece. In wind band repertoire, grade levels are often attributed to musical works to determine a baseline difficulty. However, as with any system for evaluating subjective content, the system is imperfect and often incongruent from person to person. Anecdotally, for many performers and conductors, the ambiguity of the difficulty level of a given compositional work can contribute to neglect or disinterest, particularly when that practitioner does not have time to dive deep into the musical score to determine a difficulty level themselves. An overview of the numerical grade levels of wind band works used by Hal Leonard Corporation is illustrated in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Summary of Grade Level Attributes for Wind Band Compositions⁴³

Grade Level (Quantitative)	Grade Level (Qualitative)	Typical Ensemble Level
I	Very Easy	Primary School/Junior High School
II	Easy	Junior High/High School
III	Medium	Advanced Junior High/High School
IV	Medium Advanced	Advanced High School/Collegiate
V	Advanced	Collegiate
VI+	Professional	Advanced Collegiate/Professional

⁴³ Hal Leonard Corporation, “Grade Level and Series Guide” (accessed January 18, 2025), <https://halleonard.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360009867993-Grade-Level-and-Series-Guide>.

According to the literature reviewed for this study, only seven of the sixteen works surveyed have been attributed grade levels by way of peer-review processes (table 1.2).⁴⁴ While the purpose of this study is not a complete and exhaustive analysis of the selected compositions, it is important to establish a general idea of difficulty level for each work to consider when programming Still's wind band music. As a result, I've adopted two public rubrics for assessing grade levels in wind band composition. The first is David Marlatt's rubric for the Canadian-based *Eighth Note Publications* which offers criteria for works ranging from grade 0.5 to grade 6.⁴⁵ Additionally, the American Band College's "Music Grading Chart" offers a simple set of criteria for a comprehensive variety of musical elements such as meter, note value, scoring, length, and other elements.⁴⁶ Assigning a grade level, in addition to accumulating/creating program notes, and assembling concert programs exercises many of the skills that wind band conductors use on a regular basis. For this reason, I have found the programming guide to be a wonderful compliment to the historical survey in this study.

⁴⁴ This count only considers grade levels attributed by publishing companies (William Grant Still Music, Peer Music, Southern Music), prescribed music lists, and other scholarly documents. This excludes open-source databases such as the Wind Repertory Project. These databases will, however, be useful in the process of verifying and updating each work's grade level.

⁴⁵ Marlatt, David, "Defining the Wind Band Grading System," *Canadian Winds: The Journal of the Canadian Band Association* 14, no. 1 (Fall 2015): 44-47.

⁴⁶ Bandworld, "American Band College Music Grading Chart" (accessed January 18, 2025), <https://www.bandworld.org/pdfs/gradingchart.pdf>.

Table 1.2: Still's Band Works with Grade Levels Already Attributed

Title	Grade Level	Source
<i>Victory Tide (Song of a City)</i>	IV	Myron Moss (Text)
<i>Old California</i>	V	Myron Moss (Text)
<i>From the Delta</i>	IV	Myron Moss (Text) UIL Prescribed Music List (State List)
<i>To You, America!</i>	V	Southern Music/Peer Music Classical (Publisher) Tennessee Bandmasters Association (State List)
<i>The American Scene for Band</i>	IV/V	Myron Moss (Text)
<i>Folk Suite for Band</i>	IV	Myron Moss (Text) West Virginia Graded Music List (State List)
<i>Little Red Schoolhouse</i>	IV/V	Southern Music/Peer Music Classical (Publisher) Tennessee Bandmasters Association (State List) Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association (State List)
<i>Symphony No. 1: Afro-American</i>	V	<i>The Horizon Leans Forward</i> (Text)

CHAPTER 2

ORIGINAL WORKS FOR WIND BAND

Victory Tide (Song of a City)

Year of Composition: 1939/1945

Duration: ca. 3:00

Arranger/Editor: William Grant Still

Grade Level: IV

Publisher: William Grant Still Music

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute I-II
Oboe I-II
English Horn
Eb Soprano Clarinet
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III
Alto Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
Contrabass Clarinet
Bassoon I-II
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone I-II
Baritone Saxophone
Bass Saxophone
Bb Cornet I-II-III
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II-III
Baritone/Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass
Timpani
Percussion

Optional SATB or TTBB Choir

Program Note:

William Grant Still was an American Composer who authored nearly two hundred works including symphonies, ballets, operas, film scores, choral works, art songs, chamber music, and works for solo instruments, and is often referred to as the “Dean of Afro-American Composers.” His close association and collaboration with prominent African American literary and cultural figures earn him consideration as part of the Harlem Renaissance. His list of “firsts” includes being the first American to have an opera produced by the New York City Opera, and the first African-American to conduct a major American symphony orchestra, to have a symphony performed by a leading orchestra, to have an opera performed by a major opera company, and to have an opera performed on national television, among other achievements. Still was a multi-instrumentalist and worked in W.C. Handy’s band in Memphis and later in Harlem.

In 1938, William Grant Still was commissioned by the New York World’s Fair to compose the official theme. The resultant composition was *Rising Tide*, sometimes referred to as *Victory Tide*. The monumental Theme Center of the World’s Fair was the Trylon and Perisphere, two huge modernistic structures connected by what was at the time the world’s longest escalator. The Trylon was a giant needle, a 610-foot obelisk in the shape of a triangular pylon (hence “Trylon”) while the Perisphere was tremendous in size, measuring 180 feet in diameter and housing a Henry Dreyfuss diorama called “Democracy” which presented the Fair’s theme of “The World of Tomorrow” by depicting a utopian city-of-the-future. Visitors aboard a moving sidewalk viewed the diorama from above while a multi-image slide presentation was projected on the sphere’s inner dome—and the accompanying music over all, playing on a six-minute loop, was Still’s expanded orchestration of *Victory Tide* for orchestra, SATB Choir, and narration. Visitors exited the Perisphere through the Helicline, a 950-foot long spiral ramp partially encircling the Perisphere and yielding visitors’ a vista over the grounds of the World’s Fair as they descended the ramp to ground level.

[program note by the United States Coast Guard Band]⁴⁷

General Performance Considerations:

Victory Tide is the truest form of ceremonial music. It is a short march with fanfares that sound open fifths and move in triadic motion. Despite being in common time, there is a recurring triplet subdivision and compound meter feel throughout the entire march. The march opens in G minor, with a G minor to D major intervallic leap by the cornets (fig. 2.1). This particular voicing and range for the cornet outlines the challenge that makes this work an advanced Grade IV, or perhaps a Grade V work.

⁴⁷ The United States Coast Guard, “Angels in the Architecture” (accessed February 10, 2025), <https://www.uscg.mil/Community/Coast-Guard-Band/Publicity/Angels-in-the-Architecture/>.

Fig 2.1: Opening Fanfares from *Victory Tide (Song of a City)*

Opening Fanfares from *Victory Tide*

(Cornets) Gm D (Horns)

The image shows a musical score for the opening fanfares of 'Victory Tide'. It is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first measure is marked with a forte 'f' dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The second measure is marked with a G minor chord (Gm) and a triplet of eighth notes. The third measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventh measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The ninth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The tenth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eleventh measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twelfth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirteenth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fourteenth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifteenth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixteenth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventeenth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighteenth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The nineteenth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twentieth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twenty-first measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twenty-second measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twenty-third measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twenty-fourth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twenty-fifth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twenty-sixth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twenty-seventh measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twenty-eighth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The twenty-ninth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirtieth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirty-first measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirty-second measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirty-third measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirty-fourth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirty-fifth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirty-sixth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirty-seventh measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirty-eighth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The thirty-ninth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fortieth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The forty-first measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The forty-second measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The forty-third measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The forty-fourth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The forty-fifth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The forty-sixth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The forty-seventh measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The forty-eighth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The forty-ninth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fiftieth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifty-first measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifty-second measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifty-third measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifty-fourth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifty-fifth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifty-sixth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifty-seventh measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifty-eighth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifty-ninth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixtieth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixty-first measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixty-second measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixty-third measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixty-fourth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixty-fifth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixty-sixth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixty-seventh measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixty-eighth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixty-ninth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventieth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventy-first measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventy-second measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventy-third measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventy-fourth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventy-fifth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventy-sixth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventy-seventh measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventy-eighth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventy-ninth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eightieth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighty-first measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighty-second measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighty-third measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighty-fourth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighty-fifth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighty-sixth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighty-seventh measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighty-eighth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighty-ninth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The ninetieth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes. The hundredth measure is marked with a D major chord (D) and a triplet of eighth notes.

As the march continues into the second strain (m. 13), the march modulates to G major where it stays for the remainder of the work. While the composition has not received much performance attention, Myron Moss said this of the technical considerations for the work itself: “The piece is Grade IV despite its simplicity and brevity. Trumpet ranges are high, and the key changes and harmonic vocabulary result in considerable reliance on accidentals.”⁴⁸ In addition to the work’s simplicity and brevity, the composition maintains a tonal and triadic harmonic structure throughout.

Old California

Year of Composition: 1941/ca. 1942

⁴⁸ Myron D. Moss “Concert Band Music by African-American Composers,” 78.

Duration: ca. 9:00

Arranger/Editor: William Grant Still

Grade Level: V

Publisher: William Grant Still Music

Instrumentation:

Piccolo

Flute I-II

Oboe I-II

English Horn

E♭ Soprano Clarinet

B♭ Soprano Clarinet I-II-III

Alto Clarinet

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon I-II

Soprano Saxophone

Alto Saxophone I-II

Tenor Saxophone I-II

Baritone Saxophone

B♭ Trumpet I-II-III

French Horn I-II-III-IV

Trombone I-II-III

Baritone/Euphonium

Tuba (B♭/E♭)

String Bass

Timpani

Percussion

Snare Drum

Bass Drum

Vibraphone

Chime

Claves/Sleigh Bells/Maracas/Castanets/Tambourine

Gong

Cymbals

Harp

Program Note:

William Grant Still's *Old California* is a symphonic poem that evokes the narrative of immigration waves that have found home in the state of California. Written for the 160th anniversary of the city of Los Angeles, Still pays homage to the diversity of the city and its people, in what ultimately would be identified in his stylistic approach as the "universal idiom."⁴⁹ On the composition, William Grant Still himself wrote: "The symphonic poem, *Old California* does not pretend to be anything more than program music. The short introduction indicates that before the coming of the red man, California's destiny was established. Then the composition depicts, in turn, the Indian and his tribal dances (the thematic material suggested by an authentic American Indian melody); the Spaniard with his religious life and colorful fiestas; a time of struggle when the American appeared on the scene, and finally a merging of all these groups to bring an era of peace and plenty. The composer has dedicated the work to the memory of his friend George Fischer, who worked tirelessly on behalf of American composers and their music."⁵⁰

Within a year of the 1941 premiere by the Janssen Symphony Orchestra at the Wilshire-Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles on October 30, 1941, Still arranged the work for wind band.

[program note by Grant Knox]

General Performance Considerations:

In his dissertation on the concert band music of Black composers, Myron Moss attributed this work a "Grade IV" citing its straightforward and folk-like thematic material.⁵¹ Moments of the ten minute tone poem hold true to this evaluation, but due to the composition's numerous style changes, key changes, and wide range/register demands (compounded by a dense approach to voicing and advanced orchestration, exemplified in the piano reduction in Figure 2.2), this work is better attributed a Grade V difficulty. Furthermore, the work requires advanced upper woodwind performers (fl/picc., ob., clar.), in addition to high brass (trumpet/French horn) performers with advanced ranges.

The work is through-composed, containing three distinct stylistic sections that are evocative of the cultural melting pot that California has represented in its evolution. Still pays homage to American Indian, Spanish, and European cultures through the setting of a tribal dance, a paso doble march, and a hymn. This results in an active percussion writing throughout in the work, as well as compositional techniques that are idiomatic in folk music such as call and response, homophony, and harmonies that move in parallel

⁴⁹ Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, "Context and Creativity": 20.

⁵⁰ Concert program, November 4 1944, Program ID 3227, *New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives*, <https://archives.nyphil.org/index.php/artifact/b5277a32-a2c2-4102-87cc-e1329002a658-0.1>

⁵¹ Myron D. Moss "Concert Band Music by African-American Composers," 76.

motion. An expanded analysis of each section can be found in Myron Moss's aforementioned dissertation.⁵²

Fig 2.2: "Hymn," Excerpt from *Old California*

"Hymn": Excerpt from *Old California* (mm. 82-89)

Dm Gm Bb/D Dm/F Bb C7sus D

⁵² Myron D. Moss "Concert Band Music by African-American Composers," 75-78.

From the Delta

Year of Composition: 1945/2020

Duration: ca. 9:30

Arranger/Editor: Dane Teter

Grade Level: IV

Publisher: Leeds Music Corporation (1945/1947)

Available now through William Grant Still Music

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute I-II
Oboe I-II
Eb Soprano Clarinet (doubles piccolo)
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III
Alto Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon I-II
Soprano Saxophone
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone I-II
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Cornet I-II-III
Bb Trumpet I-II
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II-III
Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass
Timpani
Percussion
 Snare Drum
 Bass Drum
 Suspended Cymbal
 Crash Cymbals
 Metal Plate/Sand Block
 Chime
Harp

Program Note:

From the Delta is a suite consisting of three segments: “Work Song,” “Spiritual,” and “Dance.” It was first performed on June 17, 1947 by Richard Franko Goldman and the Goldman Band at the Central Park Mall Concert in New York City. Speaking about the work, Still himself wrote, “Although in the past I have written music reminiscent of several other states of our Union, this is the first time that I have tried to express in music the romance of the Delta country in my native state of Mississippi. These three short pieces are, however, all original. No one of them is based on authentic folk material. In the first section, ‘Work Song’, the metal block on the piece of wood is used to suggest the sound of a sledge-hammer driving spikes. It may be necessary to experiment a little with various sizes of pieces of wood to get just the right effect. A singing style of playing in the ‘Spiritual’ would give it just the right effect, while in the last section the feeling should be that of a dancing game rather than a formal theatrical dance.”

[Program note from the score/composer]⁵³

General Performance Considerations:

William Grant Still’s *From the Delta* appears on the University Interscholastic League “Prescribed Music List” as a Grade IV work for band.⁵⁴ Despite Myron Moss’s assessment as a Grade III work, the composition requires careful attention to style (both marked and quasi-swing) in addition to a somewhat advanced harmonic palette underneath simple folk-like melodies, suggesting a slightly more advanced demand than the modern Grade III work.⁵⁵ Two corrections have been submitted to the open source “Errata” list on the *Wind Repertory Project* website,⁵⁶ and they are listed below:

Table 2.1: Errata List for *From the Delta*

Part	Movement/Measure Number	Correction
Trombone II (in score)	Mvt. 1 / m. 50, beat 3	E-natural should be E-flat
Bb Cornet III (in part)	Mvt. 3/ m. 3	Remove rhythm dot from sixteenth rest

⁵³ “Program note for *To You, America!*,” n.d., box 83, folder 25, MC 1125, William Grant Still and Verna Arvey papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

⁵⁴ University Interscholastic League, “2024-2025 Prescribed Music List” (accessed January 18, 2025), <https://www.uiltexas.org/pml/>

⁵⁵ Myron D. Moss “Concert Band Music by African-American Composers,” 84.

⁵⁶ Wind Repertory Project, “From the Delta” (Accessed February 14, 2025), https://www.windrep.org/From_the_Delta.

Conductors should observe this note from the editor (Dane Teter): This full score was prepared from the instrumental parts published by Leeds Music Corporation, Copyright 1947. The score shows the actual dynamic and expressions found in the parts. Any dynamics not shown in the score are absent in the parts, and may be added at the conductor's discretion. In *Work Song*, the cues in the 2nd Alto Saxophone at Rehearsal 2 do not exactly match the notes in the 2nd Cornet part. The score reflects the cues as written in the saxophone part without aligning them to the cornet part. To save space, the Piccolo and E-flat Clarinet have been placed on the same staff in the score and are notated in concert pitch but sound an octave higher. In *Work Song*, the E-flat Alto Clarinet and the B-flat Bass Clarinet have been written on the same staff of the score. The Alto Clarinet notes have been transposed to be in the same key as the Bass Clarinet.

Movement 1: "Work Song": the metal plate in the percussion part should be a fairly large and thick metal plate resting on a large block of wood (preferably a 4x4), and struck with a heavy hammer. The purpose of this is to imitate the sound of a sledgehammer driving spikes. On the original manuscript, William Grant Still also denotes the following with regard to "Work Song": "It is extremely important that the tempo indicated here [quarter note = 104 BPM] is observed exactly, since an increase of speed would tend to alter the character and meaning of the piece."⁵⁷

⁵⁷ *From the Delta*, 1945, box 92, folder 1, MC 1125, William Grant Still and Verna Arvey papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

To You, America!

Year of Composition: 1951

Duration: ca. 9:00

Arranger/Editor: N/A

Grade Level: V

Publisher: Southern Music Publishing Company, Inc. (1956)

Available now through Peer Music Classical and William Grant Still Music

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute I-II
Oboe I-II
English Horn
Eb Soprano Clarinet
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III-IV
Alto Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon I-II
Soprano Saxophone
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone I-II
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Cornet I-II-III-IV
Bb Trumpet I-II-III
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II-III
Baritone/Euphonium
Basses (Tuba/String Bass)
Timpani
Percussion I-II
Harp

Program Note:

To You, America! Was composed in honor of the Sesquicentennial Celebrations at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York. It was first performed there with the USMA Band under the composer's direction on February 17, 1952. On that occasion, the program contained the following note: "In response to a letter from Lt. Col. Resta asking William Grant Still, in his own words, for a description of his composition, the composer wrote: 'As for the composition I have written for West Point—it is a simple reaffirmation of the faith which all of us who are loyal Americans feel at this crucial time—our faith in our country and in its future. Musically speaking, it is a development of a single theme, energetic at the beginning and progressing to a majestic, chorale-like Finale, pointing to a glorious destiny.'

The composer has, with becoming modesty, made a simple statement as to the musical development of the work. He has presented us with an excellent composition, constructed with only the simplest of means, yet, and for this reason, it becomes extremely complex—complex in that the one theme utilized finds its only apparent contrast in the accompanying march, yet hymn-like figure which prevails throughout. William Grant Still then proceeds to show us how the craftsman develops his material, and utilizes with understanding the various instrumental colors of the ensemble at his disposal. One can discern the influence of folk element, and a seemingly vocal conception in the instrumental score.

[Program note from score]⁵⁸

General Performance Considerations:

To You, America! offers a demanding, yet rewarding soundscape for wind bands. The work calls for an expanded version of the standard, professional-level wind ensemble instrumentation with the addition of a fourth clarinet part, split tenor saxophones, and seven trumpets (Cornet I-II-III-IV and Trumpet I-II-III). This presents a challenge for the standard wind ensemble to field, justifying its assessment as a Grade V work. While the published score indicates medium difficulty, the instrumentation and technical challenges suggest that this work is only accessible for advanced/professional ensembles. At the time of this study, the United States Army Band at West Point has made the 1952 premiere recording under the direction of Capt. Francis Resta available online for reference.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ "Program note for *To You, America!*," n.d., box 83, folder 77, MC 1125, William Grant Still and Verna Arvey papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

⁵⁹ Available via YouTube.

The American Scene for Band

Year of Composition: 1957/ca. 1964

Duration: ca. 18:00

Arranger/Editor: William Grant Still/Dane Teter

Grade Level: IV

Publisher: William Grant Still Music

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute I-II
Oboe I-II
English Horn
Bassoon I-II
Eb Soprano Clarinet
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III
Alto Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
Eb Contrabass Clarinet
Soprano Saxophone
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Trumpet I-II-III
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II-III
Baritone/Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass
Timpani
Percussion
 Snare Drum
 Bass Drum
 Cymbals (Suspended/Crash)
 Tambourine
 Triangle
 Bells
Harp

Program Note:

The American Scene, composed in 1957, consists of five suites for orchestra which depict life, scenery, and culture in various parts of the United States. The themes are original ones written in some of the American idioms. The work was commissioned by Adrian Michaelis for the Standard School Broadcasts. Some of the suites aired on the NBC Western Network from 1959 to 1960.

The excerpts for band were arranged by the composer.

Suite 1: The East is dedicated to Marjorie Lange. *Berkshire Night* is subtitled "Tranquility."

Suite 2: The South is dedicated to Miriam Matthews. *A New Orleans Street* is subtitled "The festive spirit of yesterday." The Creole idiom is employed to picture the festive spirit of Mardi Gras.

Suite 3: The Old West is dedicated to Joseph Portonova.

Suite 4: The Far West is dedicated to the Pasadena Interracial Woman's Club.

Suite 5: A Mountain, a Memorial, and a Song is dedicated to Mrs. Helen Thompson.

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is subtitled "Our boys will never be forgotten." The subtitle of *Grand Teton* is "A symbol of America's strength."

[Program note by Erica Neidlinger]⁶⁰

General Performance Considerations:

William Grant Still arranged selections from his collection of five suites titled *The American Scene* with the idea that "a performance of the entire group would be too long."⁶¹ Furthermore, William Grant Still Music currently sells each suite individually, suggesting that one may perform individual movements/suites independently (while remaining true to composer's intent). The selections/movements are listed below with their respective performance length:

"Berkshire Night" from *Suite No. 1: The East* (4:00)

"New Orleans Street" from *Suite No. 2: The South* (2:30)

"Tribal Dance" from *Suite No. 3: The Old West* (1:40)

"Grand Teton" from *Suite No. 5: A Mountain, A Memorial, and A Song* (3:30)

"Tomb of the Unknown Soldier" from *Suite No. 5: A Mountain, A Memorial, and A Song* (6:15)

⁶⁰ Wind Repertory Project, "American Scene, The" (Accessed February 15, 2025), https://www.windrep.org/American_Scene_The.

⁶¹ Haas, *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, 285.

Myron Moss provides a technical analysis of each movement/selection, and offer the composition as a whole to be evaluated as a Grade V work for band. Due to the variance of each movement, the work is better evaluated as a Grade IV work for band. He continues, however, suggesting that “a selection of only one or two movements would, clearly, not be as challenging.”⁶² Should a conductor decide to choose the “easier” movements of the work, they would be best served programming “Berkshire Night” and “A New Orleans Street.”

⁶² Myron D. Moss “Concert Band Music by African-American Composers,” 190.

Folk Suite for Band

Year of Composition: 1963

Duration: ca. 9:45

Arranger/Editor: N/A

Grade Level: IV

Publisher: Bourne Co. Music Publishers

Available now through William Grant Still Music

Instrumentation:

Piccolo

Flute I-II

Oboe I-II

English Horn

Bassoon I-II

Eb Soprano Clarinet

Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III

Alto Clarinet

Bass Clarinet

Eb Contrabass Clarinet

Alto Saxophone I-II

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

Bb Trumpet I-II-III

French Horn I-II-III-IV

Trombone I-II-III

Baritone

Tuba

String Bass

Timpani

Percussion I

Snare Drum

Sand Block/Triangle

Cymbals

Percussion II

Vibraphone

Xylophone

Harp

Program Note:

The major part of William Grant Still's creative work has been in the field of original compositions, yet in his *Folk Suite for Band*, he has made one of his rare excursions into the realm of traditional American melodies, this time in building several of the most widely loved and often sung negro spirituals into a larger work. Wherever American music is known, "Get On Board, Little Children," "Deep River," "The Old Ark's a Moverin'," and "Sinner, Please don't Let This Harvest Pass" are favorites. The Suite was first performed in Los Angeles on August 18, 1963, by one of the Bureau of Music's symphonic bands, Dale Eymann conducting.

[Program note from score]

General Performance Considerations:

Given that this work is one of the four fully and exclusively original works for wind band by William Grant Still, there are two detailed analyses of the work. A thorough study of the technical considerations for preparing a performance of *Folk Suite for Band* can be found in Myron Moss's aforementioned dissertation, as well as Matthew Patrick Winarski's dissertation titled "Pedagogy and Representation: A Pedagogical Approach for Introducing Secondary and Collegiate Students to the Wind Band Compositions of Three Underrepresented Composers."

The first movement makes use of the spiritual "Git On Board, Little Children" in a light, playful character. Rhythmic passages are traded between instruments, providing a through-line of an energetic, composite sixteenth note motif. Winarski cites this as a challenge to consider in the need for a "light and quick articulation to keep the lively feeling of the music."⁶³ The second movement makes use of the spiritual "Deep River," and William Grant Still sets it in a traditionally lyrical way. In addition to a general sensitivity towards lyrical playing that all slow repertoire requires, Winarski recognizes that proficient flute, oboe, clarinet, and horn players are essential to the movement.⁶⁴ Similar to the first, the third movement (titled "Medley") offers a moderate technical challenge with the activity of sixteenth notes frequently presented. Still makes use of two spirituals here, "The Old Ark's a Moverin'" and "Sinner, Please don't Let This Harvest Pass." The movement vaguely resembles a rondo form, alternating moderate tempo sections with "lively" sections in duple meter.

⁶³ Matthew Patrick Winarski, "Pedagogy and Representation: A Pedagogical Approach for Introducing Secondary and Collegiate Students to the Wind Band Compositions of Three Underrepresented Composers: William Grant Still (1895-1978), Carlos Chávez (1899-1978), and Julie Giroux (b. 1961)" (DMA Diss., North Dakota State University, 2023), 12.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

Little Red Schoolhouse

Year of Composition: 1957/1967/1977

Duration: approx. 11 minutes

Arranger/Editor: William Grant Still/Charles Bucky Steele

Grade Level: IV

Publisher: Southern Music Publishing Company, Inc. (1977)

Available now through Peer Music Classical

Instrumentation:

Piccolo

Flute I-II

Oboe I-II

English Horn

Eb Soprano Clarinet

Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III

Alto Clarinet

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon I-II

Alto Saxophone I-II

Tenor Saxophone I-II

Baritone Saxophone

Bb Trumpet I-II-III

French Horn I-II-III-IV

Trombone I-II-III

Euphonium

Tuba

String Bass

Timpani

Percussion

Snare Drum

Bass Drum

Triangle

Bells/Glockenspiel

Wood Block

Suspended Cymbal (small/large)

Harp

Program Note:

William Grant Still, American composer, became world-famed for his operas, ballets, and symphonies, but he never lost the ability nor the inclination to think in terms of music for and about young people. *Little Red Schoolhouse* is an orchestral suite written for adults about children. Like multiple other works, Still later arranged the work for wind band in 1967 (later edited by Charles Bucky Steele in 1977).

Each of its five sections describes a different student who may have attended the little red schoolhouse, so famed in America's history. "Little Conqueror" is descriptive of the boy who wanted to become a great general, and who always played soldier. The teen-aged girl who liked to pretend that she was the daughter of a pharaoh is pictured in "Egyptian Princess," while "Captain Kidd, Junior" is a musical portrayal of the small boy who tried to be ferocious—but it's all a sham, as the closing phrase for woodwinds indicates. The prettiest girl in school is pictured in "Colleen Bawn," while "Petey" was just—Petey, a good-natured, popular, lively red-headed boy with a captivating grin."

[Program note by William Grant Still, edited by Grant Knox]⁶⁵

General Performance Considerations:

When Still composed *Little Red Schoolhouse*, he intended for an suite that was "written for adults, about children."⁶⁶ Each movement/vignette offers a moderate challenge, with the suite in its entirety evaluated as a mature Grade IV work. Each movement presents a different style that calls to mind a distinct, child-like imagination.

- Mvt. 1: Little Conqueror (2:04)*
- Mvt. 2: Egyptian Princess (3:39)
- Mvt. 3: Captain Kidd, Junior (1:06)
- Mvt. 4: Colleen Bawn (3:10)
- Mvt. 5: Petey (2:20)

**performance times based on William Grant Still's notes/markings*

The first movement, "Little Conqueror" is in a march style with a steady tempo of 108 beats per minute. Rehearsal 2 shifts into a quasi-swing style with the triplet subdivision expressed in the melody.

⁶⁵ Program note for *Little Red Schoolhouse*," n.d., box 83, folder 37, MC 1125, William Grant Still and Verna Arvey papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Fig 2.3: Swing Motive in “Little Conqueror” from *Little Red Schoolhouse*



“Egyptian Princess” is in a buoyant 3/8 meter, resembling a waltz. Beginning at rehearsal 8 and continuing to the end of the movement, there is a counter line of repeated sixteenth notes passed off between the clarinets, bassoons, alto saxophones, baritone saxophone, French horn, and euphonium. This motive presents the challenge of being quickly and lightly articulated, particularly among these instruments.

Fig 2.4: Rhythmic Motive in “Egyptian Princess” from *Little Red Schoolhouse*



The remaining movements are straightforward in nature. The third movement, “Captain Kidd, Junior” resembles an intermezzo in that it is the shortest of the movements coming in just over one minute long. Additionally, the abrupt ending leaves room for listeners to receive it as something that is incomplete, lending to the story of a boy who tried to be ferocious but it’s all a sham. The fourth movement, “Colleen Bawn” is a beautiful ballad in 12/8, that resembles the folk melodies sourced in the English wind band repertoire of Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams. The percussion is tacet for the entire movement until a short, two-measure statement at the very end of the movement from the bells. The final movement is a brisk, but jovial dance in 6/8. Agility is required of each of the sections, including the tuba. Furthermore, the range in the clarinet part becomes a bit more extreme than the typical Grade IV work would require.

CHAPTER 3

TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR WIND BAND

Symphony No. 1: "Afro-American"

Year of Composition: 1930/1970
Duration: ca. 25:00
Arranger/Editor: Robert O. O'Brien
Grade Level: V
Publisher: William Grant Still Music
Original Medium: Symphony Orchestra

Instrumentation:

Flute I-II
Flute III/Piccolo
Oboe I-II/English Horn
Bassoon I-II
Eb Soprano Clarinet
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III
Bass Clarinet
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Trumpet I-II-III
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II-III
Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass
Timpani
Vibraphone
Harp
Celesta
Percussion
 Snare Drum/Bass Drum
 Crash Cymbal (small/large)
 Triangle/Gong
Tenor Banjo

Program Note:

William Grant Still (1895-1978) was undoubtedly one of the most influential African-American composers of the early 20th century. He started his musical career playing oboe in the pit orchestra of an All-Black musical, *Shuffle Along*, in 1921. His composition career started when he was awarded a scholarship to study at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in the era of Jim Crow segregation, when Oberlin was one of the few major conservatories that admitted black students. The premiere of Still's *Afro-American Symphony* in 1931 signaled one of the earliest works by an African-American composer to gain a place in the orchestral canon, and it has held up well over time. In the work's title, Still identified his race with pride, inspired by the cultural activism of the Harlem Renaissance. Prior to studying music at Oberlin, Still studied medicine at Wilberforce University and served in the Navy during World War I. Later, he moved to New York and studied composition with George Chadwick and Edgard Varèse. He then traveled to Los Angeles, where he spent his final years and died on December 3, 1978.

Still's *Symphony No. 1 "Afro-American"* met with great controversy among the press when it was first played by a major symphony. Some felt that the piece belonged with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, a jazz group that Still often played with, and others who felt that the melding of classical elements with African-American Culture was brilliant. Still wanted to "portray not the higher type of colored American, but the sons of the soil, who still retain so many of the traits peculiar to their African forebears and who have not responded completely to the transforming effect of progress."

The symphony has four movements, each of which has two different sets of titles, signaling the cultural bifurcation that defined Still's career. One version is thoroughly European: "Moderato assai," "Adagio," "Animato," and "Lento, con risoluzione," while the other, as found in one of Still's notebooks, refers to African-American history: "Longing," "Sorrow," "Humor," and "Aspiration." In the end, because Still wanted to be taken seriously as a symphony composer, he published the work with the traditional European movement titles.

Still was studying with Edgard Varèse when he wrote the First Symphony. He kept detailed notebooks with hundreds of themes, each labeled with the theme's effect. He used terms such as voodoo, lament, and spiritual. Reading these notebooks, one gets a sense that he was assimilating two cultures to come up with a symphony that made a larger than life statement.

Each movement has a separate character and the original titles "–Longing," "Sorrow," "Humor," and "Aspiration" – tell the story. The first movement opens with a haunting English horn blues solo that is then echoed in several other instruments throughout the movement. The second movement has an F major tonal center with many chromatic alternations that maintain the blues feeling. The movement works to avoid Western European music's drive to a cadence; the absence of cadences leaves the listener with a

sense of ambiguity. The third movement uses essentially two minstrel themes, with small variations that depict a joyous, hallelujah feeling. The use of the tenor banjo adds to the magic and down-home feel of the movement. It is the only movement that uses the traditional Western European drive toward cadence, so this accounts for the completeness that the listener enjoys. The final movement is full of hope. Its themes, tempo variations, and harmonies give the listener a sense of desire, expectation, and dreams.

Still selected poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906), which serve as four epigraphs in the context of longer quotations. The poems used as epigraphs for the first two movements refer to the dreams and sorrows of the former slaves. The opening stanza of "Twell de Night Is Pas'," prefacing the opening movement with its blues theme, reads:

*All de night long twell de moon goes down,
 Lovin I set at huh feet,
 Den fu 'de long jou 'ney back f'om de town,
 Ha'd, but de dreams mek it sweet.
 Still quotes the close:
 "All my life long twell de night has pas'
 Let de wo'k come ez it will,
 So dat I fin 'you, my honey, at last,
 Somewhah des ovah de hill."*

The first stanza of "W'en I Gits Home" is attached to the slow second movement, with its spiritual-like melody:

*It's moughty tiahsome layin' 'roun'
 Dis sorrer-laden erfly groun',
 An 'oftentimes I thinks, thinks I,
 'T would be a sweet t'ing des to die,
 An go long home.*

The upbeat third movement poem shows how effectively Still used the "minstrel mask" to reflect his sense of racial doubleness:

*We is gathahed hyeah, my brothahs,
 In dis howlin 'wildaness,
 Fu 'to speak some words of comfo' t'
 To each othah in distress.
 So you see de Lawd's intention,
 Evah sence de worl began,
 Was dat His almighty freedom
 Should belong to evah man,*

*But when Moses wif his powah
Comes an 'sets us chillun free,
We will praise de gracious Mastah
Dat has gin us liberty;
An 'we 'll shout ouah halleluyahs,
On dat mighty reck 'nin' day,
When we 'se reco 'nised ez citiz'—
Hun un! Chillun, let us pray!*

The final movement, with its hymn-like, modal opening, was first assigned the final stanza from Dunbar's "Ode to Ethiopia":

*Go on and up! Our souls and eyes
Shall follow thy continuous rise;
Our ears shall list thy story
From bards who from thy root shall spring,
And proudly tune their lyres to sing
Of Ethiopia's Glory.*

All printed editions of the score bear this rather better-known stanza from the same poem:

*Be proud, my Race, in mind and soul,
Thy name is writ on Glory's scroll
In characters of fire.
High 'mid the clouds of Fame's bright sky,
Thy banner's blazoned folds now fly,
And truth shall lift them higher.*

[Program note by Gerard Morris]⁶⁷

General Performance Considerations:

The *Afro-American Symphony* is one of a kind, due to the careful attention to performance practice that conductors must observe. The symphony embodies the "Blues idiom" through its melodic content, harmonies, form, and stylistic character. Of the importance of the Blues, and its unifying significance throughout the symphony, Still wrote:

⁶⁷ Wind Repertory Project, "Symphony I (Still)" (Accessed February 15, 2025), [https://www.windrep.org/Symphony_I_\(Still\)](https://www.windrep.org/Symphony_I_(Still))

I devised my own Blues theme (which appears in varied guises throughout the Symphony, as a unifying thread), planned the form, then wrote out the entire melody. After that, I worked out the harmonies, the various treatments of the time, and the orchestration. When the composition was finished, the Paul Lawrence Dunbar verses which precede each movement were added, as well as the descriptive program notes. These described it as being a musical portrait of the Afro-Americans of yesterday: their longings, sorrows, humor, and aspirations.⁶⁸

Each statement of the Blues theme that is introduced in the first movement (fig. 3.1) is treated with the eighth note swung in both the melody and accompaniment, underneath a standard twelve-bar blues harmonic progression. This occurs twice throughout the movement, in both the exposition (from mm. 7-30), as well as the recapitulation (from mm. 114-128). While not indicated in the score, the swung treatment is often recognized as a standard of performance practice:

Fig. 3.1: Primary Theme in Mvt. 1 of *Afro-American Symphony*



Additionally within the 1970 arrangement of the symphony for wind band by Robert O. O'Brien, there are copy errors that have been evaluated against the original manuscript found in the Special Collections library at the University of Arkansas, as well as the 2014 critical edition for symphony orchestra by Charles William Latshaw. Because of the timing of the creation of the wind band arrangement, it is likely that O'Brien consulted the 1970 Novello score that is currently available for rental from G. Schirmer publishing.⁶⁹ Latshaw's critical edition codifies errata derived from this score, and as a result, the following errata list for the wind band version should be consulted:

Table 3.1: Errata List for *Afro-American Symphony*

⁶⁸ "Music Research: Afro-American Symphony," n.d., box 83, folder 2, MC 1125, William Grant Still and Verna Arvey papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

⁶⁹ Charles William Latshaw, "William Grant Still's Afro-American Symphony: A Critical Edition" (DMA Diss., Indiana University, 2014), 22.

Part	Movement/Measure Number	Correction
Timpani	Mvt. 1 / m. 119	16th note after beat 3, not 8th note
Trumpet 1	Mvt. 1/ m. 125	D-flat as last note of measure
Oboe 1	Mvt. 2/ m. 48	First note enter on 1& with quarter note—C5
Alto Sax 1	Mvt. 3/m. 43 and 45	E-flat instead of E natural
Horn 1	Mvt. 4/m. 31	Beat 3& is the note B
Horn 1	Mvt. 4/m. 32	Beat 1 is the note D
Horn 1	Mvt. 4/m. 38	B-flat on downbeat
Trumpet 2	Mvt. 4/m. 35	G instead of A on beat 3
Oboes	Mvt. 4/m. 48	F double sharp on beat 3
Tuba	Mvt. 4/m. 138	Last note should be A natural
Trumpet 1	Mvt. 4/m. 197	Beat 1 is a dotted quarter note

Regarding difficulty, the adherence to style and the arrangement of string parts that are not always idiomatic for winds lead to the composition being evaluated as a Grade V work.⁷⁰ In many cases, the violin parts are voiced in the clarinets, viola parts to the saxophone, cello parts to the euphonium, and bass parts to the tuba. However, it should be noted that Still's writing for winds was quite proficient and idiomatic, even within the symphonic works. Notable technical challenges include alignment in the fast section of the first movement (mm. 74-104), third movement in its entirety, the end of the fourth movement (mm. 126-end), and range and intonation in slow sections throughout the

⁷⁰ Erik Kar Jun Leung's *The Horizon Leans Forward* lists Still's *Afro-American Symphony* as a Grade V work for band. This is the only known assessment of the difficulty level of the wind band transcription; Erik Kar Jun Leung, *The Horizon Leans Forward: Stories of Courage, Strength, and Triumph of Underrepresented Communities in the Wind Band Field* (Illinois: GIA Publications, Inc., 2021), 486-487.

symphony. The third movement, “Humor” is available for stand-alone performance, titled *Scherzo for Band*. Like the rest of the Symphony, due to advanced orchestration and recurring technical challenges, this movement should also be evaluated as a Grade V work.

Finally, a historically-informed performance of the symphony for wind band calls for the celesta, harp, and tenor banjo. While the celesta and tenor banjo are only used for one movement (movements one and three, respectively), these instruments add a distinct color to the symphony. In lieu of either instrument, the celesta part can be adapted and covered by the vibraphone with the possibility of using a harder mallet in order to resemble the timbre of a celesta. Furthermore, the tenor banjo can be omitted, as the part purely serves an accompanying role and is not a feature instrument in the third movement. However, the harp part is essential to the symphony, containing many moments of solo playing. If a harp is unable to be used, one should prioritize the substitution of these parts with piano.

“Entrance of the Porteuses” from *La Guigabbesse*

Year of Composition: ca. 1926/2012/2020

Duration: ca. 1:40

Arranger/Editor: Dana Paul Perna/ed. Tom Lloyd

Grade Level: IV

Publisher: William Grant Still Music

Original Medium: Ballet

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute I-II
Oboe I-II
English Horn
Bassoon I-II
Eb Soprano Clarinet
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III
Alto Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Trumpet I-II-III
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass
Timpani
Percussion
 Snare Drum
 Bass Drum
 Suspended Cymbals
 Xylophone
 Vibraphone
Harp (*optional*)
Piano (*optional*)

Program Note:

Completed in 1926, the ballet *La Guiablesse* was the first major commission (for an original score) William Grant Still received, which came by way of Ruth Page, supported by Adolph Bolt and Chicago Allied Arts. The story is set on the island of Martinique. Its central character, La Guiablesse (The Devil Woman), is an evil spirit who, in the guise of a beautiful woman, lures men to their death. It was produced in 1933 at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, also in Chicago; later it was produced thrice in a single season (1934) by the Chicago Grand Opera Company. Before writing it, Still studied West Indian and Creole musical material, but finally determined to create his own themes as being truer to the scene and mood. For the ballet's premiere production, Ruth Page invited Katherine Dunham to join her company at the Chicago Grand Opera Company, and remained to train the members of the ballet at the opera.

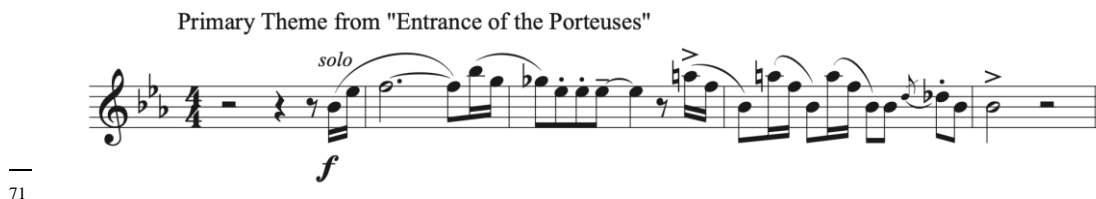
"Entrance of the Porteuses" is a short excerpt from the ballet that was arranged for band by Dana Paul Perna in 2012 and edited by Tom Lloyd in 2020. The Porteuses, whose entrance this music underscores, are basket carriers, hence the reason the tempo for the dance is marked at not too fast a tempo.

[Program note by Verna Arvey and Dana Paul Perna, edited by Grant Knox]⁷¹

General Performance Considerations:

"Entrance of the Porteuses" is a short, musical intermezzo with two statements that is best evaluated as an accessible Grade IV work for band. The primary theme is introduced by the solo clarinet in measure five (in the same role as the original orchestral version). This disjunct motive is stated again with the flutes, oboe, and second clarinet joining at letter D. The intervallic leaps in this motive present a challenge for novice woodwind players, and should be considered when programming or preparing this work.

Fig. 3.2: Primary Theme in "Entrance of the Porteuses"



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Catherine Parsons Smith (University of California Press, 2000), 325.

With the 2020 edits made by Tom Lloyd, the parts for less-than-common instruments are able to be covered in their absence.⁷² While instrumentation and the retention of Still's original compositional intent is of most importance in many of the wind band transcriptions, special consideration has been made for this transcription. The arranger makes the following recommendations for ensembles without full instrumentation:

- 1) There is a substitute B-flat clarinet part that covers the E-flat clarinet part (available in the set of parts from William Grant Still Music).
- 2) If only one bassoonist is available, they may be better served by playing bassoon 2.
- 3) The English horn part is non-essential.
- 4) If the lower-end of the ensemble needs reinforcement, tubas have been supplied cues throughout for other low brass/woodwind parts.
- 5) The harp part is optional

⁷² Cross-cues and other provisions have been made for the following instruments: english horn, e-flat clarinet, alto clarinet, bassoons, full french horn section, and string bass.

Songs of Separation

Year of Composition: 1945/ca. 2012

Duration: ca. 8:00

Arranger/Editor: Scott A. Silbert

Grade Level: V

Publisher: Unpublished/Not Available for Purchase

Original Medium: Solo Voice and Piano

Instrumentation:

Solo Voice
Piccolo
Flute I-II-III
Oboe I-II
English Horn
Bassoon
Eb Soprano Clarinet
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III
Bass Clarinet
Contra-Alto Clarinet
Soprano Saxophone
Alto Saxophone
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Trumpet I-II-III
French Horn I-II (with *divisi*)
Trombone I-II-III
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass
Harp
Glockenspiel
Vibraphone
Triangle

Program Note:

Born in Mississippi in 1895 and raised in Arkansas, William Grant Still (1895-1978) was a gifted musician who took formal violin lessons and taught himself to play clarinet, saxophone, oboe, viola, cello, and double bass. Despite his interest in music, his mother advised him to study medicine in college because she wanted him to have a secure future and not one that could be filled with the uncertainties that come alone with being a musician.

Still was a leading figure in the Harlem Renaissance and earned the nickname "The Dean of Afro-American Composers," a title bestowed upon him by being awarded with several firsts among African American Composers. These firsts include being the first African American composer to have an opera produced by the New York City Opera *Troubled Island* (1949), first symphony, *Afro-American Symphony* (1930), and the first African American to conduct an orchestra in the deep south, the New Orleans Philharmonic Orchestra (1955).

Still was enamored with the voice. He composed over nine operas, several choral compositions, solo songs, as well as arrangements for spirituals, the largest one being the song "Here's One" (1941). According to research by Orin Moe, a leading scholar on the music of Still, *Songs of Separation* (1949), is Still's most popular song cycle. This song cycle consists of five songs by five different poets: Arna Bontemps (*Idolatry*), Phillipe Thoby Marcelin (*Poème*, a French song), Paul Lawrence Dunbar (*Parted*), Countee Cullen (*If You Should Go*), and Langston Hughes (*Black Pierrot*); all are African American except for Marcelin, who is Haitian. All the poets were also leading figures during the Harlem Renaissance except for Dunbar.

[Program note by Michael Preacely]⁷³

General Performance Considerations:

William Grant Still's *Songs of Separation* is a song cycle that was originally composed in 1945 for solo voice and piano. As is the case with other transcriptions in this study, Still arranged the song cycle for a variety of media, including one for full orchestra with which this band arrangement is based on. The music and is set to the poems of five Black poets, and like many of his works, was intended to pay homage to the music of Black Americans and the poetry of Black writers.⁷⁴

I. *Idolatry* (by Arna Bontemps)

II. *Poème* (or "Poème," by Phillipe Thoby Marcelin)

⁷³ Michael Preacely, "A Musical Analysis of William Grant Still's *Songs of Separation*: The Chamber Arrangement" (DMA Diss., University of Kentucky, 2021), 65-67.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

- III. Parted (by Paul Lawrence Dunbar)
- IV. If You Should Go (by Countee Cullen)
- V. A Black Pierrot (by Langston Hughes)

An extensive analysis of each movement with special consideration to the relationship between text and music can be found in Michael Preacely's "A Music Analysis of William Grant Still's *Songs of Separation*." With regard to the band arrangement by Scott A. Silbert, conductors should be mindful of the textural challenges that come with combining voice with large ensemble. Additionally, Still offers a nuanced approach to convey the overarching theme of "separation," as allusion and metaphor with regard to the plight of the African-American cultural heritage. Orin Moe speaks to this covert expression, arriving at the following conclusions:

- (1) The work as a whole is organized as a series of choruses (the use of this term is deliberate) on an initial group of ideas, a procedure similar to jazz.
- (2) The musical rhythm is often syncopated against the poetic rhythm, particularly in the metrically conservative poems. Again this suggests jazz.
- (3) The harmonic language is compatible with blues or jazz: seventh and ninth chords; chords of the added second; alternation between major and minor thirds, etc.
- (4) The cycle as a whole is strongly pointed towards "A Black Pierrot," a poem obviously in blues style and a song which uses elements of jazz.⁷⁵

It is recommended that conductors and performers reference the 2012 recording by the United States Navy Band under the direction of Captain Brian Walden for the most authentic performance practice. The arranger, Scott Silbert spoke about the approach in the transcription, indication that the work primarily features woodwinds and french horns, with limited presence of the brass. This allows for "the etherealness in his writing" to take the lead, in addition to listeners being able to "swim in the chords underneath the solo voice."⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Orin Moe, "William Grant Still: Songs of Separation," 19-20.

⁷⁶ Grant Knox, phone call with Scott Silbert, February 28, 2025.

Kaintuck'

Year of Composition: 1935/2013

Duration: ca. 10:45

Arranger/Editor: Dana Paul Perna

Grade Level: V

Publisher: William Grant Still Music (2013)

Original Medium: Piano and Symphony Orchestra

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute I-II
Oboe I-II
English Horn
Bassoon I-II
Eb Soprano Clarinet
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III
Alto Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
Soprano Saxophone
Alto Saxophone
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Cornet I-II-III
Bb Trumpet I-II
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass
Timpani
Vibraphone/Chimes/Bells
Piano [solo]
Percussion

Fig 3.4: Primary Motive (B Section) in *Kaintuck*'

The image shows a musical score for the Primary Motive of the B Section (mm. 113-120) in *Kaintuck*'. The score is written on a single staff in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music begins with a **L** (Lento) marking in a box. The tempo is marked *solo*. The dynamics are marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) with the instruction *singing sweetly*. The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with a triplet of eighth notes in the fifth measure. The piece concludes with a whole note chord.

In terms of technical rigor, the wind parts are not difficult in a traditional sense (i.e.: rhythmic involvement). While there is no known grade level attribution for the wind band transcription, the work is best attributed a Grade V difficulty due to the difficulty of the solo piano, and the complexity of harmonic language throughout. The frequent accidentals and enharmonic spellings for each instrument call for an advanced level of dexterity among all players. Furthermore, the sensitivity required in a concerto to balance between large ensemble and solo instrument suggests that advanced/professional players perform the composition.

“Summerland” from *Three Visions*

Year of Composition: 1937/2013
Duration: ca. 5:30
Arranger/Editor: Dane Teter
Grade Level: IV
Publisher: William Grant Still Music
Original Medium: Solo Piano

Instrumentation:

Flute I-II-III
Oboe I-II
Eb Soprano Clarinet
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III
Alto Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon I-II
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Cornet I-II-III
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II-III
Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass
Timpani
Harp

Program Note:

William Grant Still's "Summerland" was composed in 1936 as the second movement of a piano work entitled *Three Visions*. Later, Still prepared several additional versions of the slow movement, including arrangements for small orchestra; violin and piano; full orchestra; a version for flute, violin, viola, cello, and harp; a two-piano version; and this version for band that was posthumously arranged by Dane Teter (2013). Still also used "Summerland" as part of his incidental music for *The Prince and the Mermaid*, a play by Carol Stone (1965).

William Grant Still was always a spiritual man. Many of his works following the premiere of *Kaintuck* in February, 1935 were inscribed with a phrase that would become his trademark: "With humble thanks to God, the source of inspiration."⁷⁹ This spirituality is on full display throughout *Three Visions*; his concept of the afterlife. Accomplished pianist, writer, and Still's wife, Verna Arvey premiered the work initially its original solo piano format, and she later referred to "Summerland" as "a portrait of promised beauty in the afterlife."⁸⁰

[Program note by William S. Carson, edited by Grant Knox]

General Performance Considerations:

An extensive analysis and teacher resource guide of the band transcription for "Summerland" can be found in Volume 9 of the *Teaching Music through Performance in Band* series (pp. 416-424), contributed by William Carson.⁸¹ Generally speaking, Still's "Summerland" makes for a beautiful soundscape that is of a particular Impressionistic quality. The composition is through-composed, remaining in 6/8 for the entirety of the work, containing two key changes (moving away from the original key of G-flat major to B-flat minor, then returning to G-flat major). Overall, the work calls for sensitive playing and careful subdivision to ensure cohesion across the sparse textural moments.

The recurring flute solo throughout provides ensembles the opportunity to showcase a stronger musician, while the rest of the ensemble maintains an accompaniment-like role throughout. While the composition's sparse texture and unusual timbral pairings make for an atypical Grade IV work for band, it is not overly challenging from an individual technique standpoint. Conductors should be mindful of the harp part, as it is essential to filling out the texture. If a harp player is not available, one can make adaptations to cover the part on piano. But the part itself is critical. This is evident in figure 3.5:

⁷⁹ Still et al., *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*, 30.

⁸⁰ William S. Carson, "Summerland" in *Teaching Music through Performance in Band 9*, edit. & comp. by Richard Miles (GIA Publications, 2013), 417.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 416-424.

Fig 3.5: Harp Solo in “Summerland” from *Three Visions*



Finally, conductors should be mindful of the fact that there are no percussion parts. As a result, when programming “Summerland,” conductors and artistic directors should provide additional repertoire that features the rest of the winds and percussion sections. This approach is demonstrated in Appendix C: “Programming Examples for Grade IV Band.”

“Land of Superstition” from *Africa*

Year of Composition: 1930/2015
Duration: ca. 8:00
Arranger/Editor: Kevin Tam
Grade Level: V
Publisher: William Grant Still Music
Original Medium: Symphony Orchestra

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute I-II-III
Oboe I-II
English Horn
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III
Alto Clarinet
Bass Clarinet I
Bassoon I-II
Contrabassoon
Soprano Saxophone
Alto Saxophone I-II (Alto I doubling Soprano)
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Trumpet I-II-III
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II-III
Euphonium
Tuba
String Bass
Percussion I-II-III
 Snare Drum
 Bass Drum
 Toms
 Suspended Cymbal
 Crash Cymbals
 Woodblock
 Gong
 Gourd
 Bells
 Xylophone
 Vibraphone
 Marimba
Timpani

Harp (cross cued in mallet percussion parts)
Piano

Program Note:

On the condensed autograph score for his 1930 symphonic suite, *Africa*, William Grant Still wrote: “An American Negro has formed a concept of the land of his ancestors, based largely on its folklore, and influence by his contact with American civilization. He holds in his mind’s eye not the Africa of reality, but an Africa mirrored in fancy, and radiantly ideal.”⁸² The work, viewed as a tone poem by some critics, has an unmistakable programmatic character, as the narrative of an idealized African continent resonates through each of the three movements.

The final movement, “Land of Superstition” was arranged for concert band in 2015 by Kevin Tam. On the movement’s programmatic features, Verna Arvey describes the two forms of superstition that are personified: “that of the pagan African and that of the followers of Mohammed.”⁸³ There’s an undertone of darkness that is conveyed through chromatic and disjunct melodic line and a ritualistic pulse that teases listeners with the oxymoronic sense of a familiar exoticism.

[Program note by Grant Knox]

General Performance Considerations:

Still’s “Land of Superstition” is the third movement from his 1930 symphonic suite, *Africa*. The work is punctuated with a climatic ending which should be felt in continuation of the previous two movements from the original orchestral composition. Like many of Still’s works, the primary theme creates melodic and rhythmic content in multiple variations throughout the work.

The primary theme (figure 3.6) is stated initially in the primary key area of E-flat major, then heard in the secondary key area of A-flat major at measure 15. Still also moves through the key of G-minor during the Moderato section (mm. 56-132). Here, the tempo picks up (quarter note = 112) representing the ritualistic nature of pagan African imagery Still intended to evoke.

⁸² Still et al., *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*, 45.

⁸³ Verna Arvey, “William Grant Still” in *William Grant Still: A Study in Contradictions*, 317.

Fig 3.6: Primary Theme from “Land of Superstition”



There are moments of the work that lend well to a Grade IV assessment, however like many of the other original works and transcriptions in this study, there are other notable sections where range and technical rigor increases. Furthermore, the moderately large instrumentation, expansive percussion list, and harp/piano involvement suggests that the composition is best evaluated as a Grade V work, intended for advanced-professional ensembles.

Choreographic Prelude for Band

Year of Composition: 1970/2019
Duration: ca. 5:00
Arranger/Editor: Tom Lloyd
Grade Level: V
Publisher: William Grant Still Music
Original Medium: Symphony Orchestra

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute I-II
Oboe I-II
Bassoon I-II
Eb Soprano Clarinet
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III-IV
Bass Clarinet
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Trumpet I-II-III
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II
Euphonium I-II
Tuba
Timpani
Harp
Percussion
 Snare Drum
 Conga
 Suspended Cymbal
 Tambourine

Program Note:

Written in 1970, *Choreographic Prelude* was William Grant Still's last major work for orchestra. The work premiered at the Los Angeles County Museum with Still as conductor. Of the work, Robert Bartlett Haas stated, "A longtime idea of Still's, works out a percussive theme. There are no lyrical passages, only an exciting and rhythmic dithyramb and striking finale."⁸⁴

In 2019, Tom Lloyd arranged the work for wind band.

[Program note by Grant Knox]

General Performance Considerations:

The information provided for Still's *Choreographic Prelude* is inconclusive due to a lack of access to the score. At the time of this study, William Grant Still Music only offers the purchase of the work as a complete score and parts set for \$135.00.⁸⁵ As a result, there is no known analysis of the original orchestral work or the wind band transcription.

The Wind Repertory Project lists this composition as a Grade V, and provides an instrumentation list.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Haas, *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, 273.

⁸⁵ William Grant Still Music. "Works for Band and Brass Ensemble." Accessed January 18, 2025.
<http://www.williamgrantstillmusic.com/WorksforBand.htm>.

⁸⁶ Wind Repertory Project, "Choreographic Prelude" (Accessed March 10, 2025),
https://www.windrep.org/Choreographic_Prelude.

“Whippoorwill’s Shoes” from *Wood Notes*

Year of Composition: 1948/2022

Duration: ca. 2:30

Arranger/Editor: Stan Mauldin

Grade Level: IV

Publisher: Unpublished/Not Available for Purchase

Original Medium: Symphony Orchestra

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute I-II
Oboe I-II
Bassoon I-II
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III
Bass Clarinet
Soprano Saxophone
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Trumpet I-II-III
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II
Euphonium
Tuba
Timpani
Percussion
 Snare Drum
 Bass Drum
 Suspended Cymbals
 Triangle
 Bells
 Vibraphone
 Xylophone

Program Note:

Wood Notes is a pastoral orchestral suite inspired by the natural beauty of the American South and the poetry of Joseph Mitchell Pilcher, a poet and social worker living in Alabama. As Still wrote in the program for the 1948 premiere by Artur Rodziński and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, “Wood Notes has a social significance because it is a collaboration between a Southern white man and a Southern-born Negro composer, in which both of the participants were enthused over the project.” Still also chose to dedicate the suite to his composition professor at Oberlin Conservatory, F.J. Lehmann.

“Whippoorwill’s Shoes” is the fourth movement of the suite, written in a playful and dance-like style. Arranged for wind band in 2022 by Stan Mauldin, this short finale makes for a great interlude in any program for a young wind band.

[Program note by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, edited by Grant Knox]⁸⁷

General Performance Considerations:

At the time of this study, this movement of Still’s *Wood Notes* is the only movement to be arranged for wind band. In his 2022 arrangement, Stan Mauldin has made this movement accessible for younger bands. The movements is fairly straightforward and tonal, with the primary challenges to the musicians being the sixteenth note runs and maintaining stylistic continuity among the motives that are passed between instruments. However, the sixteenth note runs are primarily diatonic, lending to easier access than the notation would suggest on the surface.

The movement is in C major, with moments of chromatic development that lend to the pastoral soundscape of the entire suite. Still marks the tempo at 104 beats per minute, giving ample room for moderately proficient musicians to play the sixteenth note runs successfully. It should also be noted that the percussion involvement is very limited, lending well to groups who are short in numbers. “Whippoorwill’s Shoes” has been submitted and approval for the Texas UIL Performing list and has been selected as a grade IV work. Per the arranger, the movement will go onto the UIL list on September 1, 2025.

⁸⁷ Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, “‘Singing River’ from *Wood Notes*” (Accessed March, 10, 2025), <https://www.hollywoodbowl.com/musicdb/pieces/6034/singing-river-from-wood-notes>

In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy

Year of Composition: 1943/2022

Duration: ca. 7:30

Arranger/Editor: Robert Truan

Grade Level: V

Publisher: Unpublished/Not Available for Purchase

Original Medium: Symphony Orchestra

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute I-II
Oboe I-II
English Horn
Bassoon I-II
Eb Soprano Clarinet
Bb Soprano Clarinet I-II-III-IV
Bass Clarinet I-II
Eb Contralto Clarinet
Bb Contrabass Clarinet
Contrabassoon
Soprano Saxophone
Alto Saxophone I-II
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bb Cornet I-II-III
Bb Trumpet I-II (with *divisi*)
French Horn I-II-III-IV
Trombone I-II
Bass Trombone
Euphonium I-II
Tuba I-II
Timpani
Marimba
Harp
Percussion
 Snare Drum
 Bass Drum
 Crash Cymbal

Chimes

Program Note:

William Grant Still's 1943 symphonic poem *In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy* was one of seventeen works commissioned by the League of Composers and premiered by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra on January 5, 1944. The work's initial reception was positive, with sources citing that it had been given the distinction of being the most successful of the seventeen patriotic works originally commissioned.

As part of a 1943 *New York Times* column written by Olin Downes, William Grant Still said this of his composition: "When you suggested that I compose something patriotic, there immediately flashed through my mind the press release which announced that the first American soldier to be killed in World War II was a Negro soldier. Then my thoughts turned to the colored soldiers all over the world, fighting under our flag and under the flags of countries allied with us. Our civilization has known no greater patriotism, no greater loyalty than that shown by the colored men who fight and die for democracy. Those who return will, I hope, come back to a better world. I also hope that our tribute to those who die will be to make the democracy for which they fought greater and broader than it has ever been before."⁸⁸

Robert Truan's 2022 transcription for wind band retains all of the fanfare and elegiac character of the original symphonic work, offering a diverse perspective of American patriotic music.

[program note by Grant Knox]

General Performance Considerations:

Still's *In Memoriam* is a tone poem with thematic material tied together by a recurring fanfare (first stated in the opening seven measures and shown below). It's character resembles that of the greatest symphonic elegies, alternating spiritual-like melodies with a patriotic fanfare paying homage to Black soldiers throughout history who have died for the preservation of democracy. On the composition's form, William Grant Still writes, "In this composition I have employed a rondo form, varying it by using a fanfare to bind together the three themes employed. This fanfare is heard at the beginning of the composition, followed by the principal theme stated by the English horn. Variations of the fanfare precede the second subject and the brief third subject. The latter is followed

⁸⁸" Music Research: *In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy*," n.d., box 83, folder 31, MC 1125, William Grant Still and Verna Arvey papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

by a development based on the fanfare motif which leads to the recapitulation and coda.”⁸⁹

Fig 3.7: Motif “A”: Fanfare from *In Memoriam*



The wind band transcription by Robert Truan was completed in 2022, and per the transcriber remains unpublished and unavailable for performance. The transcription retains the original key of Bb minor throughout, and due to its expansive instrumentation, notational complexity through enharmonic spellings, and deceptive technical challenges, the work can be evaluated as a Grade V work for wind band.⁹⁰ Additionally, the percussion involvement is minimal (retaining the same texture as the original work for orchestra), and should be considered in the programming of this work alongside others.

⁸⁹“ Music Research: In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy,” n.d., box 83, folder 31, MC 1125, William Grant Still and Verna Arvey papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

⁹⁰ The English horn and harp parts are critical, but are cross cued in the absence of those instruments.

CHAPTER 4

OMISSIONS FROM CATALOG

As a result of the fluid nature of growing an artists catalog through arrangements and transcriptions, it's easy for a catalog to quickly become outdated. Moreover, these databases don't directly account for the performance discrepancy between ensembles that have wind instruments, and the wind ensemble as defined by Frederick Fennell and his mid-century contemporaries. From the list of wind band works found on William Grant Still Music's website and the Wind Repertory Project, there are a number of works that do not meet the criteria considered in this study. The database of "Band and Brass Ensemble" repertoire on William Grant Still Music encompasses both chamber and full ensemble repertoire for winds.⁹¹ Furthermore, due to the aforementioned growing and fluid nature of repertory contributions, some works that have been created are not (and potentially will never be) published. Table 4.1 denotes the list of non-duplicative works from William Grant Still Music that were not cataloged in this study, due to the original medium or arrangement not being written for full wind band.

⁹¹ William Grant Still Music, "Works for Band and Brass Ensemble" (Accessed January 18, 2025), <http://www.williamgrantstillmusic.com/WorksforBand.htm>.

Table 4.1: List of omitted titles from William Grant Still Music

Title	Original Medium	Arranger/Editor
"The Crowdad Song" from <i>Little Folk Suite #4</i>	String Quartet	Tom Lloyd
<i>Fanfare for American War Heroes</i>	Symphony Orchestra	Tom Lloyd
<i>Fanfare for the 99th Fighter Squadron</i>	Brass and Percussion	Tom Lloyd
<i>Frisco Jazz Band Blues</i>	Miscellaneous Chamber Winds and Drums/Piano	William Grant Still
<i>Hesitating Blues</i>	Big Band	William Grant Still
Brass Quintet Arrangements of Still	Various	Don Wold
<i>Little Folk Suite from the Western Hemisphere</i>	Brass Quintet	William Grant Still/Tom Lloyd

Between 1943 and 1945, William Grant Still composed two fanfares that resemble other patriotic works written around the same time such as *To You, America!* (1943) and *In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy* (1951). These two fanfares are brief in duration, but are consistently present in catalogs of Still’s music. *Fanfare for American War Heroes* was written for symphony orchestra, and according to William Grant Still Music, later arranged for concert band. However, due to the large collection of music that the company circulates, it does not appear that the arrangement for concert band is available or possessed by anyone else.⁹² Additionally, Still’s 1945 work *Fanfare for the 99th Fighter Squadron* (also known as *Chamber Music for Brass and Percussion*) is available, and has been omitted from this study for the sole reason of

⁹² An order for the score was placed on May 4, 2024 (along with four other scores), and not received until September 2024. The original version for symphony orchestra was received, but no evidence of the concert band arrangement has been encountered since.

being deemed chamber music.⁹³ While there is no issue with others deeming this to be a work for wind band, for the consistency of this study it has been omitted.

In addition to William Grant Still Music, the open-source website database Wind Repertory Project lists works without much discrimination of Still’s authorship or the genre of the work itself. For example, it lists Florence Price’s *Dances in the Canebrakes* and W.C. Handy’s *Hesitating Blues* as works for winds that were orchestrated or arranged by William Grant Still.⁹⁴ These works were omitted from the catalog for the fact that Still did not arrange them for band, but rather for orchestra and big band. It should be noted, however, that *Dances in the Canebrakes* was transcribed for wind band by Darrell Brown. The complete list of works from the Wind Repertory Project database that have been omitted in this survey are listed below in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: List of omitted titles from Wind Repertory Project

Title	Original Medium	Arranger/Editor
<i>Dances in the Canebrakes</i>	Symphony Orchestra	William Grant Still/Darrell Brown
<i>Fanfare for American War Heroes</i>	Symphony Orchestra	Tom Lloyd
<i>Fanfare for the 99th Fighter Squadron</i>	Symphony Orchestra	Tom Lloyd
<i>Frisco Jazz Band Blues</i>	Miscellaneous Chamber Winds and Drums/Piano	William Grant Still
<i>The Hesitating Blues</i>	Big Band	William Grant Still

⁹³ Still et al., *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*, 92.

⁹⁴ Wind Repertory Project, “William Grant Still.”

"Land of Peace" from <i>Africa</i>	Symphony Orchestra	Unknown
<i>Little Folk Suite from the Western Hemisphere</i>	Brass Quintet	William Grant Still/Tom Lloyd
<i>Miniatures</i>	Trio (Flute, Oboe, and Piano)	Adam Lesnick
<i>Scherzo for Band</i>	Symphony Orchestra	William Grant Still

A few other works that were omitted from the catalog include Still's *Scherzo for Band*, *Frisco Jazz Band Blues*, *Miniatures*, and *Little Folk Suite from the Western Hemisphere*. Each of these works were original compositions by Still and are listed on either or both of the "works for winds" lists from William Grant Still Music and Wind Repertory Project. As denoted in Chapter 3, the *Scherzo for Band* is the third movement of Still's first symphony, published as a stand-alone work. Here, the omission is simply the result of preventing redundancies. Regarding the other four works, each composition and/or its corresponding arrangement is only available for miscellaneous chamber winds, rather than the full wind ensemble. Similar to the reasoning for omitting *Fanfare for the 99th Fighter Squadron*, these works are valuable contributions to Still's overall body of work, but not necessary to include in a survey of his works for the wind band. It should be acknowledged that the efforts made in this study are not entirely conclusive, but the best result of the allotted resources and limited ability to communicate with living people, many of whom engaged with Still's music long ago and did not seek publication or shared engagement with their contributions.

CHAPTER 5

PROGRAMMING STILL'S MUSIC

In the Afterword of *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, Robert Bartlett Haas offers a programming guide for the music of William Grant Still based on genre. The idea here, in 1972 (the year this text was published), was to “assist programmers in the future by suggesting a number of feasible programs for sampling the work of William Grant Still.”⁹⁵ This guide was initially put forward as a proposal for a Festival of the Works of William Grant Still to commemorate Still’s seventy-fifth birthday (1970). However, as Still’s health deteriorated leading up to his death in 1978, and artistic plans changed among Still’s collaborators, such a festival has yet to happen on the grandiose scale it was intended. It is a small aim of this document to contribute to the presence of Still’s wind band music, should such a festival occur. Moreover, as practitioners within the wind band medium learn more about composers from underrepresented backgrounds as the result of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, it is my hope that such conductors and performers be equipped with the resources to seek out Still’s music and perform it with historical and cultural authenticity.

Achieving an authentic performance practice of dated works presents a challenge for the modern wind band, regardless of the research and scholarship available for that composer’s work. Even with wind band composers whose manuscripts and other archival materials have undergone significant examination, it remains that the modern conductor and performer must be well-informed on the composers intent in order to fully achieve an

⁹⁵ Haas, *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, 266.

authentic performance.⁹⁶ With regard to the music of William Grant Still, the previously alluded to archival collections at the University of Arkansas and Duke University offer modern scholars and performers a clear insight into his compositional intent. Still wrote profusely on various topics that directly influenced his approach to music and composition, including (but not limited to) racial identity in the United States, the landscape of American classical music, generational trends of music composition, and the role of spirituality on his compositions.

When scholars and performers seek to amplify a composer from an underrepresented background, the default reception is to evaluate the aspect of their identity that makes them underrepresented before their art itself. This can be useful in understanding that artists' aesthetic approach, but also can present problems when the art itself is not given equitable evaluation. During his lifetime, William Grant Still understood this dichotomy, and offered ample spoken and written perspectives on racial identity and the music itself. In a 1967 speech for the National Association of Negro Musicians, William Grant Still spoke about his compositional approach stating, "Once having decided upon which themes to use, I then go on to planning the form of the new composition. My usual practice is to map out a plan which conforms loosely to the established rules of musical form, and then to deviate from it as I see fit. This method serves as a stimulant to invention and inspiration."⁹⁷ Throughout this speech, Still identifies "invention" as a key tool for determining composer ingenuity, particularly as it

⁹⁶ See prominent figures in the wind band repertoire such as John Philip Sousa, Percy Aldridge Grainger, John Mackey, etc. who's compositions typically entail detailed and specific performance instructions in order to achieve authenticity.

⁹⁷ "How Do You Go About The Business of Composing Music," Aug. 17, 1967, box 70, folder 29, William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers, MC 1125, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

relates to melodic creation and formal organization. Because of this, when preparing a performance of William Grant Still's music, one should consider melodic content and form/structure with the highest priority.

William Grant Still also wrote abundantly on the effect of race and religion on his music. Eileen Southern speaks to the role of the African diaspora in Black American composers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century:

Almost the entire first generation of post-slavery Black composers—i.e., those born after 1863—may be regarded as nationalists in the sense that they consciously turned to the folk music of their people as a source of inspiration for their compositions, whether in the fields of concert music, show music, or dance and entertainment music.⁹⁸

She later elaborates, stating that Black concert artists who “achieved distinction during the Harlem Renaissance” became “race symbols, whose successes were shared vicariously by the great mass of Black Americans that could never hope to attain similar distinction.”⁹⁹ William Grant Still certainly felt this weight with each composition.

Particularly with the use of Black musical idioms such as the blues, spirituals, and other folk music, Still paid careful attention to the authenticity of his work in this regard:

While my own study of African music has not been inclusive enough to enable me to speak with complete authority, I can still give you some impressions of it. Its strong points are infectious rhythms and melodies that are in many cases both memorable and pleasing. It demonstrates a most unusual rhythmic sense on the part of its creators and contains some striking examples of rhythmic counterpoint...the entire religious, social, and economic life of the African people is embedded in their song and dance.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans A History (Third Edition)* (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997), 268.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 409.

¹⁰⁰ “African Influences On American Music, with Verna Arvey” Feb 17, 1960, Box 70, Folder 4, William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers, MC 1125, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

With regard to religion and faith, William Grant Still often spoke about his spirituality and its effect on his compositional approach:

Composing needs what I may call inspiration—not the mood of a moment, but the permanent breath of life, emanating from the Life Source [*sic*] itself. No amount of technique can make up for this God-given sense of life. Somewhere in his nature, the real composer *must* have a spiritual quality which enables him to come close to God. At the end of my works, I always write, “With humble thanks to God, the source of inspiration.”¹⁰¹

As far as the performance of William Grant Still’s music at the primary and secondary educational levels (Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade), it is important to speak to the presence of each work on state prescribed music lists. These lists are designed to offer school ensembles a consistent body of repertoire to perform at adjudicated events, verified by fellow wind band professionals. Given that a large component of school large ensemble education in the United States is the performance at these adjudicated festivals, it only follows that this study identifies the works that currently appear on state music lists. As it stands, only four of William Grant Still’s works exist on state prescribed music lists. Each of the four are original works by Still, reinforcing the recency and secondary nature of interest in transcriptions of his works for other mediums. Still’s 1945 original composition for wind band *From the Delta* appears on the University Interscholastic League’s (Texas) Prescribed Music List as a Grade IV work.¹⁰² The Tennessee Bandmasters Association lists Still’s *Little Red Schoolhouse* and *To You, America!* as Grade V works.¹⁰³ *Little Red Schoolhouse* also makes an appearance

¹⁰¹ Steven West, “The Composer Needs Determination and Faith.” *Etude* 67, no. 1 (1949), 8.

¹⁰² University Interscholastic League, “2024-2025 Prescribed Music List” (accessed January 18, 2025), <https://www.uil texas.org/pml/>

¹⁰³ Tennessee Bandmasters Association, “TBA Tennessee State Music List - Concert Band” (accessed January 18, 2025), <https://tennesseebandmasters.org/concert-band/>.

on the Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association's (ASBOA) Required Music List for Concert Bands, where it is listed as a Grade IV work.¹⁰⁴ Finally, Still's *Folk Suite for Band* is listed on the West Virginia Graded Music List as a Grade IV composition.¹⁰⁵

One of the great challenges with programming music from composers of diverse backgrounds is the effort to perform their music with respectful representation without tokenism. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "tokenism" as "the practice or policy of making merely a token effort or granting only minimal concessions, especially to minority or marginalized groups."¹⁰⁶ In wind band performance practice, this can include only programming William Grant Still's music in the month of February for Black History Month, or among other Black composers solely for their racial/ethnic backgrounds (rather than artistic merits). There can be benefits to amplifying Black composers while being mindful of race as a leading factor, in the case of William Grant Still where he was a pioneer for fusing Black musical idioms in the classical/symphonic space. However, as this study has explored, Still's compositions span a wide range of subject matter, musical styles, and genres. The conductor or artistic director should consider Still as a great *American* composer, just as much as his contributions as a Black composer are valued. The appendix of this study includes examples of programming that aim to pair Still's music with other diverse works in the wind band medium on the basis of artistic merit.

¹⁰⁴ Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association, "Required Music List - Concert Band" (accessed January 18, 2025), <https://asboa.org/asboa-music-lists/>.

¹⁰⁵ "West Virginia Graded Music List" (accessed January 18, 2025), <https://wrjenks74.wixsite.com/wygradedmusiclist/graded-music-list>.

¹⁰⁶ Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "tokenism (n.)," June 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1912693323>.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The literature on William Grant Still offers a necessary insight into his compositional style and the reception of each of these works in their original form. Without the contributions of Verna Arvey, Judith Anne Still, Eileen Southern, Catherine Parsons Smith, Gayle Murchison, Myron Moss, and William Grant Still himself, modern practitioners would not have nearly the amount of insight that has been currently afforded. Moreover, because of the work of these scholars, we are able to arrive at a more authentic reception and performance practice of these works as they are being discovered and reimagined within the wind band medium.

With that said, there remains a great deal of potential for additional scholarship, performance, and critical evaluation of William Grant Still's music beyond this study. As stated before, Still is objectively one of the most prolific American composers of the twentieth century, and because of this, interest in his life and music will only continue to grow as his music is made available across genres. Eight of the sixteen works in this study were made available for the wind band after Still's death in 1978, with each of them being generated in the last fifteen years. There is room for additional arrangements to be created of Still's other symphonic, chamber, and solo works for the wind band. Given that none of Still's original band works, or arrangements done by others are accessible for young bands, those interested in arranging Still's music should seek opportunities to adapt the music for Grade I to III ensemble. With the increasing interest in Still's music, however, comes the responsibility of amplifying Still's music in an

artistically responsible, and historically authentic way. When this is achieved, the product can be beautiful, and the lasting result is a credible and sustainable marriage of one of America's great composers with the wind band medium.

With regard to further research, analysis, and performances of William Grant Still's band music, this study seeks only to provide a survey of the works written for the medium, and an overview for the conductor to launch their own deeper analysis or seek the analysis that has already been done on the works. As a result, this has left an important gap to fill for the following works that have not received an extensive technical analysis: "Entrance of the Porteuses" from *La Guiablesse*, "Land of Superstition" from *Africa, Kaintuck', In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy*, "Whippoorwill's Shoes" from *Wood Notes*, and *Choreographic Prelude for Band*. Furthermore, the works that Still arranged himself for wind band, such as *Victory Tide (Song of a City)*, *Old California*, and *The American Scene* could benefit from a new edition, as the current availability of these works are copied from the original manuscript. As the provided information in this study shows, access to some of the works is limited due to the nature of manuscripts being lost, as well as William Grant Still Music having finite resources to attend to the frequency of orders and requests. For this reason, it is important for future scholars to understand that the archives at the University of Arkansas and Duke University are critical to preserving the legacy of William Grant Still, and should be interacted with as such.

Still's contributions to the wind band during his lifetime and posthumously should not be understated in quantity and quality. In a 1975 birthday homage to Still, Karl

Krueger declared, “The world knows and treasures Still's music, and it is not inappropriate to repeat here what has often been said by the most competent authorities—that William Grant Still's works will have a permanent place in the repertory.”¹⁰⁷ While his five symphonies and nine operas (which are generally viewed as larger-scale works) tend to get the primary focus in the reception of Still’s compositional identity, his body of work is quite diverse, and serves critics well to receive all genres he composed in with the merit and consideration that they deserve. In the accreditation of sixteen works for wind band to William Grant Still, and the acknowledgement of a growing interest in the revival of his music, it follows that future narratives about the great American composer must include the wind band as a central genre in his catalog.

¹⁰⁷ Karl Krueger, “Homage to William Grant Still,” *The Black Perspective in Music* (1975), 134.

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APPENDIX A

COMPLETE LIST OF STILL'S WIND BAND COMPOSITIONS AND
TRANSCRIPTIONS

Listed in order of original composition date

Title of Composition	Original Medium	Arranger/Editor	Year of Composition/Arrangement	Grade
“Entrance of the Porteuses” from <i>La Guiblessé</i>	Ballet	Dana Paul Perna/Tom Lloyd	ca. 1926/2012/2020	IV
<i>Symphony No. 1: Afro-American</i>	Symphony Orchestra	Robert O’ Brien	1930/1970	V
<i>Africa, Mvt. 3: “Land of Superstition”</i>	Chamber/Symphony Orchestra	Kevin Tam	1930/2015	V
<i>Kaintuck’</i>	Solo Piano & Symphony Orchestra	Dana Paul Perna	1935/2013	V
“Summerland” from <i>Three Visions</i>	Solo Piano	Dane Teter	1937/2013	IV
<i>Victory Tide (Song of a City)</i>	Symphony Orchestra/Wind Band	William Grant Still	1939/1945	IV
<i>Old California</i>	Symphony Orchestra/Wind Band	William Grant Still	1941/ca. 1942	V
<i>In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy</i>	Symphony Orchestra	Robert Truan	1943/2022	V
<i>From the Delta</i>	Wind Band	Dane Teter	1945/2020	IV
<i>Songs of Separation</i>	Solo Voice and Piano	Scott A. Silbert	1945/ca. 2012	V
“Whippoorwill’s Shoes” from <i>Wood Notes</i>	Symphony Orchestra	Stan Mauldin	1948/2022	IV
<i>To You, America!</i>	Wind Band	—	1951	V
<i>The American Scene</i> for Band	Symphony Orchestra/Wind Band	William Grant Still	1957/ca. 1964	IV
<i>Little Red Schoolhouse</i>	Symphony Orchestra/Wind Band	William Grant Still/Charles Bucky Steele	1957/1967/1977	IV
<i>Folk Suite for Band</i>	Wind Band	—	1963	IV
<i>Choreographic Prelude</i> for Band	Symphony Orchestra	Tom Lloyd	1970/2019	V

APPENDIX B

PROGRAMMING EXAMPLES FOR GRADE III BAND

<u>Composer</u>	<u>Title (Grade // Duration)</u>
Grace Baugher Dunlap	<i>With Gratitude</i> , (III // 5')
Frank Ticheli	<i>Shenandoah</i> (IV // 6')
William Grant Still	<i>Folk Suite for Band</i> (IV // 10')
William Grant Still	“Whipporwill’s Shoes” from <i>Wood Notes</i> (IV // 2.5')
John Mackey	<i>Sheltering Sky</i> (III // 5')
Pierre LaPlante	<i>American Riversongs</i> (III // 6')
Shuying Li	<i>The Last Hivemind II</i> (III // 3')
Kelijah Dunton	<i>Stillwater</i> (III // 5')
William Grant Still	<i>Little Red Schoolhouse</i> (IV // 10')

APPENDIX C

PROGRAMMING EXAMPLES FOR GRADE IV BAND

<u>Composer</u>	<u>Title (Grade // Duration)</u>
Cait Nishimura	Chasing Sunlight (III // 3')
Ronald Lo Presti	<i>Elegy for a Young American</i> (IV // 7')
William Grant Still	<i>From the Delta</i> (IV // 9')
Katahji Copley	<i>AYO</i> (III // 4')
William Grant Still	"Summerland" from <i>Three Visions</i> (IV // 6')
John Philip Sousa	<i>The Diplomat</i> (III // 3.5')
Kevin Charoensri	<i>Regeneration</i> (IV // 5')
Florence Price/arr. Williams	<i>Adoration</i> (IV // 3.5')
William Grant Still	<i>Folk Suite for Band</i> (IV // 10')

APPENDIX D

PROGRAMMING EXAMPLES FOR GRADE V+ BAND

<u>Composer</u>	<u>Title (Grade // Duration)</u>
Nicole Piunno	<i>Bright Shadow Fanfare</i> (V // 3')
Percy Aldridge Grainger	<i>Colonial Song</i> (V // 6')
William Grant Still	<i>Symphony No. 1: Afro-American</i> (V // 25')
Lili Boulanger/trans. Hontz	<i>D'un Matin de Printemps</i> (V // 6')
William Grant Still	<i>Kaintuck'</i> (V // 11')
Margaret Bonds/trans. Ehrlich	<i>Spiritual Suite</i> (IV // ca. 12')
William Grant Still	<i>To You, America!</i> (V // 8')
Viet Cuong	<i>Shared Spaces</i> (IV // 7')
Dwayne Milburn	<i>American Hymnsong Suite</i> (V // 10')
Walter Piston	<i>Tunbridge Fair</i> (V+ // 5')
William Grant Still	<i>Old California</i> (V // 9')
Alfred Reed	<i>El Camino Real</i> (V // 10')