

ARMSTRONG, JR., JAMES EARL, D.M.A. A Performance Edition of Five Works by William Grant Still (1895-1978): Brass Quintet Arrangements of *Memphis Man*, *Bayou Home*, *Mississippi*, *Elegy*, and *All That I Am*. (2012). Directed by Dr. Dennis Askew. 65 pp.

William Grant Still (1895-1978) was one of the most prolific African-American composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. During his career, Still composed over 150 musical works. He was the first African-American to conduct a major American symphony orchestra, hear his own Symphony performed by a leading orchestra, have his opera produced by a major opera company, and view his opera broadcast on a national television network. As a result of these and many other musical accomplishments, Still has been titled, “Dean of African-American Composers.”

Still spent the majority of his life composing and arranging compositions that featured his unique style of incorporating Western harmonies with African-American blues. Although known primarily for his orchestral works, Still’s vocal works have been integrated into the core repertoire of many college, university, and professional ensembles.

The purpose of this study was to arrange five works by Still for brass quintet including *Memphis Man* (1923), *Bayou Home* (1944), *Mississippi* (1948), *Elegy* (1963), and *All That I Am* (1965). A secondary purpose was to present a biographical sketch of Still. A descriptive analysis about each of the arrangements for brass quintet was included along with the actual settings. Included in the document are performance editions of the five works.

The vocal works, *Memphis Man*, *Bayou Home*, and *Mississippi* were created from versions of songs in *William Grant Still, An Art Song Collection* compiled by Celeste Anne Headlee with lyrics by Verna Arvey. *Elegy* was taken from *William Grant Still: An Organ Collection* and is the only work in the collection written for organ. *All That I Am* was transcribed from an edition for solo voice and piano edited by Celeste Anne Headlee. The spirituals included in this study date from several different periods of his career and are representative of many of his other compositions. Still created passionate melodic lines and straightforward harmonies to communicate inherent emotion and powerful impact to the audience. In these settings, the melodies have been left unaltered.

A PERFORMANCE EDITION OF FIVE WORKS BY WILLIAM GRANT STILL  
(1895-1978): BRASS QUINTET ARRANGEMENTS OF *MEMPHIS MAN*,  
*BAYOU HOME*, *MISSISSIPPI*, *ELEGY*, AND *ALL THAT I AM*

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to  
The Faculty of The Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts

Greensboro  
2012

Approved by

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Committee Chair

This document is dedicated to Philicia R. Armstrong,  
for her support, love, and patience, and to mother,  
Georgia Armstrong, father, James E. Armstrong, Sr.,  
sisters, Carla Armstrong, Cherlyne Miller, and  
Christi Walker for their support.

APPROVAL PAGE

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this document was made possible by the support, direction, expertise, and encouragement of many individuals. Committee chair, Dennis Askew, and advisory committee members, Randy Kohlenberg, Chad Eby, and Patricia Sink, provided support and valuable criticism during the completion of the document. Considerable gratitude is expressed to all committee members for their inexhaustible hours and contribution to the completion of this document. Gratitude also is extended to Edward Bach for his diligence, support, encouragement and understanding throughout the degree program. Special appreciation is expressed to Philicia R. Armstrong for her constant support and encouragement through the degree program and the process of completing the dissertation requirements. As well, sincere gratitude is extended to family members James E. Armstrong, Sr., Georgia Ann Armstrong, Carla Armstrong, Cherlyne Miller, Christi Armstrong, and Tyrisha Jefferson and the entire Armstrong family and friends for their endless love and support throughout this process.

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CHAPTER I  
AN INTRODUCTION TO WILLIAM GRANT STILL

William Grant Still was a memorable figure in the spiritual creation of American music. Still was born on May 11, 1895, and died on December 3, 1978. He was an inexhaustible American composer who wrote more than 150 compositions. In addition to being the first African-American to conduct a major American symphony orchestra, he also was the first African American to have a symphony of his own performed by a leading orchestra. Still was the first African-American to have an opera performed by a major opera company, and the first to have an opera performed during a national television broadcast. Frequently he is referred to as the "dean of African-American composers."<sup>1</sup>

William Grant Still's father performed as a local bandleader until his death when Still was 3 months old. With the death of his father, William Grant Still Sr., his mother, Carrie Lena Fambro Still, moved the family to Little Rock, Arkansas, and married Charles B. Shepperson who nurtured young William's musical interests by taking him to operettas and buying recordings of classical music. His grandmother also nurtured his musical interests by introducing him to African American spirituals at an early age.

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<sup>1</sup> Sara M. K. Neal February 23rd, 2011  
<http://www.utahsymphony.org/blog/2011/02/composer-of-the-week-william-grant-still>,  
January 10, 2012.

At the age of fifteen, Still began to study the violin, and later in life, he learned to play the clarinet, saxophone, oboe, double bass, cello and viola. Although Still's interest was in music, his mother encouraged him to pursue a field of medicine, because she was apprehensive of the uncertainty of African-American musicians during the time. Still's musical interest, however, propelled his interest into a composer of unprecedented importance.

Recognized as the "dean of African-American composers," Still composed in every genre, although he is most noted for his instrumental compositions. His early compositions were in the modernist style, but later, he merged musical characteristics of his African-American heritage with traditional European classical forms.<sup>2</sup> His African American background and his grandmother's influence are evident in his many spirituals.

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to arrange and present in performance edition works by William Grant Still; *Memphis Man*, *Bayou Home*, *Mississippi*, *Elegy*, and *All That I Am*. A secondary purpose was to present the chronological history and a brief biographical sketch of Still to have an understanding of his compositional style. Also included in this document are performance edition scores of the arrangements for brass quintet of *Memphis Man*, *Bayou Home*, *Mississippi*, *Elegy*, and *All That I Am*.

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<sup>2</sup> William Grant Still, New World Encyclopedia, [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/William\\_Grant\\_Still](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/William_Grant_Still), January 1, 2012.

## Still and His Spirituals

The development of Still's spirituals was based upon the values instilled in him by his mother and grandmother. Maturing in a home with educated parents and in an area including many ethnicities, Still's spirituals displayed the amalgamation of Negro, Spanish and Indian ancestry. In his spirituals, Still shows a depth of consecration.<sup>3</sup> Still's tireless dedication to the development of his spirituals presents a deep religious fervor that he intended to be preserved.

Still wrote with a humility and sensuousness that was under girded by an honest dedication to God. As well, the arrangements of his spirituals in this document display his mastery as a composer. Taken from voice, organ and piano arrangements, the melodies are virtually consistent with four-part soprano, alto, tenor and bass arrangements. The works presented in the performance editions are appropriate for both chamber music and concert hall settings.

### The Process of Arranging *Memphis Man*, *Bayou Home*, *Mississippi*, *Elegy* and *All That I Am*

The vocal works; *Memphis Man* (1923), *Bayou Home* (1944) and *Mississippi* (1948) were created using the versions of songs in Still's, *An Art Song Collection* compiled by Celeste Anne Headlee with Lyrics by Verna Arvey. *Elegy* (1963) was located in "William Grant Still: An Organ Collection" and the only work in the collection written for organ. *All That I Am* (1965) was created using a transcription for solo voice

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<sup>3</sup> Frederick Hall, *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, (1972), xi.

and piano by Celeste Anne Headlee. The hymns originally were written for SATB and piano. All of the compositions were scored for traditional brass quintets; 2 trumpets, horn, trombone, and tuba. In rescored compositions, each instrument assumes different contextual roles depending upon the vocal range of the composition. The transcriptions are simple and contain minimal ornamentation, similar to the original works, to avoid cluttering the picturesque melodies and rich harmonies. In arranging the compositions, the focus was to arouse an emotional response consistent with the composer's approach of his own music. The settings are intended to be performed by the musicians who appreciate and value expressive and intensely beautiful music.

## CHAPTER II

### STILL'S LIFE AND CAREER

#### Still's Early Years

William Grant Still was born in Woodville, Mississippi to Carrie and William Grant Still, Sr. in 1895. After the death of his father while Still was an infant, his mother married Charles B. Shepperson who raised Still as his son in Little Rock, Arkansas. In Arkansas, he began to study violin with a private teacher, as well as taking lessons with his mother and grandmother who sang hymns and spirituals throughout the house. During his childhood, family serenading was frequent. Still said, "It was always pleasant to be awakened from slumber by such sweet sounds."<sup>4</sup>

Because his stepfather was financially stable, Still was afforded the opportunity to attend the best musical shows and listen to recordings on the family's phonograph, a luxury not afforded to many African American families of the time. His upbringing and mother's influence, both in and out of school, provided the foundation for his commitment to composing music. Also, his mother's determination, talent, and high moral character influenced him significantly.

Carrie "Frambro" Still, Still's mother was also his school teacher and mentor. According to Verna Arvey, her personality commanded attention, and students learned more from her than from anyone else at her school, as did Still who was in her classes at

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<sup>4</sup> Verna Arvey, *Studies of Contemporary American Composers: William Grant Still* (1939), 3.

school.<sup>5</sup> His mother was determined to excel as a teacher, an organizer, and a community activist at a time when few accolades were provided to African Americans and violent resistance from whites was customary when it concerned growth and the education of African Americans. As a teacher, Still's mother motivated her students by writing and producing school plays that sometimes were performed at a downtown theater in Little Rock. Local African-Americans remembered those times, because it afforded the liberation of African-American audiences from their usual confinement to the balcony, to be able to sit anywhere in the theater.<sup>6</sup>

#### Still's Wilberforce Education

Still attended Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, Ohio in 1911 upon completion of high school at age 16 years to pursue a medical career upon the insistence of his mother. While attending Wilberforce University, Still played violin in the string quartet and clarinet and oboe in the college band. He also was afforded opportunities to experiment with arranging. These performance experiences provided opportunities for Still to learn about orchestration. He also was a bandleader in several college bands and conducted the university band. As a bandleader, he played several different instruments that later proved to be valuable to his career both as a composer and an orchestrator.<sup>7</sup>

With encouragement from music professors at Wilberforce, Still performed a recital of his compositions and after the success of the recital, Still's desire to continue

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<sup>5</sup> Arvey, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Fon Louise Gordon, untitled, *Pulaski County Historical Review*, vol. 35, no. 2 (Summer 1987), 26.

<sup>7</sup> Arvey, 11.

his musical career became paramount. Although Still did not earn a degree at Wilberforce, his musical career was launched during that time.

### Still's Oberlin Experience

When Still left Wilberforce, he served as an arranger for W.C. Handy's band and earned a living as a professional musician. During this period, Still became aware of the importance of African-American music and he wrote:

I realized that the American Negro had made an unrecognized contribution of great value to American music, particularly . . . in the blues . . . Of course the blues were looked down upon, people looked over their noses at them, and they were considered to be connected with the brothels. But in the South, where I had gone around and listened to them at their source, I felt that there was something more in them than that. I felt that they represented the yearning of people who were reaching out for something that they'd been denied. . . . There is something pathetic in the blues, something you hope to get some day, and it looks like you're not going to get it, but yet you haven't given up. I felt that hope and sorrow in the blues, and I wanted to use that idiom.<sup>8</sup>

In 1916, Still published his first musical work, *No Matter What You Do*.

At age 21 in 1916, Still received a settlement from an inheritance following the untimely death of his stepfather. He returned to Ohio and enrolled in Oberlin College as a music student. Oberlin College in 1867 offered formal instruction in music and accepted the Conservatory as part of the curriculum.<sup>9</sup> Still studied with Friedrich Lehmann at

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<sup>8</sup> "Negro Serious Music," interview with Still by R. Donald Brown, California State University-Fullerton, Oral History Program, Nov. 13, 1967, and Dec. 4, 1967, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Oberlin College & Conservatory, <http://new.oberlin.edu/about/history.dot>, November 6, 2012.



Oberlin Conservatory of Music as a scholarship student and later with George Whitefield Chadwick at the New England Conservatory.<sup>10</sup> Still recalled his time spent at Oberlin:

While in Oberlin Prof. Lehmann, who taught me theory, seemed impressed with my work in the class. He asked me one day why I did not study composition. I told him that I did not have the money. . . . As a result Dr. Geo. Andrews was asked and consented to teach me composition free of charge.<sup>11</sup>

Still's time at Oberlin afforded him opportunities to perform more than at Wilberforce. He heard well-known orchestras and virtuosic players as well as group performances on campus. Still left Oberlin after three semesters and enlisted in the U.S navy in 1918. Strong feeling was held among African Americans that volunteering for military service would be repaid through improved social conditions at home.<sup>12</sup>

#### A Working Musician

After leaving Wilberforce in 1914, Still worked as an orchestral musician earning fifteen dollars a week playing oboe and cello in Cleveland's Luna Park. With the recommendation from a professional musician named Tom Howard, Still began finding abundant work. Still examined standard repertoire, overtures, excerpts and other music with professional musicians on Sundays and learned valuable lessons about music during those sessions. Still commented in a 1967 interview with Donald Brown concerning his

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<sup>10</sup> William Grant Still, New World Encyclopedia, [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/William\\_Grant\\_Still](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/William_Grant_Still), December 20, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> William Grant Still, "Personal Notes," undated typescript (c. 1932), published in Catherine Parsons Smith, *William Grant Still: A Study in Contradictions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), ASC 218.

<sup>12</sup> Catherine Parsons Smith, *William Grant Still*, (1933), 22.

grasp of African-American music, “I didn’t come in contact much with Negro music until I had become of age and had entered professional work. I had to go out and learn it.”<sup>13</sup>

Along with many non-musical jobs to sustain a moderate living, Still performed as a freelance musician wherever possible. After a brief military period in 1918, Still found work in the Whispering Orchestra in Columbus Ohio. As a working musician, he performed in a variety of venues, including private clubs and parties where he was expected to be able to sightread music in various styles. During this period, Still and other African-American musicians played commercially for little money. The varied repertoire Still played afforded him the opportunity to learn a myriad of styles that ranged from waltzes to marches and jazz. Catherine Parsons Smith noted, “Still’s performance experience sharpened his skills as an arranger, leading to his unique approach to arranging and orchestrating.”<sup>14</sup> Still left Ohio for New York where he obtained a position as an arranger for the Pace and Handy Music Publishing Company.

#### The New York Years

When Still went to New York, although he worked again for W.C. Handy, he had serious doubts about making a living as a musician. During the early twentieth century, an African-American musician would have found it difficult to make a living in the field of serious music, and yet Still wanted to explore higher forms of composition.<sup>15</sup> He was determined to dedicate himself to a career in music and he wanted to write no matter

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<sup>13</sup> Negro Serious Music, Interview with Still by Donald Brown, California State University-Fullerton, Oral History Program, November 13, 1967.

<sup>14</sup> William Grant Still, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Judith Anne Still, *William Grant Still, A Voice High Sounding*, (2003), 99.

hardships he faced in trying to support a family. Still also decided to write future compositions that would demonstrate his devout faith in the Lord. Still wrote:

In a vision, I beheld a mighty cloud of angels approaching me. They sang a song of overwhelming beauty unlike any I have ever heard; a song that I have been unable to recall although I am a musician and can generally retain with ease any melody that appeals to me.<sup>16</sup>

While working and arranging for W. C. Handy, Still also arranged music for the Paul Whiteman Orchestra and worked as the house arranger for the Pace and Handy Music Publishing Company. He also worked for Harry Pace for a short period of time. When the company ceased to exist, Still was employed as an oboist in a pit orchestra for *Shuffle Along*, an all-African-American musical that opened in May 1921 in a run that lasted for over a year. Still's involvement with this musical opened doors for his later accomplishments as an arranger.

Still toured for a short period of time with *Shuffle Along* and afterward returned to New York to become the recording director for the Black Swan Recording Company, the first African-American owned record label. For Black Swan Recording Company, he arranged, composed, and orchestrated James P. Johnson's music for *Runnin Wild* in 1923. In addition, Still served as an assistant conductor at The Plantation Casino for an after-hours show. Along with working at the casino, Still completed arrangements for *Dixie to Broadway*, *Creole Follies* and *Struttin' Time*. He also arranged for performers including Sophie Tucker and Florence Mills. By 1925, he was recognized by the primary *New York Times* classical music critic as "orchestrator of much of the music for Negro revues and

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 99.

other theatrical attractions.”<sup>17</sup> Still aroused the interest of not only African-American composers, but also all others who listened and recognized the clarity and melodiousness in his arrangements. Although Still continued to perform throughout his career, he is well-known for his many accomplishments as a composer and arranger.

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<sup>17</sup> Gerald M. Bordman, *American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle*, New York: Oxford University Press, (2001); Tommy Krasker, *Catolog of the American Musical* (Washington, DC.: National Institute for Opera and Musical theater, 1988); and [www.ibdb.com](http://www.ibdb.com).

### CHAPTER III

#### STILL'S COMPOSITIONS

During his lifetime, William Grant Still composed and arranged for every music genre from spirituals to operas and orchestral works. He is recognized as having paved the way for other African-American composers and was emulated by them. In a catalogue of his work, Still is estimated to have written over 14 works for stage, 45 works for orchestra, 14 works for orchestra with soloists or chorus, four works for band, 19 chamber compositions, eight works for piano, three works for organ and accordion and many other compositions for various instruments ranging well into the hundreds.<sup>18</sup> Still also believed in performing the works of others and did so, to increase his understanding of compositional devices and overall musicianship.

Although Still's love for composition was manifested primarily in opera and the symphony orchestra, he wrote a substantial number of spirituals that led to his creation of his operas. The success of his vocal works, "*Levee Land*" and "*Sahdji*" helped to inspire him in the composition of operas. Although American opera-houses in the 1920s were devoted to European operas, Still worked with the librettist, Bruce Forsythe on his opera *Blue Steel* that sparked his creative interest and production.

Still wrote many instrumental compositions in the 1930s, but opera was still the driving force of his interest. He wrote "*And They Lynched Him On A Tree*" for white and

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Bartlett Haas, *William Grant Still, and The Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, (1972), 143-165.

African-American chorus, contralto soloist, narrator, and orchestra. This work pointed toward better interracial understanding in America during a time where racial divides plagued the United States and closed doors for the African-American composer and imposed hardship as it pertained to becoming a serious and recognized musician.

During the 1940s, Still continued to compose and arrange operas, however, he worked to write vocal compositions that illuminated and clarified the racial divide in the country. Compositions, such as *Those Who Wait*, *Wailing Woman*, *The Voice of The Lord*, and many others, brought light to inequality among races in the country.

Still continued to write successful operas in later years that overall were accepted by audiences, although some critics were reluctant to endorse them, according to Robert Haas.<sup>19</sup> Although Still received much acclaim for his operas, his vocal works were equally well important as a recognized and gifted composer. Still embedded his faith in God and his musical upbringing in his inspirational vocal works. Later in life, when Still lived in Los Angeles, CA, he composed scores for “Horizon” and “Pennies from Heaven” along with scores for television shows such as “Perry Mason” and “Gunsmoke.” Still continued to write for various genres throughout his life, and many of the vocal and piano compositions have continued to be performed in colleges, universities, and professional settings.

#### Still’s Musical Philosophy

William Grant Still’s musical philosophy was based upon the ideals that he learned in early childhood with his mother. Focusing upon his belief in God in all aspects

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<sup>19</sup> William Grant Still and *The Fusion of Cultures in America*, 61.

of life was a predominant theme of Still's compositions. Expressive melody played an important role in Still's music, and his convictions concerning melodic lines, harmony, rhythm, and dynamic contrast reflected his studies at Wilberforce and Oberlin. Although these elements were important in creating musical compositions, Still felt that appreciation for variety in music was also important. He commented:

Composers should never confine themselves to materials already invented, and I do not believe that any one tonality is of itself more significant than another. Colored People in America have a natural and deep-rooted feeling for music, for melody, harmony, and rhythm. Our music possesses exoticism without straining for strangeness. The natural practices in this music open up a new field which can be of value in larger musical works when constructed into organized form by a composer who, having the underlying feeling develops it through his intellect.<sup>20</sup>

The contemplation embedded in prayer also was an obvious inspiration for Still. He believed music was spiritual in nature and the voice of inspiration was the voice of God; the soul of man must first hear it before its message may be transferred to the intellect.<sup>21</sup> Still understood that through prayer God revealed his pathway or plan for a person's life.

### Still's Compositional Style

Still strived to enhance his musical compositions by learning from the greats; Brahms, Beethoven, etc. He studied liberally scores and transcripts of classical composers. He excelled at form and analysis courses while attending Wilberforce. Understanding that it was necessary to know how music was constructed according to rules of composition to only expound on those rules thus creating a new form and

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 112

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 107

maintaining clarity. Still said, “Clarity is the quality that tends to make every effect clear and each voice proportionately distinct.”<sup>22</sup>

The melodic structure is of most importance in Still’s music. Still’s concern for the position of African-Americans in American society is evident in his music. His use of the blues is evident in his *American Symphony*. Still’s experience arranging for Handy’s band helped shape the style of his major works. He indicated that when scoring for an orchestra, to present the material effectively, clarity, balance and a tasteful variety of tone color is essential.<sup>23</sup> Within Still’s compositional philosophy, he believed that the melody should be supported through the use of a design that is balanced and clear. He also addressed the form of a composition, by stating, “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.”<sup>24</sup> Still’s early compositions illustrate a jazz influence upon his musical style and his range in genres from jazz, in addition to European, Latin American, and other folk influences. He preferred to compose simple yet elegant harmonies and transparent orchestrations, although, during time spent with Edgar Varèse (1923), he incorporated elements of the pentatonic scale along with the use of tonic, dominant and sub-dominant harmonies. The dominant and sub-dominant harmonies are featured in his spirituals. *Bayou Home* is an example of a style reminiscent of folk melodies and the use of dominant and sub-dominant harmonies.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 103

<sup>24</sup> Speech to Composer’s Workshop, annual convention of The National Association of Negro Musicians, Los Angeles, California, August 17, 1967.



The Compositions Presented: *Memphis Man*, *Bayou Home*,  
*Mississippi*, *Elegy*, and *All That I Am*

Although not as well-known nor as widely performed as his operas and symphonies, Still's works, *Memphis Man*, *Bayou Home*, *Mississippi*, *Elegy*, and *All That I Am*, convey his belief in expressiveness within the lyrics. The lyrics, however, are not presented in the performance editions that follow in Chapter IV, but yet still evoke the expressive intention of the composer. This level of mastery was developed by this pioneer African-American composer during a time in United States when African-Americans were considered to be neither effective nor accomplished writers of serious music. These works presented in this edition and Still's other vocal works are considered by critics to be among the most well-crafted and accomplished of any in this style and genre. The work continued to be included into the repertoires of college, university, and professional vocal ensembles in the United States and indeed around the world. Still delivered in a speech the following, his idea concerning African-Americans and music:

Colored People in America have a natural and deep-rooted feeling for music, for melody, harmony, and rhythm. Our music possesses exoticism without straining for strangeness. The natural practices in this music open up a new field, which can be of value in larger musical works when constructed into organized form by a composer who, having the underlying feeling develops it through his intellect.<sup>25</sup>

The performance editions of Still's five works with descriptive commentary are presented in Chapter IV. In addition, a brief introduction to the work and the circumstances in which the work was composed is included. As well as description of the process of arranging the work and setting for brass quintet also is addressed.

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<sup>25</sup> Haas, 112.

## CHAPTER IV

*MEMPHIS MAN, BAYOU HOME, MISSISSIPPI, ELEGY, AND ALL THAT I AM:  
PERFORMANCE EDITIONS FOR BRASS QUINTET*

The settings of the vocal works, *Memphis Man*, *Bayou Home*, and *Mississippi*, were created using the versions of songs in William Grant Still, *An Art Song Collection* compiled by Celeste Anne Headlee with Lyrics by Verna Arvey. *Elegy* was created using the organ work found in a William Grant Still: *An Organ Collection*. *All That I Am* was created using a transcription for solo voice and piano in *An Art Song Collection* compiled by Celeste Anne Headlee with Lyrics by Verna Arvey. These settings were completed using Finale notation software and a piano on an Apple Macintosh computer and later edited on a Personal Computer. Each arrangement begins in the original key, and the melodies are generally unaltered aside from slight rhythmic alterations. The settings are intended to highlight the simplicity of the melodies and richness of the harmonies that Still composed. The settings primarily include the melodic progressions found in the original works, rhythmic diversity in the accompanying parts, and original material in transitional sections.

*Memphis Man*

*Memphis Man* was composed in 1923. This work was one of Still's earlier compositions published by the Edward B. Marks Music Corporation under the

pseudonym of Willy M. Grant.<sup>26</sup> *Memphis Man* is set to the text of Paul Henry. The composition is based on the blues form with “blue notes” that add contrast and color by flattening or bending a minor third to major third in relation to the major scale. Also, repeating chord progressions that mirror call and response characterize this form. The sixteen bar blues pattern is evident in this composition. The original work found in *William Grant Still, An Art Song Collection* is for vocal solo and piano. The composition begins with a four-measure introduction followed by a two-measure vamp for improvisation. The first verse is then introduced on the tonic E-flat chord in root position. Subsequent verses enter on the same tonic key transitioning to the key of A-flat in the chorus section. The composition ends in the key of A-flat.

The brass quintet setting for *Memphis Man* is written in E-flat, the same key as that written in the Art Song Collection. Although the original composition includes a two-measure repeated vamp, the brass quintet setting excludes this vamp and begins with the melody on the tonic chord in measure five. Four-measure phrases outline the sixteen bar blues pattern for the setting. The first two four-measure phrases begin with the major one (I) chord in root position. The subsequent four-measure phrase begins on the major six (VI) of the key in measure thirteen then transitions to the five chord (V) in measure seventeen to complete the sixteen-bar blues progression. The next sixteen bars, although the melody begins a fourth above the prior melody line in the first trumpet, follow the same pattern as the previous sixteen bars beginning again with the root chord in E-flat major. The next two four-measure phrases are repeated with the first trumpet playing the

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<sup>26</sup> Smith, 311.

melody and second trumpet and horn playing the harmony all on an E-flat triad (E ♭ , G, and B ♭ ). First trumpet has the root, second trumpet has the third and horn has the fifth of the chord. Throughout the setting, the harmonic material is presented in the second trumpet, horn and trombone lines with the tuba keeping time primarily with quarter and half notes. The chorus is then presented in the key of A-flat with the dominant in measure thirty-six. This section of the setting utilizes two eight-measure phrases with a first and second ending to end the composition.

Figure 1. *Memphis Man*, Brass Quintet Arrangement.

**Memphis Man**

William Grant Still  
arr. James E. Armstrong

Molto Blues

The musical score is arranged for a brass quintet. The first system includes parts for Trumpet in B $\flat$  1, Trumpet in B $\flat$  2, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The second system includes parts for B $\flat$  Tpt. 1, B $\flat$  Tpt. 2, Horn, Trombone, and Tuba. The score is in 4/4 time, key of B $\flat$  major, and marked "Molto Blues". Dynamics include *f*, *sfz*, and *mf*. The first system shows measures 1-4, and the second system shows measures 5-8.

13

Musical score for measures 13-18. The score is for five instruments: B♭ Trumpet 1, B♭ Trumpet 2, Horn, Trombone, and Tuba. The key signature is two flats (B♭ major/D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The dynamic marking is *mp* (mezzo-piano) for all instruments. The B♭ Trumpet 1 part has a melodic line with some grace notes. The B♭ Trumpet 2 part has a similar melodic line. The Horn part has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The Trombone and Tuba parts have a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents.

B♭ Tpt. 1  
*mp*

B♭ Tpt. 2  
*mp*

Hn.  
*mp*

Tbn.  
*mp*

Tba.  
*mp*

19

Musical score for measures 19-24. The score is for five instruments: B♭ Trumpet 1, B♭ Trumpet 2, Horn, Trombone, and Tuba. The key signature is two flats (B♭ major/D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The dynamic marking is *mf* (mezzo-forte) for all instruments. The B♭ Trumpet 1 part has a melodic line with a *mf* dynamic marking. The B♭ Trumpet 2 part has a similar melodic line. The Horn part has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The Trombone and Tuba parts have a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents.

B♭ Tpt. 1  
*mf*

B♭ Tpt. 2  
*mf*

Hn.  
*mf*

Tbn.  
*mf*

Tba.  
*mf*

25

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

*mp*

31

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

*mp*

36

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

41

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*



47

B♭ Tpt. 1  
*mf*

B♭ Tpt. 2  
*mf*

Hn.  
*mf*

Tbn.  
*mf*

Tba.  
*mf*

51

B♭ Tpt. 1  
1st 2nd

B♭ Tpt. 2  
1st 2nd

Hn.  
1st 2nd

Tbn.  
1st 2nd

Tba.  
1st 2nd

### *Bayou Home*

*Bayou Home* was composed in 1944 for solo voice and piano; also with lyrics by Verna Arvey. This composition is composed in two sections. The introduction of the song is in through-composed form followed by a strophic section. *Bayou Home* is a folk song depicting a man leaving his home and love interest on the bayou in search of his reason for being alive.

The version found in the *William Grant Still: An Art Song Collection* is written in D-minor in a 4/4 setting. The four measure introduction begins on the tonic chord and end on the dominant introducing the verse at measure five. The form of the composition is ABC with a short coda at measure forty seven. This is one of Still's darker sounding compositions incorporating the use of chromaticism and (i—iv—V—i) chords with occasional (vii—V—i) chords. The range of the melody spans a minor tenth from D4 to F5.

The brass quintet setting is written in the same key and 4/4 meter as the original version in the *An Art Song Collection*. This setting begins with an introduction that is through-composed in form, followed by a strophic section. The introduction begins in D-minor with the first trumpet and trombone playing a soli line and ends on a half cadence in measure four. The verse begins in measure five on a D-minor (i) chord with the first phrase ending on a five chord on the third beat of measure eight. The D-minor chord introduces the next four-measure phrase. Trumpet one and two perform a call and response in measures nine-twelve. The two four measure phrases illustrate the first verse. The next eight-measure phrase begins on a D-minor chord in measure thirteen as new

harmonic elements are introduced. Tonic, sub-dominant, dominant chords are introduced in the next three measures ending the phrase on a minor (i) chord in measure seventeen. Chord structure from the first verse is repeated in measure seventeen for the next verse. Still utilized the Western European style of writing in his spirituals as well as his orchestral music. The V to iv to I chord is evident in bar twenty on the fourth beat coming from the repeat of the first verse in measure seventeen. The eight-measure phrase in measure twenty-three is then repeated in the next eight measures beginning with the D-minor chord. The use of the A-minor chord begins the next verse to add an alteration to the normal structure of the Western European style. In measure forty-seven, the repeat of the third verse from measure twenty-one began on the pickup V chord of measure forty-six. The composition ends with a four measure repeat beginning on the pick-up to measure fifty-one. The fermata on the third beat is resolved in the next measure on a D-minor chord holding the next fermata. An added texture of a V to I in the last measure ends the composition.

Figure 2. Bayou Home, Brass Quintet Arrangement.

# Bayou Home

William Grant Still  
arr. James E. Armstrong

Moderato Andante

Trumpet in B $\flat$  1

Trumpet in B $\flat$  2

Horn in F

Trombone

Tuba

B $\flat$  Tpt. 1

B $\flat$  Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

*mf* hurry slightly

rall.

*p*

*mp*

Musical score for measures 12-16, featuring five instruments: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music begins at measure 12 with a dynamic of *f*. The first three measures feature a crescendo leading to a dynamic of *f*. At measure 4, the dynamics shift to *mp* with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The tempo is marked *a tempo* at the start of measure 5. The score concludes at measure 6 with a *rit.* marking.

Musical score for measures 17-21, featuring five instruments: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music begins at measure 17 with a dynamic of *mf p*. The tempo is marked *Moderately and expressive* above the staff. The score concludes at measure 21 with a dynamic of *mp*.

Moderately and expressive

Musical score for measures 22-26, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo/mood is "Moderately and expressive". The dynamic marking *mf* is present in measures 24, 25, and 26. The score includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs.

Musical score for measures 27-31, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs.

Musical score for measures 32-36, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The dynamic marking *mp* (mezzo-piano) is indicated for all parts. The score shows a melodic line for the trumpets and horns, and a more rhythmic, eighth-note pattern for the trombones and tuba.

Musical score for measures 37-40, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The music is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The dynamic marking *f* (forte) is indicated for all parts. The score shows a melodic line for the trumpets and horns, and a more rhythmic, eighth-note pattern for the trombones and tuba.

Musical score for measures 41-46, featuring five instruments: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins at measure 41. The B♭ Tpt. 1 part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 42-44 and a 'rall.' marking at the end of measure 46. The B♭ Tpt. 2 part has a similar melodic line with a 'rall.' marking at the end of measure 46. The Hn. part has a melodic line with a 'rall.' marking at the end of measure 46. The Tbn. part has a melodic line with a 'rall.' marking at the end of measure 46. The Tba. part has a melodic line with a 'rall.' marking at the end of measure 46.

Musical score for measures 47-52, featuring five instruments: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins at measure 47. The B♭ Tpt. 1 part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 47-49, a 'mp' marking, and an 'a tempo' marking. The B♭ Tpt. 2 part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 47-49, a 'mp' marking, and an 'a tempo' marking. The Hn. part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 47-49, a 'mp' marking, and an 'a tempo' marking. The Tbn. part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 47-49, a 'mp' marking, and an 'a tempo' marking. The Tba. part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 47-49, a 'mp' marking, and an 'a tempo' marking.



53

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

*f* *rall.* *p*

*f* *rall.* *p*

*f* *rall.* *p*

*f* *rall.* *p*

*f* *rall.* *p*

### *Mississippi*

*Mississippi* was composed in 1948 for voices and piano. *Mississippi*, first published in the *William Grant Still: An Art Song Collection* (1948) was composed for voice and piano on the text by Verna Arvey. It was first performed on the “Sound Off” program over the ABC radio network (the U.S. Army broadcast) on July 26, 1948.<sup>27</sup> Still composed this work paying homage to the state where he was born and raised. Although the work was written in 1948, it wasn’t until almost thirty years later that he received the key to the state (1975) from Governor William Waller honoring him as an accomplished African-American composer from the state of Mississippi. The version of *Mississippi* found in the *William Grant Still: An Art Song Collection* is written in the key of C-minor in a 6/8 meter.

The brass quintet setting of *Mississippi* is written in C-minor, in a 6/8 meter same as the *Art Song Collection*. The setting begins with the first and second trumpet fanfare introduction, with the tuba entering at measure eleven to close the introduction at measure twelve. Four voices are heard in measure thirteen, with exception of the first trumpet. Second trumpet presents the melody on the major seventh of the C-minor chord with subsequent voices playing the triad of the chord. The setting employs eight-measure phrases with four verses interrupted by a refrain in measure forty-five. The first trumpet imitates the second trumpet with the presentation of the second verse at measure twenty-one. The setting use motor rhythms with the trombone and tuba in mm. thirteen-sixteen. The horn adds harmony with the second trumpet on the first verse (mm. 13-20) and

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<sup>27</sup> Haas, 163.

harmony with the first trumpet on the second verse (mm. 21-29). Transitional material is presented at measures thirty-eight to forty-four with a V—iv repeated succession of measures. During the refrain section of the composition (mm. 45-60), first and second trumpet alternate two-bar phrases a major third apart while horn trombone and tuba supply the motor rhythms for motion. New material is presented with the next verse in measure sixty-one with the first trumpet on root of the V-chord. Measures sixty-nine through seventy-two supplies a repeated conversation between the first and second trumpets leading to a repetition of material presented in measure forty-five at measure seventy-seven. The setting uses ninth and eleventh chords common in jazz music of the time. The setting ends with an eight bar restatement of the refrain (mm. 101-108).

Figure 3. *Mississippi*, Brass Quintet Arrangement.

**Mississippi**

William Grant Still  
arr. James E. Armstrong

Moderato  $\text{♩} = 116$

The musical score is arranged for a brass quintet. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes parts for Trumpet in B♭ 1, Trumpet in B♭ 2, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The second system includes parts for B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Horn (Hn.), Trombone (Tbn.), and Tuba (Tba.).

**System 1 (Measures 1-6):**

- Trumpet in B♭ 1:** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic, playing a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes.
- Trumpet in B♭ 2:** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.
- Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba:** All three parts are silent (indicated by a horizontal line) throughout this system.

**System 2 (Measures 7-12):**

- B♭ Tpt. 1:** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic, playing a melodic line with quarter notes and half notes.
- B♭ Tpt. 2:** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, transitioning to a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic in measure 12.
- Hn. (Horn):** Silent until measure 12, where it plays a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.
- Tbn. (Trombone):** Silent until measure 12, where it plays a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.
- Tba. (Tuba):** Silent until measure 12, where it plays a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.

14

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

20

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

26

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

33

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

39

B♭ Tpt. 1  
B♭ Tpt. 2  
Hn.  
Tbn.  
Tba.

Detailed description: This system of music covers measures 39 through 44. It features five staves: B♭ Trumpet 1, B♭ Trumpet 2, Horn, Trombone, and Tuba. The key signature has two flats (B♭ and E♭), and the time signature is 4/4. The B♭ Tpt. 1 staff begins with a half rest in measure 39, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G4, and a half note A4. A slur covers measures 40-42, with notes G4, A4, and B4. A fermata is placed over the B4 note in measure 42. The B♭ Tpt. 2 staff starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The Horn staff has a quarter rest in measure 39, then quarter notes G4, A4, and B4. The Trombone staff has a quarter rest in measure 39, then quarter notes G3, A3, and B3. The Tuba staff has quarter notes G2, A2, and B2. Dynamic markings include *mf* and *f*. Accents are present on several notes in measures 41-44.

45

B♭ Tpt. 1  
B♭ Tpt. 2  
Hn.  
Tbn.  
Tba.

Detailed description: This system of music covers measures 45 through 50. It features the same five staves as the previous system. The B♭ Tpt. 1 staff has a whole rest in measure 45, followed by a half rest, then a half note G4 in measure 46. A slur covers measures 47-49, with notes A4, B4, and C5. The B♭ Tpt. 2 staff has a half note G4 in measure 45, followed by a half note A4, then a quarter rest, and a quarter note G4 in measure 49. The Horn staff has quarter notes G4, A4, and B4 in measure 45, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, and B4 in measure 46, and quarter notes G4, A4, and B4 in measure 47. The Trombone staff has quarter notes G3, A3, and B3 in measure 45, followed by quarter notes G3, A3, and B3 in measure 46, and quarter notes G3, A3, and B3 in measure 47. The Tuba staff has quarter notes G2, A2, and B2 in measure 45, followed by quarter notes G2, A2, and B2 in measure 46, and quarter notes G2, A2, and B2 in measure 47. Dynamic markings include *mf* and *f*.

51

B> Tpt. 1  
B> Tpt. 2  
Hn.  
Tbn.  
Tba.

This musical system covers measures 51 through 57. It features five staves: B> Tpt. 1, B> Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The music consists of various rhythmic patterns, including quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The dynamics are generally moderate.

58

B> Tpt. 1  
B> Tpt. 2  
Hn.  
Tbn.  
Tba.

This musical system covers measures 58 through 64. It features the same five staves as the previous system. The key signature remains two flats, and the time signature is 4/4. The music continues with similar rhythmic patterns. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present in measures 59, 60, 61, 62, and 63, indicating a louder volume. The system concludes with a fermata over the final measure (64).



65

Musical score for measures 65-71. The score is for five instruments: B♭ Trumpet 1, B♭ Trumpet 2, Horn, Trombone, and Tuba. The key signature has two flats (B♭ and E♭). Measure 65 starts with a treble clef and a key signature change to one flat (B♭). The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings include accents (>) and hairpins (wedges) for crescendo and decrescendo.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

72

Musical score for measures 72-78. The score is for five instruments: B♭ Trumpet 1, B♭ Trumpet 2, Horn, Trombone, and Tuba. The key signature has two flats (B♭ and E♭). Measure 72 starts with a treble clef and a key signature change to one flat (B♭). The music features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings include accents (>) and hairpins (wedges) for crescendo and decrescendo, as well as the *mf* (mezzo-forte) marking.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

78

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

*mf*

Detailed description: This musical system covers measures 78 through 83. It features five staves: B♭ Trumpet 1, B♭ Trumpet 2, Horn, Trombone, and Tuba. The key signature has two flats (B♭ and E♭), and the time signature is 4/4. In measure 78, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a whole note G2, while the other instruments have rests. In measure 79, B♭ Tpt. 2 enters with a half note G2, marked *mf*. The Horn part consists of eighth notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The Trombone part consists of eighth notes: G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1. The Tuba part consists of eighth notes: G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1. In measure 80, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a half note G2, B♭ Tpt. 2 has a half note G2, and the other instruments continue their patterns. In measure 81, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a half note G2, B♭ Tpt. 2 has a half note G2, and the other instruments continue. In measure 82, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a half note G2, B♭ Tpt. 2 has a half note G2, and the other instruments continue. In measure 83, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a half note G2, B♭ Tpt. 2 has a half note G2, and the other instruments continue.

84

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

Detailed description: This musical system covers measures 84 through 89. It features five staves: B♭ Trumpet 1, B♭ Trumpet 2, Horn, Trombone, and Tuba. The key signature has two flats (B♭ and E♭), and the time signature is 4/4. In measure 84, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a half note G2, B♭ Tpt. 2 has a half note G2, and the other instruments continue their patterns. In measure 85, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a half note G2, B♭ Tpt. 2 has a half note G2, and the other instruments continue. In measure 86, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a half note G2, B♭ Tpt. 2 has a half note G2, and the other instruments continue. In measure 87, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a half note G2, B♭ Tpt. 2 has a half note G2, and the other instruments continue. In measure 88, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a half note G2, B♭ Tpt. 2 has a half note G2, and the other instruments continue. In measure 89, B♭ Tpt. 1 has a half note G2, B♭ Tpt. 2 has a half note G2, and the other instruments continue.

91

B♭ Tpt. 1  
B♭ Tpt. 2  
Hn.  
Tbn.  
Tba.

This musical system covers measures 91 through 96. It features five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1 (treble clef), B♭ Tpt. 2 (treble clef), Hn. (treble clef), Tbn. (bass clef), and Tba. (bass clef). The key signature has two flats (B♭ and E♭). The music is written in a 4/4 time signature. Measures 91-92 show the B♭ Tpt. 1 and Hn. parts with rests, while the other instruments play. In measures 93-96, all instruments have active parts, with the B♭ Tpt. 1 part featuring a melodic line that includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 95.

97

B♭ Tpt. 1  
B♭ Tpt. 2  
Hn.  
Tbn.  
Tba.

This musical system covers measures 97 through 102. It features the same five staves as the previous system. The key signature remains two flats. Measures 97-98 show the B♭ Tpt. 1 part with rests, while the other instruments play. In measures 99-102, all instruments have active parts, with the B♭ Tpt. 1 part featuring a melodic line that includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 101.

104

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

*ritard steadily to the end*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

### *Elegy*

*Elegy* was composed for organ in 1963. The version found in the *William Grant Still: An Organ Collection* is written in the key of C-minor in a 4/4 meter then transposing to the key of G-minor and back to C-minor to complete the composition. The work was commissioned by the Long Beach, Los Angeles, Pasadena and Valley District Chapters of the American Guild of Organists.<sup>28</sup> The form of the composition is written in ABA style utilizing four-measure phrases. The first two four-measure phrases begin and end on the tonic chord of C-minor utilizing an authentic cadence. The B-section of the composition modulates to the key of G-minor with the opening phrase beginning on a G-minor chord and ending on a D-major chord, utilizing a half cadence. Throughout the B-section, Still uses (i—V—i) chords traditional of the Western European style of writing. The return to the A-section is evidenced and climaxed by a V chord in C-minor on beat three of measure forty returning to C-minor at the key change of measure forty-one. The composition is written with simple and rich melodies consistent with Still's spirituals and organ works.

The brass quintet setting of *Elegy* is written in C-minor, in a 4/4 meter same as the version in the *William Grant Still: An Organ Collection*. However, slight augmentations with rhythmic material and dynamic contrasts are included. The composition is in ABA form with the opening section beginning with the trumpet supplying the melody and trombone and tuba supplying the harmony on a C-minor chord in root position. Second trumpet then begins the melody in measure two, echoing the first trumpet with all other

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<sup>28</sup> Lucius R. Weathersby, *William Grant Still: An Organ Collection*, William Grant Still Music, 7.

voices supplying the harmony. The melody is then heard again at measure five with the first and second trumpet alternating patterns. A harmonic progression of (i—VI—V—iv—I) dictates the form leading to the transitional material with the second trumpet at measure nine and harmonic material with the horn. The build to the climax on the key change is evident in measure thirteen starting with the second trumpet on a counter-melody, and then echoed with the first trumpet. The use of the V—I chord at measure sixteen further guides the listener to the key of G-minor. The harmonies used in the B-section are typical of how Still used the Western European style of writing in his works. The use of triplet figures in the first four voices at measure seventeen supplies this new transitional material not heard in the setting. The build continues with a call-and-response in all five voices leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) section at measure twenty-six. Transitional material is heard at measure twenty-eight with the first trumpet and trombone. The melody then changes to the tuba in measures thirty-three to thirty-six and echoed with the trombone and the third and fourth beats of the horn line. The restatement of the A section and initial melody is heard again at measure forty-one in the original key of C-minor now heard first with the second trumpet. The statement is heard at a broader dynamic level and a slight augmentation of the melody is heard leading to the close of the setting. The setting ends with a C-minor chord with an added six in the horn section in measure fifty-five moving to a traditional triad on C-minor in measure fifty-nine.

Figure 4. *Elegy*, Brass Quintet Arrangement.

**Elegy**

William Grant Still  
arr. James E. Armstrong

**Larghetto** ♩ = 63

Trumpet in B $\flat$  1 *mp*

Trumpet in B $\flat$  2 *mp*

Horn in F

Trombone *mp*

Tuba *mp*

B $\flat$  Tpt. 1 *rit.* *mf a tempo*

B $\flat$  Tpt. 2 *rit.* *mf a tempo*

Hn. *rit.* *mf a tempo*

Tbn. *rit.* *mf a tempo*

Tuba *rit.* *mf a tempo*

12

Musical score for measures 12-16, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tuba. The key signature has two flats (B♭ and E♭). The score includes dynamics such as *mp* and *f*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. Measure 12 starts with a *mp* dynamic. Measures 13-16 show various rhythmic patterns and dynamics, with a *f* dynamic appearing in measure 15.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

17

Musical score for measures 17-21, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tuba. The key signature has two flats (B♭ and E♭). The score includes dynamics such as *f* and *mf*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. Measure 17 starts with a *f* dynamic. Measures 18-21 show various rhythmic patterns and dynamics, with a *mf* dynamic appearing in measure 19.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*



Musical score for measures 22-25, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tuba. The music is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of two flats. The score includes dynamic markings of *ff* and *ff*, and articulation marks such as accents and slurs. Trills and triplets are indicated with '3' and a bracket. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and a fermata over the final measure.

Musical score for measures 26-29, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tuba. The music is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of two flats. The score includes dynamic markings of *mf* and *mf*, and tempo markings of *rit.* and *a tempo*. Trills and triplets are indicated with '3' and a bracket. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and a fermata over the final measure.

30

Musical score for measures 30-34, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tuba. The key signature is one flat (B♭ major). Measure 30: B♭ Tpt. 1 has a triplet of eighth notes (B♭, A, G); B♭ Tpt. 2 has a quarter note (B♭), a quarter rest, and a quarter note (G); Hn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tbn. has a triplet of eighth notes (B♭, A, G); Tuba has a quarter note (B♭). Measure 31: B♭ Tpt. 1 has a quarter rest; B♭ Tpt. 2 has a triplet of eighth notes (B♭, A, G); Hn. has a triplet of eighth notes (B♭, A, G); Tbn. has a triplet of eighth notes (B♭, A, G); Tuba has a quarter note (B♭). Measure 32: B♭ Tpt. 1 has a quarter note (B♭); B♭ Tpt. 2 has a quarter note (B♭), a quarter note (A), and a quarter note (G); Hn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tbn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tuba has a quarter note (B♭). Measure 33: B♭ Tpt. 1 has a quarter rest; B♭ Tpt. 2 has a quarter note (B♭), a quarter note (A), and a quarter note (G); Hn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tbn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tuba has a quarter note (B♭). Measure 34: B♭ Tpt. 1 has a quarter rest; B♭ Tpt. 2 has a quarter note (B♭), a quarter note (A), and a quarter note (G); Hn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tbn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tuba has a quarter note (B♭). Dynamics: *mp* (measures 32-33), *mf* (measures 33-34).

35

Musical score for measures 35-39, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tuba. The key signature is one flat (B♭ major). Measure 35: B♭ Tpt. 1 has a quarter rest; B♭ Tpt. 2 has a quarter note (B♭), a quarter note (A), and a quarter note (G); Hn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tbn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tuba has a quarter note (B♭). Measure 36: B♭ Tpt. 1 has a quarter rest; B♭ Tpt. 2 has a quarter note (B♭), a quarter note (A), and a quarter note (G); Hn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tbn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tuba has a quarter note (B♭). Measure 37: B♭ Tpt. 1 has a quarter rest; B♭ Tpt. 2 has a quarter note (B♭), a quarter note (A), and a quarter note (G); Hn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tbn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tuba has a quarter note (B♭). Measure 38: B♭ Tpt. 1 has a quarter note (B♭), a quarter note (A), and a quarter note (G); B♭ Tpt. 2 has a quarter note (B♭), a quarter note (A), and a quarter note (G); Hn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tbn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tuba has a quarter note (B♭). Measure 39: B♭ Tpt. 1 has a quarter rest; B♭ Tpt. 2 has a quarter note (B♭), a quarter note (A), and a quarter note (G); Hn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tbn. has a quarter note (B♭); Tuba has a quarter note (B♭). Dynamics: *mp* (measures 35-36), *mf* (measures 36-39).

40

Musical score for measures 40-44, featuring five staves: B<sup>b</sup> Tpt. 1, B<sup>b</sup> Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tuba. The key signature is B-flat major. Measure 40 starts with a *mp* dynamic. Measure 41 has a *f* dynamic. Measure 42 has a *mf* dynamic. Measure 43 has a *mf* dynamic. Measure 44 has a *mf* dynamic. The score includes triplets in measures 40 and 41, and various rhythmic patterns including eighth and sixteenth notes.

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt. 1  
*mp* *mf*

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt. 2  
*f* *mf*

Hn.  
*mp* *mf*

Tbn.  
*mp* *f* *mf*

Tuba  
*mp* *f* *mf*

45

Musical score for measures 45-49, featuring five staves: B<sup>b</sup> Tpt. 1, B<sup>b</sup> Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tuba. The key signature is B-flat major. Measure 45 has a *f* dynamic. Measure 46 has a *f* dynamic. Measure 47 has a *f* dynamic. Measure 48 has a *f* dynamic. Measure 49 has a *f* dynamic. The score includes various rhythmic patterns including eighth and sixteenth notes, and accents in measures 48 and 49.

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt. 1

B<sup>b</sup> Tpt. 2  
*f*

Hn.  
*f*

Tbn.  
*f*

Tuba  
*f*

51

B♭ Tpt. 1  
decrease.....

B♭ Tpt. 2  
decrease.....

Hn.  
decrease.....

Tbn.  
decrease.....

Tuba  
decrease.....

56

B♭ Tpt. 1  
*p*

B♭ Tpt. 2  
*p*

Hn.  
*p*

Tbn.  
*rit. p*

Tuba  
*rit. p*

*All That I Am*

*All that I Am* was composed in 1965 for soprano, alto, tenor and bass (SATB) and published in the *William Grant Still: An Art Song Collection* with lyrics by Verna Arvey. This hymn tune explored the spirituality of Stills' life dictating in the verse how he is surrendering all to the Lord. Still states, "All that I am, all I ever can be, I owe to you, Lord, for you have molded me."<sup>29</sup>

The composition encompasses four measure phrases, creating a form of ABA. *All That I Am* begins with a two-measure introduction in the key of A-flat major. The A-section ends with a perfect authentic cadence, and the B section ends with a half cadence. Tonic, mediant, sub-dominant and dominant chords are emphasized. The hymn tune is written in four-part vocal harmony with traditional rhythmic continuity for vocal hymns. The vocal lines are comprised of step-wise motion with minimal leaps of a major six (M6). The range of the melody spans a perfect octave, from E-flat4 to E-flat5.

The brass quintet setting of *All That I Am* is written in A-flat-major, in a 4/4 meter same as the version in the *An Art Song Collection*. The composition is in ABA form with the opening introduction beginning in the second trumpet part. The first verse begins at measure three in the first trumpet on a major I chord. The harmonic material is stated with the second trumpet, French horn and trombone. The tuba sustains the tonic of the chord beginning in measure three. The composition is in four-measure phrases with the first verse beginning in measure three and the second verse beginning in measure seven. The composition is simplistic in form with tonic-dominant relationships. The A section

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<sup>29</sup> Lyrics by Verna Arvey from *All That I Am*, *William Grant Still: An Art Song Collection*, William Grant Still Music.

utilizes four measure phrases with two contrasting phrases in the B section to conclude the composition with a repeat of the A section. The composition begins and ends in the key of A-flat major utilizing simple melodies absent of embellishments, typical of the vocal works of Still. The setting ends on the opening chord of the piece in A-flat major, consistent with ABA style of writing.

Figure 5. *All That I Am*, Brass Quintet Arrangement.

**All That I Am**

William Grant Still  
arr. James E. Armstrong

Andante  $\text{♩} = 69$

Trumpet in B $\flat$  1

Trumpet in B $\flat$  2

Horn in F

Trombone

Tuba

B $\flat$  Tpt. 1

B $\flat$  Tpt. 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

Musical score for measures 11-15, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The music is in 4/4 time and begins with a *mf* dynamic. The brass instruments play rhythmic patterns, while the woodwinds provide harmonic support with sustained notes and some melodic lines.

Musical score for measures 16-18, featuring five staves: B♭ Tpt. 1, B♭ Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The music begins at measure 16 with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking and a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. The tempo is marked *a tempo* at the start of measure 17. The brass instruments play rhythmic patterns, while the woodwinds provide harmonic support with sustained notes and some melodic lines. A triplet of eighth notes is indicated in measure 18.





The selected works mentioned above utilize a unique clarity of expression. Many of Still's vocal works are absent of his viewpoints regarding interpretation. However, in studying Still, the composer, a person can understand that he was an advocate for melody first, then harmony and rhythm. He strove for simple melodic lines accompanied by "rich" harmonies. Still disdained elaborated use of embellishments when orchestrating. Still wrote:

In order to acquire this quality it is necessary to refrain from over-orchestrating. I use the term "over-orchestrating" to define the excessive use of embellishments, ornate accomplishments and masses of sound. Very often, one who scores is tempted to indulge in such excesses, perhaps due to his desire to avoid thinness. Thinness should indeed be avoided, but not by going to a worse extreme. Such excesses may also be due to the pleasing effect an elaborate, over-orchestrated score has on the eye. It is true that a score of this sort displays visual evidence of skill. But one must not for a moment lose sight of the fact that the message of music can be comprehended only by man's aural sense.<sup>30</sup>

With Still's philosophy of composing, spirituality was always emphasized in the creation of spirituals as well as his orchestral compositions.

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<sup>30</sup> Haas, 103.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

William Grant Still (1895-1978), was one of the most prolific African-American composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century producing more than 150 musical works including the works arranged for brass quintet in this document, *Memphis Man* (1923), *Bayou Home* (1944), *Mississippi* (1948), *Elegy* (1963), and *All That I Am* (1965). Frequently referred to as the “Dean of African-American Composers,” Still composed vocal works that achieved recognition comparable to the reception of his more well-known orchestral works. As a composer, his unique style of incorporating Western European harmonies with African-American blues style is featured prominently in his spirituals. Still’s works appeal to audiences and all levels of performers from students to professional because of their rich and sonorous harmonies. Powell stated in the preface of Still’s *An Art Song Collection*, “Still’s harmonic vocabulary includes extended use of embellished chords; the tonic chord with an added sixth; the tonic seventh as a chord of resolution; chord clusters with triton sonorities; diminished seventh chords; and chords with flatted thirds, fifths or ninths.”<sup>31</sup> Still’s spirituals and vocal works have become central to the repertoire of professional vocal groups.

The purpose of this study was to arrange five selected works by Still for brass quintet, *Memphis Man* (1923), *Bayou Home* (1944), *Mississippi* (1948), *Elegy* (1963),

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<sup>31</sup> Still, iv

and *All That I Am* (1965). A secondary purpose was to present a biographical sketch of Still to provide a historical framework for study of the works and subsequent performance. Historical information and descriptive analysis about each of the arrangements for brass quintet has been included along with the actual settings.

During a time when few African-American composers were afforded the same opportunities as white musicians, Still's struggle became evident in his efforts to become an accomplished composer and yet to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. His musical compositions have achieved considerable acclaim in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries because of the release of his art song collection and the subsequent frequency of performances in concerts. As an example of Still's works, the arrangements of *Memphis Man*, *Bayou Home*, *Mississippi*, *Elegy*, and *All That I Am* for brass quintet feature some of Still's more prominent and well known compositions. Except for *Elegy*, originally composed for organ, the arrangements were conceived originally by Still as vocal works. The spirituals included in this study that date from several different periods of his career are representative of many of his other compositions because they do not include extensive ornamentation or embellishment found in works by other composers. Instead, Still created passionate melodic lines and straightforward harmonies to communicate inherent emotion and powerful impact to the audience. In addition, these five arrangements illustrate his use of traditional harmony appropriate for venues that range from worship services to small ensemble concerts. In these brass quintet settings, the melodies have been left unaltered.

Still spent his early years as a youth in Little Rock, Arkansas. This was a time during the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when he experienced and endured the complexities of being African-American, although, in many sections of the city, including his own, blacks and whites lived together in an ethnically diverse neighborhood. Still's life in that neighborhood did however coincide with the transitioning of race relations from a more flexible to more rigid system of segregation that involved both legal and extralegal restrictions imposed upon African Americans.<sup>32</sup> During his lifetime, Still endured evidence of racism that steadily and deliberately eroded his civil rights. This climate, however, did not alter Still's determination to become one of the most renown composers of the day and led to his consideration by many as being a master of composition that afforded him the title, "Dean of African American Composers." Still's compositional style did however recall and reflect the times of his youth and adult life. Because of Still's lasting influence upon American musicians, his vocal and instrumental works have continued to be valued for study and performance both in educational settings and concert halls.

Still's music also has become more readily available because of later publications of his collective works and subsequently is performed more frequently in concerts. Other works composed by Still also merit consideration for arrangement not only for brass quintet, but also other large and small, instrumental and vocal ensembles. Although the five settings presented in this document are intended to be performed by brass quintet, transferring these ideas to larger ensembles is conceivable. Also, the actual settings in

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<sup>32</sup> Smith, 23.

this document also could be transcribed for other combinations of instruments.

The settings of these spirituals depict a variety of moods experienced during their composition and illustrated in Still's music. In no way are the settings intended to encroach upon the mood or quality of the original vocal work. Rather, they are intended to illustrate the harmonious juxtaposition of Western European music and jazz style. Although Still's spirituals are less familiar than his instrumental works, the settings are understandable and approachable for the audience and merit additional study of his vocal works.

Still was a pioneer because he created music that aroused the interest of composers, conductors, and patrons of the day. Still's combination of Western European and Jazz styles in many of his works continues to be considered a somewhat radical approach to composing music during his own lifetime. Experiencing Still's music through the five settings presented in this document not only provides a brief insight into his own unique style of composing music, but also affords continued study and appreciation of his music for future generations of musicians. Most importantly, these settings demonstrate and highlight Still's musical style and afford access to music literature that preserves the heritage of this historically noteworthy composer.

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APPENDIX A

PERMISSION

## Judith Anne Still

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November 6, 2012

Mr. James Armstrong  
 Professor of Music  
 Winston-Salem State University  
 Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

Thank you for your request to arrange and transcribe for brass quintet and print in the dissertation document the following works composed by William Grant Still:

*Memphis Man*  
*Bayou Home*  
*Mississippi*  
*Elegy*  
*All That I Am*

I am pleased to grant you permission to arrange and transcribe the works listed for brass quintet and reprint the scores in their entirety in your dissertation document entitled, "A Performance Edition of Five Works by William Grant Still (1895-1978): Brass Quintet Arrangements of *Memphis Man*, *Bayou Home*, *Mississippi*, *Elegy*, and *All That I Am*" (2012).

I am pleased that you have chosen William Grant Still and his music to be the topic of your dissertation document. I look forward to hearing more about your study and work.

Yours sincerely,

*Judith Anne Still*  
 Judith Anne Still

*P.S. All rights to your  
 arrangements and  
 transcriptions will  
 belong to William Grant  
 Still Music, worldwide.*