

Autumn in Jazz

"Shake Off the Dust"

"Autumn Leaves"

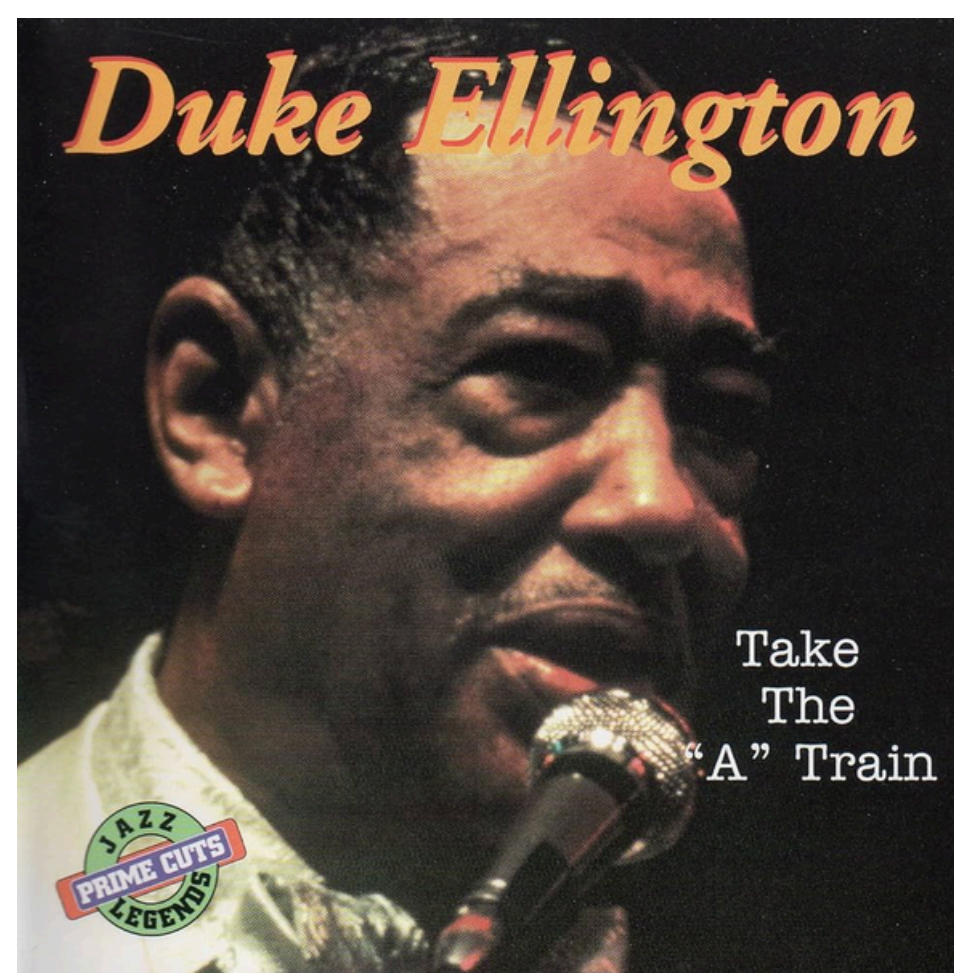
"Fly Me to the Moon"

"Take the 'A' Train"

"Crazy Race"

The Jazz Standards of Autumn

As the air turns crisp and the leaves begin to fall, autumn invites reflection, warmth, and a sense of nostalgia. Jazz, with its soulful melodies and smooth rhythms, perfectly complements the season's introspective mood. This collection of songs will envelop us in the richness of autumn and the timeless elegance of jazz, evoking feelings of comfort, change, and deep emotion.



Song: "Shake Off the Dust" (2016)

Songwriter: Herlin Riley

Brief Context: "Shake Off the Dust," composed by drummer Herlin Riley, is a smoky bolero originally featuring muted trumpet by Riley's ensemble members Bruce Harris, alto sax by Godwin Louis, and piano by Emmet Cohen. Riley, known for his mastery of post-bop rhythms and New Orleans' second-line traditions, creates a lush, romantic atmosphere with the song's layered rhythmic complexity. A prominent figure since the 1980s, Riley's career includes work with jazz greats like Wynton Marsalis and Grammy-winning albums. "Shake Off the Dust" highlights Riley's ability to balance intensity with melodic elegance, showcasing his ensemble's nuanced interplay.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Shake Off the Dust" video

Additional Listening

After listening to the Noblesville Jazz Combo's rendition of "Shake Off the Dust," enjoy a live recording performed by Herlin Riley, Emmet Cohen, Bruce Harris, Stacy Dillard and Russell Hall. The Noblesville Jazz Combo took inspiration from this recording. Consider whether you hear any similarities or differences between the two renditions.



Listen at:

<https://youtu.be/QMilJQiNDGE?si=-0A8cAx2gpqX75iH>



Song: "Autumn Leaves" (1945)

Songwriters: Joseph Kosma, Jacques Prévert, Johnny Mercer

***Brief Context:* "Autumn Leaves," composed by Joseph Kosma with original French lyrics by Jacques Prévert, was first introduced as "Les Feuilles mortes" in the 1946 film Les Portes de la nuit. Johnny Mercer later penned the English lyrics in 1950, and Jo Stafford's recording became the first English-language version. Roger Williams' 1955 instrumental hit brought the song to mainstream success, reaching #1 on the US Billboard charts. Since then, "Autumn Leaves" has become a jazz standard, with more than a thousand recordings by artists ranging from Miles Davis to Eva Cassidy.**

Activity: Singing and Discussion

What do you need?

- **Perfect Harmony "Autumn Leaves" video**
- **Perfect Harmony "Autumn Leaves" lyrics**

Suggested Discussion Prompt:

This song and the changing season makes me think of my favorite autumn activities, going on a hay ride and carving a pumpkin. Tell someone about your favorite fall activities.

Suggestions, if needed:

- **Visiting pumpkin patches or apple orchards**
- **Attending a fall festival**
- **Enjoying a warm drink by the fire**
- **Going for scenic drives to see changing leaves**



Autumn Leaves

The falling leaves drift by the window

The autumn leaves of red and gold

I see your lips, the summer kisses

The sun-burned hands I used to hold

Since you went away the days grow long

And soon I'll hear old winter's song

But I miss you most of all my darling

When autumn leaves start to fall

The falling leaves drift by the window

The autumn leaves of red and gold

I see your lips, the summer kisses

The sun-burned hands I used to hold

Since you went away the days grow long

And soon I'll hear old winter's song

But I miss you most of all my darling

When autumn leaves start to fall

Song: "Fly Me to the Moon" (1954)

Recorded by: Frank Sinatra

Brief Context: "Fly Me to the Moon," originally titled "In Other Words," was written by Bart Howard in 1954 and first recorded by Kaye Ballard the same year. The song gained popularity through jazz and cabaret covers, but it was Frank Sinatra's 1964 recording, arranged by Quincy Jones, that cemented its status as a classic. Sinatra's version became closely associated with NASA's Apollo missions and was even played during the Apollo 10 and Apollo 11 missions. The song has been covered over 300 times and remains a beloved standard in American music history.

***Activity:* Movement**

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Fly Me to the Moon" video

Suggested Seated Movement

Follow Perfect Harmony leader Nonni or create your own seated movement!

Use movements like . . .

- Alternate reaching arms up to the sky
- Clasp your hands and sway side-to-side
- Kick feet forward with jazz hands



Song: "Take the 'A' Train" (1939)

Songwriter: Billy Strayhorn

Brief Context: Duke Ellington's signature tune, "Take the 'A' Train," was composed by his frequent collaborator Billy Strayhorn in 1939. The song not only became the theme of the Duke Ellington Orchestra, but also brought the band significant financial success and cultural recognition. Strayhorn's sophisticated composition, inspired by subway directions to Ellington's home, was first recorded in 1941 and performed by Ellington for the rest of his career. Now considered one of the most important jazz standards, "Take the 'A' Train" remains a defining piece in the legacy of Ellington and American jazz.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- **Perfect Harmony "Take the 'A' Train" video**

Additional listening:

In addition to this insightful reflection on the life and legacy of Billy Strayhorn featuring his nephew Galen Demus, explore other timeless Strayhorn compositions, such as "Lush Life". To hear Strayhorn's music brought to life, check out alumna Lydia Herrera's heartfelt vocal performance of "Lush Life" at the 2022 Songbook Academy.



Listen at:

<https://youtu.be/Vh51cMvx9Xk?si=lzB0cQnAkA-trjac>



Song: "Crazy Race" (2006)

Songwriter: Roy Hargrove

Brief Context: "Crazy Race," composed by Roy Hargrove and performed by The RH Factor, appears on the album *Distractions*, released in 2006 by Verve. Following his work with D'Angelo and Erykah Badu, Hargrove brought together a diverse ensemble, blending jazz, soul, and hip-hop. The RH Factor's collective included two saxophonists, three keyboardists, two bassists, and drummers. The track serves as a vibrant call to action, encapsulating Hargrove's vision of merging musical worlds and inspiring listeners to rise and showcase their talents, a message that resonates even more deeply in his absence.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Crazy Race" video

Additional Listening

After listening to the Noblesville Jazz Combo's rendition of "Crazy Race," enjoy a live recording performed by Emmet Cohen, Cyrille Aimée, Wayne Tucker, Russell Hall and Bryan Carter. The Noblesville Jazz Combo took inspiration from this recording. How does your impression of the song change when hearing a rendition with a singer and lyrics?



Listen at:

https://youtu.be/E4MX2x6qzss?si=yZcaljPP_537rYK

