



- William Grant Still Jr. was born on May 11, 1895, in Woodville, Mississippi.
- Still started violin lessons in Little Rock at the age of 15. He taught himself to play the clarinet, saxophone, oboe, double bass, cello and viola, and showed a great interest in music.
- In 1916 Still worked in Memphis for W.C. Handy's band.
- Still's first major orchestral composition, Symphony No. 1 "Afro-American", was performed in 1931. Until 1950 the symphony was the most popular of any composed by an American.
- Still was the first African-American to conduct a major American symphony orchestra, the first to have a symphony performed by a leading orchestra, the first to have an opera performed by a major opera company, and the first to have an opera performed on national television.
- Still composed nearly 200 works, including five symphonies, four ballets, nine operas, over thirty choral works, plus art songs, chamber music and works for solo instruments.



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