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1. Take The 'A' Train
2. I Got It Bad
3. Chelsea Bridge
4. Satin Doll
5. Sophisticated Lady
6. Just Squeeze Me
7. I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart
8. Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me
9. Don't Get Around Much Anymore
10. In A Mellotone
11. In A Sentimental Mood
12. Prelude To A Kiss
13. Ring Dem Bells
14. Drop Me Off In Harlem
15. All Too Soon
16. It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)
17. Things Ain't What They Used To Be
18. Perdido
19. Warm Valley
20. Caravan
21. Mood Indigo
22. Prelude To A Kiss
23. I Didn't Know About You
24. Praise God And Dance
25. Come Sunday
26. Heritage
27. Jump For Joy
28. Pat

Produced by Bill Kirchner



1969  
ALL-STAR  
WHITE HOUSE  
TRIBUTE TO

# DUKE ELLINGTON

DUKE ELLINGTON  
LOUIE BELLSON  
BILL BERRY  
DAVE BRUBECK  
PAUL DESMOND  
URBIE GREEN  
JIM HALL  
EARL HINES  
MILT HINTON  
J.J. JOHNSON  
HANK JONES  
MARY MAYO  
GERRY MULLIGAN  
BILLY TAYLOR  
CLARK TERRY  
JOE WILLIAMS

FIRST RELEASE!



**PERSONNEL:**

The Band: Bill Berry, trumpet; Clark Terry, trumpet, flugelhorn; Urbie Green, J.J. Johnson, trombones; Paul Desmond, alto saxophone; Gerry Mulligan, baritone saxophone; Hank Jones, piano; Jim Hall, guitar; Milt Hinton, bass; Louie Bellson, drums.

The singers are Mary Mayo and Joe Williams. The guest pianists are Duke Ellington, Dave Brubeck, Earl Hines, and Billy Taylor.

1. **Take The 'A' Train** 2:38  
(Billy Strayhorn) Billy Strayhorn Songs Inc.  
**Band**  
**Solos: Berry, Green, Terry**

**MEDLEY 1:**

2. **I Got It Bad** 2:16  
(D. Ellington, P.F. Webster) Estate of Mercer K. Ellington Publishing; Webster Music Co.  
**Green, Jones, Hall, Hinton, Bellson**
3. **Chelsea Bridge** 2:07  
(Billy Strayhorn) Billy Strayhorn Songs Inc.  
**Desmond, Jones, Hall, Hinton, Bellson**
4. **Satin Doll** 2:42  
(Ellington, Mercer Strayhorn) Duke Ellington Music, c/o Famous Music Corp.; WB Music Corp., c/o Warner Chappell Music Inc.  
**Johnson, Jones, Hall, Hinton, Bellson**
5. **Sophisticated Lady** 1:51  
(Ellington, Mills, Parish) Duke Ellington Music; EMI Mills Inc./Old Acct. c/o EMI Music Publ. Inc.  
**Mulligan, Jones, Hall, Hinton, Bellson**
6. **Just Squeeze Me** 3:18  
(D. Ellington, L. Gaines) EMI Robbins Catalog Inc. c/o EMI Music Publ. Inc.  
**Band**  
**Solos: Berry, Terry**

7. **I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart** 1:01  
(Ellington, Mills, Nermo, Redmond) Duke Ellington Music; EMI Music Inc./Old Acct.  
**Band**  
**Solo: Berry**

8. **Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me** 0:55  
(D. Ellington, S. K. Russell) Estate of Mercer K. Ellington Publishing; International Music Services.  
**Band**  
**Solos: Terry, Johnson**

9. **Don't Get Around Much Anymore** 0:55  
(D. Ellington, S. K. Russell) Estate of Mercer K. Ellington Publishing; Harrison Music Corp.  
**Band**  
**Solo: Jones**

10. **In A Mellotone** 7:04  
(D. Ellington, M. Gabler) Estate of Mercer K. Ellington Publishing; EMI Robbins Catalog Inc.  
**Band**  
**Solos: Johnson (fills), Desmond, Berry, Green, Hall, Mulligan, Terry, Jones**

**>> END OF MEDLEY 1**

11. **In A Sentimental Mood** 1:54  
(Ellington, Kurtz, Mills) Duke Ellington Music; EMI Mills Music Inc./Old Acct.  
**Hall, Hinton**
12. **Prelude To A Kiss** 3:55  
(Ellington, Gordon, Mills) Duke Ellington Music; EMI Mills Inc./Old Acct.  
**Band**  
**Solos: Desmond and Mulligan, Green and Johnson, Mulligan and Terry**
13. **Ring Dem Bells** 2:13  
(D. Ellington, I. Mills) Duke Ellington Music; Harms Inc., c/o Warner Bros. Inc.  
**Band**  
**Solos: Desmond, Mulligan, Mulligan and Terry**

**MEDLEY 2:**

14. **Drop Me Off In Harlem** 2:23  
(D. Ellington, N. A. Kenny) EMI Mills Music Inc./Old Acct.; G. Schirmer Inc., c/o Music Sales Corp.  
**Taylor, Hinton, Bellson**

15. **All Too Soon** 1:56  
(D. Ellington, C. Signum) EMI Robbins Catalog Inc.; Estate of Mercer K. Ellington Publishing.  
**Taylor, Hinton, Bellson**

16. **It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)** 2:16  
(D. Ellington, I. Mills) Duke Ellington Music; EMI Mills Music Inc./Old Acct.  
**Taylor, Hinton, Bellson**

**>> END OF MEDLEY 2**

17. **Things Ain't What They Used To Be** 4:28  
(M. Ellington, T. Parsons) Tempo Music Inc.  
**Brubeck, Desmond, Mulligan, Hinton, Bellson**
18. **Perdido** 2:09  
(Drake, Lengsfelder, Tizol) Music Sales Corp.  
**Hines, Hinton, Bellson**
19. **Warm Valley** 3:32  
(D. Ellington, S. K. Russell) Estate of Mercer K. Ellington Publishing.  
**Band**  
**Solo: Mulligan**
20. **Caravan** 5:22  
(Ellington, Mills, Tizol) Duke Ellington Music; EMI Mills Music Inc./Old Acct.; Famous Music Corp.  
**Band**  
**Solos: Hinton, Bellson**

21. **Mood Indigo** 3:44  
(Bigard, Ellington, Mills) Duke Ellington Music; EMI Mills Inc./Old Acct.; The Songwriters Guild  
**Mayo, Band**  
**Solo Fills: Johnson, Mulligan**

**MEDLEY 3:**

22. **Prelude To A Kiss** 2:11  
(Ellington, Gordon, Mills) Duke Ellington Music; EMI Mills Inc./Old Acct.  
**Mayo, Jones, Hall, Hinton, Bellson**
23. **I Didn't Know About You** 2:38  
(Duke Ellington, S. K. Russell) Estate of Mercer K. Ellington Publishing; International Music Services.  
**Mayo, Jones, Hall, Hinton, Bellson**

**>> END OF MEDLEY 3**

24. **Praise God And Dance** 2:26  
(Duke Ellington) Music Sales Corp.  
**Mayo, Band**
25. **Come Sunday** 2:28  
(Duke Ellington) G. Schirmer Inc.  
**Williams, Band**
26. **Heritage** 2:12  
(Duke Ellington) Music Sales Corp.  
**Williams, Band**
27. **Jump For Joy** 1:57  
(Ellington, Kuller, Webster) EMI Robbins Catalog Inc.; Webster Music Co.; Estate of Mercer K. Ellington Publishing.  
**Williams, Band**
28. **Pat** 2:55  
(Duke Ellington) Estate of Mercer K. Ellington Publishing

Total Time: 75: 45



## DUKE ELLINGTON'S BIRTHDAY PARTY AT THE WHITE HOUSE

A spring rain freshened Washington, D.C.'s Japanese cherry blossoms as Duke Ellington arrived at the house where his father worked as a part-time butler in the Harding administration. It was the evening of April 29, 1969, and Ellington found the White House aglow with adulation. The President of the United States was giving him a 70th birthday party and a Medal of Freedom. Dinner guests assembled in the Cross Hall and examined cabinets holding historic presidential china while President and Mrs. Richard Nixon showed Ellington and his sister Ruth the private quarters — the tour included a demonstration of the stereo system. Downstairs, musicians from the Marine Band played Ellington melodies.

Two days earlier, in an appreciation published in *The Washington Star*, the novelist Ralph Ellison wrote, "Place Ellington with Hemingway, they are both masters of that which is most enduring in the human enterprise: the power of man to define himself against the ravages of time through artistic style." At dinner for eighty (coquille of seafood neptune and roast sirloin of beef Bordelaise), Ellington responded to the toast in his honor with this heartfelt note: "There is no place I would rather be tonight except in my mother's arms."



After dessert, Ellington and his host greeted a hundred more guests, who milled around sipping champagne and listening to a trio from the Navy Band. Among the friends and admirers celebrating the maestro was Willie "the Lion" Smith in his customary uniform of derby, cigar, and black-framed glasses. Forty-five years earlier, when Ellington arrived in New York from Washington, the Lion showed him deep secrets of stride piano. Harry Carney, the baritone saxophonist whose career with Ellington began in the 1920s, was there, as was Ellington's physician, Arthur Logan, and Benny Goodman, Earl Hines, Billy Eckstine, Cab Calloway, Marian McPartland, Dizzy Gillespie, Mahalia Jackson, and Dave Brubeck. Catherine Basie represented her husband; the Count was touring in Europe.

The guest list also included Vice President Spiro Agnew; Oklahoma football coach Bud Wilkinson; jazz festival impresario George Wein; Otto Preminger, for whom Ellington scored the film *Anatomy of a Murder*; com-

poser-conductor Gunther Schuller, head of the New England Conservatory of Music; Attorney General John Mitchell; civil rights leader Bayard Rustin; composers Richard Rodgers and Harold Arlen; Labor Secretary George Shultz; Presidential Assistant Daniel Patrick Moynihan; White House advisers Leonard Garment and Charles McWhorter, who had important roles in arranging the evening; and Willis Conover, the jazz broadcaster of the *Voice of America*. Conover suggested the celebration to Garment and McWhorter. He assembled the all-star tribute band and produced the evening's performance.

Agnew borrowed the Marines' piano and, to the surprise of bystanders, played his favorite Ellington songs, "In A Sentimental Mood" and "Sophisticated Lady." The jazz writers Dan Morgenstern and Leonard Feather chatted nearby. As guests went through the receiving line, Gerry Mulligan listened to the Navy's strolling trio of accordion, tenor saxophone, and bass play "Honeysuckle Rose." It was intended to be background music. "Hold that

thought," Mulligan said as he dashed off. He quickly reappeared with his baritone saxophone. Soon, trumpeter Clark Terry and trombonist Urbie Green joined him. The ad hoc sextet created an instant jam session on Charlie Parker's "Scrapple From The Apple." The accordionist, seaman Frank Carruso, looked as if he had suddenly found himself in heaven.

When we were all assembled in the East Room, Mr. Nixon presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Ellington; he said, "In the royalty of American music, no man swings more or stands higher than the Duke." Ellington showed his gratitude – and startled the President – by kissing him twice on each cheek. Harry Carney told me later that when Duke went through the kissing routine, he usually said, "There's one for each cheek." Ellington quoted the four freedoms by which his composing colleague Billy Strayhorn had lived: "Freedom from hate, unconditionally; freedom from self-pity; freedom from the fear of doing something that would help someone else more than it does me; freedom from the kind of pride that makes me feel I am better than my brother." Then the crowd sang a lusty "Happy Birthday."

Willis Conover emceed the concert that followed, introducing a band composed of Bill Berry (trumpet), Clark Terry (trumpet and flugelhorn), Urbie Green and J.J. Johnson (trombones), Paul Desmond (alto saxophone), Gerry Mulligan (baritone saxophone), Hank Jones (piano), Jim Hall (guitar), Milt

Hinton (bass), and Louie Bellson (drums). The singers were Mary Mayo and Joe Williams. Guest pianists were Dave Brubeck, Earl Hines, and Billy Taylor.

Sitting behind Ellington, I heard him remark to Cab Calloway as Hinton appeared, "Look, there's your bass player." Hinton hadn't been in Calloway's band for twenty years. When Desmond did a perfect Johnny Hodges impression during "Things Ain't What They Used To Be," Ellington sat bolt upright and looked astonished, a reaction that pleased Desmond when I described it. Jones, Taylor, and Brubeck played beautifully, but the hands-down winner in the piano category was the 65-year-old Hines, who in two daring minutes of "Perdido" tapped the essence of jazz. Ellington stood up and blew him kisses. Later, Billy Eckstine, who sang with Hines's band before he had his own, walked up to his old boss and gave him an accolade: "You dirty old man." The concert lasted an hour and a half, and the room was swinging. I looked around at heads bobbing and shoulders swaying and found Preminger beaming and snapping his fingers Teutonically, one snap at the bottom of each downward stroke of his forearm.

Urged onto the platform, Ellington improvised an instant composition inspired, he said, by "a name, something very gentle and graceful – something like 'Pat.'" The piece was full of serenity and the wizardry of Ellington's harmonies. Mrs. Nixon, who looked distracted through much of the evening, paid close

attention. The host and his wife turned in, but he invited us to stay for dancing and a jam session. After the floor was cleared of chairs, Geoffrey Holder, in a suit of black velvet and satin and his wife Carmen de Lavallade in a sweeping flamenco gown, led the dancing. Ellington danced with his sister and several other women. He played a duet with Willie the Lion, asked Dr. Logan to check his pulse, danced again, and stayed for much of the jam session, which lasted until 2:45 a.m. Duke charmed everyone in the room, especially the women, whom he melted with compliments like, "Thank you for making my party so lovely," and "Are you this beautiful every night?"

During the session, all of the pianists from the concert reappeared. Marian McPartland, Leonard Feather, and George Wein also played the East Room Steinway. McPartland joined The Lion in a duet. Eckstine, Joe Williams, and Lou Rawls traded blues choruses. Leonard Garment, once a tenor saxophonist with Woody Herman, found himself jamming on clarinet with Mulligan, J. J. Johnson, Urbie Green, and Dizzy Gillespie. In his book *Crazy Rhythm*, he wrote, "Years would pass before Benny Goodman forgave me for not instructing him to bring his clarinet; but if he played, how could I?" Most of the all-stars sat in, and so did the Navy musicians. At one point, the rhythm section was made up of Marines, looking in their scarlet tunics like a contingent of Canadian Mounties.

There has been nothing like it at the White House— or anywhere else—since.

Among my memories of the evening:

- The power of Berry and Terry's two-man trumpet section.
  - Terry's exhilaration on "Squeeze Me."
  - Billy Taylor agreeing to pose for a photograph with Brubeck and saying, "Sure, something might rub off."
  - Desmond maintaining his composure and the melody line when the chords of the middle section of "Chelsea Bridge" momentarily slipped Milt Hinton's mind.
  - J.J. Johnson's booting solo on "Satin Doll."
  - The grins on the faces of Hinton and Bellson when Earl Hines was in full flight.
  - Ellington's surprise, then amusement, at Mulligan's piquant arrangement of the usually placid "Prelude To A Kiss."
  - The scarcity of dry eyes when Joe Williams finished singing "Heritage."
  - Desmond and Urbie Green, having taken full advantage of the open bar, solicitously helping one another out the White House entrance and into a taxi as 3:00 a.m. approached.
- The United States Information Agency showed people overseas a short film of the evening's highlights. *The Voice of America*



taped the music and broadcast it around the world, but not in the U.S. Until now, few Americans have heard this tribute to one of their greatest artists.

As he left, Ellington said, "It was lovely." At 8:00 a.m., he and his band were off to an engagement in Oklahoma City. For Duke, it was back to business as usual, but, as Whitney Balliett wrote in *The New Yorker*, the maestro "was finally given his due by his country."

— Doug Ramsey

Doug Ramsey is the author of *Jazz Matters: Reflections on the Music and Some of Its Makers* (University of Arkansas Press). He is a contributor to *The Oxford Companion to Jazz* (2000), a regular contributor to *Jazz Times*, and the winner of an ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for writing about music.

The Band version of "Prelude to a Kiss" was arranged by Gerry Mulligan. Ten other band arrangements ("Take the 'A' Train," "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart," "Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me," "Ring Dem Bells," "Warm Valley," "Caravan," "Praise God and Dance," "Come Sunday," "Heritage," and "Jump For Joy") are uncredited.

Produced by Bill Kirchner  
Digital Transfer and Mastering by Malcolm Addey  
Recorded April 29, 1969, in the East Room of the White House, Washington, D.C.  
Engineer unknown.

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- MEDLEY 1:
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7. **I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart** 1:01
8. **Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me** 0:55
9. **Don't Get Around Much Anymore** 0:55

The band is Bill Berry, trumpet; Clark Terry, trumpet, flugelhorn; Urbie Green, JJ. Johnson, trombones; Paul Desmond, alto saxophone; Gerry Mulligan, baritone

10. **In A Mellotone** 7:04
- END OF MEDLEY 1
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13. **Ring Dem Bells** 2:13
- MEDLEY 2:
14. **Drop Me Off In Harlem** 2:23
15. **All Too Soon** 1:56
16. **It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)** 2:16
- END OF MEDLEY 2

saxophone; Hank Jones, piano; Jim Hall, guitar; Milt Hinton, bass; Louie Bellson, drums. The singers are Mary Mayo and Joe Williams.

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- END OF MEDLEY 3
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The guest pianists are Duke Ellington, Dave Brubeck, Earl Hines, and Billy Taylor.

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26. **Heritage** 2:12
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28. **Pat** 2:55

Total Time: 75: 45



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