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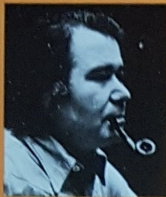
DUKE ELLINGTON



All Star
Road
Band

DUKE ELLINGTON

All Star Road Band



THE DANCE

The music in this album was recorded at a dance, a one-night stand, not at a concert. To me, that's one reason why it is so exciting. An altogether different atmosphere prevailed on such occasions. The audience danced, drank, romanced, talked, or stood around the bandstand listening. Sometimes there would be fifty people in the hall. An hour later there might be one or two hundred, and by 12:30 a.m. maybe only fifty again. At a concert you might hear some new music, performed for the first time, but even with so experienced a band as Duke Ellington's there would be tensions, and some of the playing could be a little self-conscious at times. On the other hand, at a dance like this, everybody would be, surprisingly often, happy, relaxed and full of enthusiasm.

Of course, the performance level varied from night to night, but there were always rich rewards.

These recordings brought back memories of many such happy nights that I spent listening to Duke and his guys. My longtime friendship with him was periodically highlighted by the studio recording sessions we made, but I am equally proud to be able to present this music to the public a quarter-century after it was made.

BOB THEILE



THE ROAD

Two words that have a special significance for veterans of the big bands are "The Road." The Road really began with automobiles. Fletcher Henderson and his great musicians were pioneers in that era, roaring about the country in the fastest cars they could buy. The cars were soon superseded by the bus, which to this day symbolizes The Road in the mind of most jazz musicians. But The Road was still The Road when Duke Ellington set a new fashion by traveling in pullman cars. He was endlessly fascinated by trains, but The Road remained The Road even when it was a railroad. Later, the Road took itself into the sky when bands started traveling by plane. It was the same thing, only now instead of a different city they might play in a different country each night. They traveled all round a continent, came home, and for a few days, came off the road.

What you have in this album is a typical night on The Road. Bodies grew tired and men griped, but you would be surprised how many liked the life (holding the tiger by the tail, so to speak). They met new people and old friends every night, and they could temporarily forget their domestic worries! Pop was like his men in that respect. Once out of New York, he too could forget a lot of his responsibilities and enjoy himself. I am sure he was enjoying himself this night at Carrolltown, and I know he would be happy that his dear friend, Bob Theile, was finally making the music available.

MERCER ELLINGTON

THE CARROLLTOWN DANCE

For forty-five years Duke Ellington and his men traveled enormous distances in pursuit of their daily bread. Because they were popular, they never had much time off. But they were also human, so some nights they might be tired, morose or irritable, and other nights, often inexplicably, full of *joie de vivre*. Discipline was not Ellington's forte. He was prepared to sacrifice consistency for the effluence of spontaneity that, to him, was the essence of jazz.

We may never know now why the band was in such good spirits when, in June 1957, it played a dance in Carrolltown, Pennsylvania. Nearly two hundred miles west of Philadelphia, Carrolltown was a small agricultural centre in the Alleghenies. No doubt the dance was patronized by more than the townfolk and that people came from miles around. The people, the promoters, and their hospitality, probably had more than a little to do with the way the band felt. Particularly at a dance, there was always a two-way tide of affection and admiration. And by 1957, of course, Ellington and his men had friends in every part of North America and, it is not too much to say, in every part of the globe.

The excerpts from the performances this joyful night begin, as Ellington programs so often did, with the band's theme, Billy Strayhorn's *Take the "A" Train*. It features Ray Nance's cornet in a role he virtually created for himself and his successors. The recording catches the warmth of his sound especially well. Then, as the applause dies, Ellington turns him loose again in a hilarious, quote-filled version of the same number. Besides the audience, the band gets a big kick out of this, not least Sam Woodyard, whose energetic, propulsive drumming proves a big inspirational factor all night. By 1957, of course, drummers were relinquishing provision of the main pulse to the bassists. But not Woodyard. He always kept in mind that this was a "heavy" band, and that it was his duty to provide a beat that could be heard and felt.

Next is *Such Sweet Thunder*, the theme for Othello from Ellington's Shakespearean suite. It is a brave, martial piece and once again Ray Nance has a chorus to himself, his phraseology and tone explaining why his colleague, veteran trombonist Quentin Jackson, liked to refer to him as "Mr. Soul." The precise histories of jazz do immense injustice by ignoring marvelous individuals like Nance, who was vital to the Ellington enterprise for so many years. The unique sound of the reeds is worth noting on *Such Sweet Thunder*. This saxophone section stayed together longer than any other in jazz, and much of its strength and character derived from the two men from Boston, both powerful blowers, Johnny Hodges and Harry Carney. The perspective of the live recording makes it possible to hear details of the voicing differently from those on studio recordings. Rarely heard as a soloist, John Sanders is responsible for the valve trombone statement.

Frustration is a number Ellington wrote in 1948 for Harry Carney, whose big, full tone normally anchored the whole ensemble. Here it is in the foreground, rich, velvety, and distinguished by his inimitable phrasing.

Cop Out is one of the numbers Ellington sometimes used to "punish" Paul Gonsalves for misdemeanors. The more exhausted he might appear, the more solo choruses would be demanded of him. But in this case he takes an almost nonchalant live-chorus ride on the sixteen-bar theme at a fine, swinging tempo.

Perdido, at this period, had become the prerogative of Clark Terry, the great trumpet virtuoso, whose double-timing reflected contemporary practice, but whose style remained intensely personal. Like Paul Gonsalves, he had assimilated the bebop message and could reinterpret it while maintaining an agreeable tone.

Mood Indigo was an inevitable request, but at dances it was usually subjected to wry twists. Here, surprisingly, the trio responsible for the theme statements seems to consist of Quentin Jackson, Britt Woodman and Harry Carney, the last on bass clarinet. Russell Procope perpetuates Barney Bigard's style in two mellow clarinet choruses, and Willie Cook follows with two more on muted trumpet that are full of sensitive intelligence. Then Ellington takes three on a piano that had undoubtedly seen better days, but it is clear that this was an occasion when he felt like playing. *Bassment*, also known as *Daddy's Blues and Discontented*, is a blues that

Les amateurs de grande et belle musique, et en premier lieu les toqués de Duke Ellington, ceux qui suivent avec une passion brûlante sa carrière incomparable aussi bien que ceux qui n'ont succombé que récemment au charme de l'alchimie ellingtonienne, tous se réjouiront de la parution de ce document extraordinaire.

En effet, ce double album inédit nous offre un témoignage d'une valeur inestimable: le plus bel orchestre du monde, au sommet de sa forme, enregistré simplement, dans les meilleures conditions possibles, celles d'une soirée dansante. On sait qu'en ce genre d'occasion, les musiciens, dégagés des formalités et des contraintes du concert, trouvent auprès du public l'impulsion nécessaire à l'expression du swing et la plus totale liberté dans la formation de leurs idées mélodiques. Les micros ont d'ailleurs capté les manifestations de ce bonheur de jouer, les apartés des musiciens, leurs exclamations, les grognements et les exhortations du chef.

Autre motif de satisfaction, la mise en valeur des grands solistes de l'orchestre.

Celle, en premier lieu du plus aventureux de tous, Paul Gonsalves, dans un

prodigieux *Diminuendo and Crescendo in blue*, vingt-six chorus flamboyants, encadrés par des ensembles orchestraux incandescents. On peut ici suivre note à note l'imprévisible partie de la section de trombones. On notera que *Crescendo in blue* est amputé de ses deux premiers chorus et commence en plein swing par un ensemble qui, justement, privilégie cette même section. Johnny Hodges est aussi souvent sollicité, tout au long de quatre pièces qui lui sont entièrement dévolues. Au début de son magnifique *On the sunny side of the street* Ellington annonce au public que le bar sera fermé à une heure, mais que l'orchestre jouera jusqu'à une heure trente... A verser au dossier "conditions et lieux de travail" du jazzman... Autres grands solistes mis en relief ici: Harry Carney, majestueux, Ray Nance, trompettiste puis vocaliste burlesque dans deux *Take the "A" Train*, Clark Terry, Willie Cook dans une version "dancing" de *Mood Indigo*, Harold Baker enfin, trompettiste rare et délicat, ellingtonien à éclipses, musicien terriblement méconnu, premier inspirateur de Miles Davis. Son *Stardust* est l'un des temps forts d'un album transcendant.

Claude Carrière

features the leader and introduces Joe Benjamin on bass, Benjamin, later to become the band's regular bassist, was here substituting for Jimmy Woode.

Sophisticated Lady was another invariable request and it had become Harry Carney's most famous showcase, one on which he demonstrated his great "bottom" notes and ever-increasing mastery of the circular-breathing technique. Ellington announces him as the "All-American Number One Baritone Sax," a humorous reference to Carney's many victories in those magazine jazz polls that once had a certain publicity value.

Stardust features Harold "Shorty" Baker, the fourth member of what was one of the most brilliant trumpet sections of Ellington's entire career. Within the profession, Baker was among the most respected musicians on trumpet, both as lead and soloist, but not being an exhibitionist he received less recognition from the public. A melodist, as his two beautiful choruses show, he was originally inspired by Louis Armstrong and Joe Smith. His music also has a quality that brings to mind a predecessor in the band, Artie Whetsel.

In the opinion of those who heard him often in person, Johnny Hodges was not merely Ellington's greatest star, but the greatest of all alto saxophonists. He could play ballads superbly, and he could also play the blues at all tempos with the utmost authority. All his recorded performances of *Jeep's Blues* seem like masterpieces, but this night-chorus version is outstanding, a supreme example of what "telling a story" once meant to musicians. *All of Me* illustrates his relaxed, melodic artistry on a familiar standard. He makes it sound so simple and easy, right down to the humorous vaudeville ending.

Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue had been the sensation at the Newport Jazz Festival the year before when the original 1937 composition was performed with a long "walling interval" of blues choruses by Paul Gonsalves. It put Ellington on the cover of *Time* and it typed Gonsalves as an extroverted tenor stylist just when the tenor saxophone had become the dominant jazz instrument. Although he was a marvelous ballad player, he was obliged to play this exciting *tour de force* nearly every night for the rest of his life. The present version is well recorded and rhythmically it is extremely exciting. There are shouts of encouragement from the band and the audience, all egging him on, and he responds with the generosity of spirit that made him so well liked by everyone who knew him. Ellington comes back in on piano to set up the *crescendo finale*, during which the band and all those present go wild with excitement.

To cool down the dancers, Hodges is brought back to swing two pretty songs, *I Got It Bad* and *On the Sunny Side of the Street*. There is some indication on the band's part while Ellington announces that the bar will be closing at one o'clock, although the band will play until 1:30. He suggests that the patrons may need to "fortify" themselves. The musicians had no doubt been doing that during intermissions. Johnny Hodges even emits a couple of red squeaks on the last tune, something that very rarely happened.

So now there would be hurried goodbyes to old and new friends. The music stands, the music library, the bass, the drums, and the larger instruments are loaded on the bus. The musicians, having changed leisurely despite urgent cries of "Rollin'" from the band vial, finally get themselves out to their jealously reserved seats. The World's Greatest Navigator, as Duke Ellington terms himself, gets into the front passenger seat of Harry Carney's big Imperial. He may be thinking about breakfast a few hundred miles away, but he stops to exchange some banter with his men. Then they're all gone, the All-American Road Band, rolling through the night to another city and the next engagement. Before all the famous heads nod, someone probably says, "We sounded pretty good tonight."

STANLEY DANCE

author of
The World of Duke Ellington
(Da Capo Press)

SIDE A

1. **TAKE THE A TRAIN** (4:57)
Comp.: Billy Strayhorn
Pub.: Tempo Music, Inc.—ASCAP
2. **TAKE THE A TRAIN** (2:50)
Comp.: Billy Strayhorn
Pub.: Tempo Music, Inc.—ASCAP
3. **SUCH SWEET THUNDER** (2:54)
Comp.: Duke Ellington, B. Strayhorn
Pub.: Tempo Music, Inc.—ASCAP
4. **FRUSTRATION** (3:39)
Comp.: Duke Ellington
Pub.: Tempo Music, Inc.—ASCAP
5. **COP OUT** (3:14)
Comp.: Duke Ellington
Pub.: Tempo Music, Inc.—ASCAP

SIDE B

1. **PERDIDO** (4:34)
Comp.: I. Drake, H. Langenselder, J. Tizol
Pub.: Tempo Music, Inc.—ASCAP
2. **MOOD INDIGO** (8:05)
Comp.: B. Bigard, Duke Ellington, I. Mills
Pub.: Mills Music, Inc.—ASCAP
3. **BASSMENT** (4:30)
Comp.: Duke Ellington
Pub.: Tempo Music, Inc.—ASCAP

PERSONNEL

Duke Ellington, piano
Joe Benjamin, bass
Sam Woodard, drums
Harold "Shorty" Baker, Willie Cook, Clark Terry, trumpets
Ray Nance, cornet & vocal
Quentin Jackson, Britt Woodman, John Sanders, trombones
Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone
Russell Procope, alto saxophone & clarinet
Jimmy Hamilton, tenor saxophone & clarinet
Paul Gonsalves, tenor saxophone
Harry Carney, baritone saxophone & bass clarinet

SIDE C

1. **SOPHISTICATED LADY** (3:56)
Comp.: Duke Ellington, I. Mills, M. Parish
Pub.: Mills Music, Inc./Everbright Music—ASCAP
2. **STARDUST** (3:54)
Comp.: H. Carmichael, M. Parish
Pub.: Mills Music, Inc./Everbright Music—ASCAP
3. **JEOP'S BLUES** (5:58)
Comp.: Duke Ellington, J. Hodges
Pub.: American Academy of Music, Inc.—ASCAP
4. **ALL OF ME** (2:38)
Comp.: O. Marks, S. Simons
Pub.: Marlong Music/Bourne Co.—ASCAP

SIDE D

1. **DIMINUENDO AND CRESCENDO IN BLUE** (11:50)
Comp.: Duke Ellington
Pub.: American Academy of Music, Inc.—ASCAP
2. **I GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD** (3:26)
Comp.: Duke Ellington, F.F. Webster
Pub.: Robbins Music—ASCAP
3. **ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET** (4:34)
Comp.: D. Fields, J. McHugh
Pub.: Shapiro Bernstein & Co., Inc.—ASCAP

PRODUCED BY BOB THEILE

Engineer: Jack Towers
Re-Mix: Harvey Goldberg & Bob Theile
Mastering: George Marino
Cover photos: David Redfern
Album design: George Fried

Recorded Carrolltown, Pennsylvania—June, 1957



**DOCTOR
JAZZ**

W2X39137-A

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Doctor Jazz



DUKE ELLINGTON

All Star Road Band

1. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN 4:57
(Billy Strayhorn)
2. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN 2:50
(Billy Strayhorn)
3. SUCH SWEET THUNDER 2:54
(D. Ellington - B. Strayhorn)
4. FRUSTRATION (D. Ellington) 3:39
5. COP OUT (D. Ellington) 3:14

Prod. by Teresa Gramophone
Company, Ltd.



**DOCTOR
JAZZ**

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Doctor Jazz



DUKE ELLINGTON

All Star Road Band

1. PERJUDIC 4:34
(I. Drake - J. Tizol)
 2. MOOD INDIGO 8:05
(Bigard - Ellington - Mills)
 3. BASSMENT 4:30
(D. Ellington)
- Prod. by Teresa Gramophone
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DUKE ELLINGTON

All Star Road Band

1. **SOPHISTICATED LADY 3:56**
(Ellington - Mills - Parish)
2. **STARDUST 3:54**
(Carmichael - Parish)
3. **JEEPS BLUES 5:58**
(Ellington - Hodges)
4. **ALL OF ME 2:38**
(G. Marks - B. Simons)

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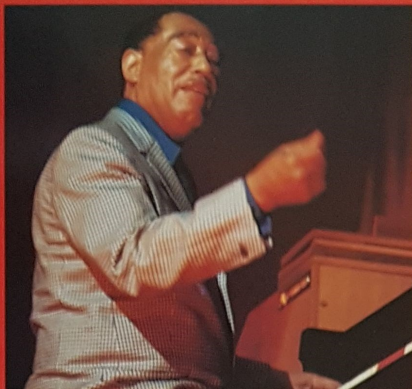


DUKE ELLINGTON

All Star Road Band

1. **DIMINUENDO & CRESCENDO IN BLUE 11'00**
(Ellington)
2. **I GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD 3'26**
(Ellington - Webster)
3. **ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET 4'34**
(Fields - McHugh)

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R&B 133

DUKE ELLINGTON

All Star Road Band

TAKE THE A TRAIN
TAKE THE A TRAIN (VOCAL BY RAY NANCE)
SUCH SWEET THUNDER
FRUSTRATION
COP OUT
PERDIDO
MOOD INDIGO
BASSMENT
SOPHISTICATED LADY
STARDUST
JEEPS BLUES
ALL OF ME
DIMINUENDO AND CRESCENDO IN BLUE
I GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD
ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET

PERSONNEL

DUKE ELLINGTON
JOE BENJAMIN
SAM WOODYARD
HAROLD "SHORTY" BAKER
WILLIE COOK
CLARK TERRY
RAY NANCE
QUENTIN JACKSON
BRITT WOODMAN
JOHN SANDERS
JOHNNY HODGES
RUSSELL PROCOPE
JIMMY HAMILTON
PAUL GONSALVES
HARRY CARNEY

PRODUCED BY BOB THIELE

Engineer: Jack Towers
Re-Mix: Harvey Goldberg & Bob Thiele
Mastering: George Marino
Cover photos: David Radtman
Album design: George Fried

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Recorded Carrolltown, Pennsylvania—June, 1957

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