

IT DON'T MEAN
A THING
IF IT AIN'T GOT
THAT SWING



DUKE ELLINGTON
&
TERESA BREWER

NOT FOR SALE

IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING

DUKE ELLINGTON & TERESA BREWER



Since the start of Teresa Brewer's re-emergence as a singular and now much matured vocal phenomenon, she has recorded with, among others, Bobby Hackett, Pretty Purdie, Gato Barbieri, Thad Jones, Max Kaminsky, Leon Thomas (as a percussionist), and the whole Count Basie band.

A further challenge remained, however. Could she cope with a series of sessions involving this country's most distinguished composer (beyond category) and his vastly experienced orchestra?

The idea of a Duke Ellington-Teresa Brewer album originated with Duke. During his annual summer seminar in Ellingtonia at New York City's Rainbow Grill, Duke noted that Teresa had recorded a Flying Dutchman set with Count Basie. "Well, then," he asked Teresa, "When are we going to make a record?"

Two weeks later, this album began to take shape. For Teresa, this collaboration with Ellington resulted in "the greatest musical experience of my life."

An index of the interest manifested by Duke's sidemen in this encounter is that everyone in the band showed up on time for each session. As veteran observers of the Ellington band will tell you, this collective concern with punctuality among Ellington's players is about as rare as the appearance of Halley's Comet. Intrigued, Ellington's associates worked hard and swung deeply. As for the band's piano player (as he often refers to himself), Duke was well pleased. Commenting on the ease and authority with which Teresa met this challenge, Duke observed, "She didn't turn off. And all the

way through, she was true to her own true self."

This capacity to fit comfortably into a wide range of quite different musical contexts while not diluting her own unmistakable style and sound has characterized all of Teresa's sessions on Flying Dutchman — from her rock groove with the British combo, Oily Rags, to her celebratory albums with Basie and Ellington.

And within each different context, Teresa always looks for new ways to surprise herself and her associates. In this instance, for example, it was her decision to take *I'm Beginning to See the Light* at such a rollercoaster tempo. On the other hand, she is equally capable of listening so attentively to her colleagues — as in *Mood Indigo* here — that she becomes an integrally persuasive part of a vintage jazz mood-setter.

The scoring for this blending of Brewer and Ellington is by Ernie Wilkins as well as by Duke; and on a number of occasions, the charts have been taken directly from the voluminous Ellington archives. Historians and just plain aficionados of Ellingtonia will note that this is the first recording ever of two Ellington tunes — the blithe-spirited *Poco Mucho* ("A Little Too Much"), written around 1968 in Mexico, and *It's Kind of Lonesome Out Tonight*, an Ellington rumination of many years back which somehow has never been recorded until now. Furthermore, as Duke notes, "We dug up some that never did get much of a hearing before — for instance, *Tulip or Turnip* and *I've Got to Be a Rug Cutter*."

On *Rug-Cutter* and *It Don't Mean A Thing II It*

Ain't Got That Swing, there is a mighty trumpet section of nine swingers, among them Jimmy Owens, Ernie Royal, Jimmy Nottingham, Joe Newman, Ray Nance, Barry Hall, Johnny Coles, Mercer Ellington and Lloyd Johnson. For *Poco Mucho*, *Tulip or Turnip*, and *Mood Indigo*, the imported rhythm section consists of the redoubtable Pretty Purdie on drums; Joe Beck, guitar; and Mume, conga drums. The meditatively intertwaving horns in the foreground of *Mood Indigo*, discographers will want to know, are those of Russell Procope, Harry Carney, and Tyree Glenn.

That light and precise male voice complementing Teresa, usually in unison, on several tracks is that of fabled dancer Bunny Briggs who emerges here as a crisp and hip vocalist. That tap dancing you hear for a few bars at the beginning and at the end of *Rug Cutter* is by Briggs and Brewer. (In her earliest show business years, Teresa was an accomplished and beguiling tap dancer.)

All in all, these sessions were ebulliently, contagiously relaxed — as the resultant music testifies. And the set is also additional proof of the quite remarkable resurgence of Teresa Brewer. Not only resurgence, but also transmutation. As Joyce Wadler pointed out in a *New York Post* profile of her, Teresa is remembered, in her previous musical incarnation, as "that '50's girl singer with 'this Coca-Cola voice' — bubbly, fizzy, like 'something ready to pop.'"

That was then. Now, as Joyce Wadler observes, "the new Miss Brewer listens to The Grateful Dead, The Band, Kris Kristofferson." (And I would add a lot of jazz of all kinds). "The former Miss Brewer," Wadler continues, "never listened to music — 'though maybe I'd buy some records to dance to.'"

The musical maturing of Teresa was due in part to her four daughters who, as they grew up, clued her into what was happening on the new pop/rock scene. Another and sizeable influence has been Bob Thiele, who clued her into the jazz scene — past, present, and avant-garde — much of which he has recorded during the years.

I know of no other singer who has so radically and convincingly changed her musical conception while retaining her youthful resiliency and high spirits. As Bob Thiele says, "I think she is unique in her versatility and in her ability to work well with musicians from all kinds of backgrounds."

Of the Teresa of the past, Thiele observes, "She was locked into cutie-pie stuff for years. Nobody gave her a chance to sing decent music. But I had been a Brewer fan for a long time, and I heard her voice develop. I knew she was ripe for good music."

So she was, as this Brewer-Ellington fusion further makes clear. Teresa has also learned something else from Thiele. "Finally," she says, "I totally enjoy what I'm doing. That's the most important thing my husband has given me — the idea that work has to be fun. If I don't like it, I just won't do it any more."

Duke, of course, has known that for years — if work ain't got that swing, it don't mean a thing.

—Nat Hentoff

SIDE 1

IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING

1. IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING (2:05) (vocal: Bunny Briggs) (Irving Mills, Duke Ellington) (Mills Music, Inc. — ASCAP)
2. I AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES (3:19) (Duke Ellington, Don George) (Ricki Music/Tempo Music — ASCAP)
3. SATIN DOLL (2:28) (Billy Strathorn, Johnny Mercer, Duke Ellington) (Tempo Music — ASCAP)
4. MOOD INDIGO (3:50) (Irving Mills, Barney Bigard, Duke Ellington) (Mills Music Inc. — ASCAP)
5. DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE (2:57) (Bob Russell, Duke Ellington) (Harrison Music/Robbins Music — ASCAP)
6. I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT (2:05) (Harry James, Johnny Hodges, Don George, Duke Ellington) (Anne Rachel Music Corp. — ASCAP)

SIDE 2

IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING

1. I'VE GOT TO BE A RUGCUTTER (2:37) (vocal: Bunny Briggs) (Duke Ellington) (American Academy of Music Inc. — ASCAP)
2. I GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD (3:38) (Paul Webster, Duke Ellington) (Robbins Music/Robbins Music — ASCAP)
3. TULIP OR TURNIP (1:58) (vocal: Bunny Briggs) (Don George, Duke Ellington) (Lewie Music Corp. — ASCAP)
4. IT'S KINDA LONESOME OUT TONIGHT (2:20) (Don George, Duke Ellington) (Jewel Music Publishing Co., Inc. — ASCAP)
5. POCO MUCHO (1:53) (Don George, Duke Ellington) (Tempo Music — ASCAP)

PERSONNEL:

September 4, 1973

DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE

SATIN DOLL

I GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD

IT'S KINDA LONESOME OUT TONIGHT

DUKE ELLINGTON, piano; Harry Carney, Russell Procope, Harold Minnerv, Harold Ashby, Norris Turner, reads; Vince Pridmore, Chuck Connors, Art Baron, trombones; Morley Johnson, Ray Nance, Johnny Coles, Barry Hall, trumpets; Joe Benjamin, bass; Quentin White, Jr., drums.

September 5, 1973

I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT

I AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES

add Tyree Glenn, trombone.

I'VE GOT TO BE A RUGCUTTER

IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING

add Mercer Ellington, Joe Newman, Ernie Royal, Jimmy Owens, Jimmy Nottingham, trumpets; Bunny Briggs, vocal.

September 6, 1973

TULIP OR TURNIP

DUKE ELLINGTON, piano; Joe Beck, guitar; Herb Bushler, electric bass; Pretty Purdie, drums; Bunny Briggs, vocal.

MOOD INDIGO

add Russell Procope, Harry Carney, reads; Tyree Glenn, trombone; omit Bunny Briggs.

POCO MUCHO

add James Mume, conga.

Produced by BOB THIELE

arranged by DUKE ELLINGTON and ERNIE WILKINS

ENGINEER: BOB SIMPSON

COVER AND LINER PHOTOS: K. ABE

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MEAN A THING
IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING

DUKE ELLINGTON & TERESA BREWER

1. IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT
SWING (2:05) (vocal: Bunny Briggs)(Irving Mills,Duke Ellington)
(Mills Music, Inc.-ASCAP)

Produced by Bob Thiele



STEREO
FD 10166
(FD-10166-AR)
SIDE 1

2. I AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES
(3:19)(Duke Ellington,Don George)(Ricki Music/
Tempo Music - ASCAP)
3. SATIN DOLL (2:29) (Billy Strayhorn,Johnny Mercer,
Duke Ellington)(Tempo Music - ASCAP)
4. MOON INDIGO (3:50)(Irving Mills,Barney Bigard, Duke
Ellington) (Mills Music Inc.-ASCAP)
5. DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE (2:57)(Bob
Russell,Duke Ellington)(Harrison Music/Robbins
Music - ASCAP)
6. I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT
(2:05)(Harry James,Johnny Hodges,Don
George,Duke Ellington)(Anne Rachel,
Music Corp. - ASCAP)

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Bunny Briggs)(Duke Ellington)(American Academy of
Music Inc. - ASCAP)



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SATIN DOLL

MOOD INDIGO

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SIDE 2

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CUTTER

I GOT IT BAD AND
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TULIP OR TURNIP

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OUT TONIGHT

POCO MUCHO

PRODUCED BY BOB THIELE

SOUND MIXER: BOB SIMPSON
COVER & LINER PHOTOS: K. ABE



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